



St. Paul DOG TRAINING CLUB

NEWSLETTER

March 2010

President's Perspective

by Phil Rustad

Happy Spring to everyone and welcome back to daylight commuting!

Last Saturday evening, we had our annual Banquet and Awards Dinner/Annual Meeting and Board Elections. Wow, that's a lot to do while enjoying each others company and a meal. As part of the meeting, I presented a "To Do" list from the meeting of 2001. We had accomplished most of the items listed, tried and discarded them (conformation classes comes to mind) and generally improved both our facility and our programs along the line of the suggestions.

As we are on the cusp of another decade, I thought it would be a good time to repeat the exercise and ask for a new list. Suggestion slips were handed out, filled out and returned. While many of the ideas were things we are working on, some were completely new and some were suggestions that perhaps it is time to try again something that hadn't worked in the past. I'll summarize the feedback from the club here.

Events

The number one request is for Fun Matches. A total of 17 slips listed Fun Matches as a desire. Three wanted Obedience; three wanted Agility; one wants Rally; and 10 just said Fun Matches or listed both Obedience and Agility. This was the number one event request. Four people asked for more Obedience or Agility trials. We could hold more Obedience Trials, but the AKC limits all clubs to eight days per year of Agility and we are doing all those now. Other requests were for more seminars, seminars for intermediate handlers, and rental space for private lessons.

President's Perspective (cont.)

Curriculum

Here the requests were evenly spread over a number of topics. The addition of more daytime classes for agility and obedience was first in popularity. Also requested were Junior classes, Rally Run Thrus on Friday nights, general expansion of the obedience program, adding Tracking, Rally, Herding and TDI classes.

Specific ideas for improvement were to add a more structured curriculum to our agility classes, add balance balls and spiders (I don't know what that means) and adding private lessons.



Facility

Our facility came in for the most criticism, which surprised me as it has steadily improved over the years. I understand that many of our current members were not here in 1993 when we took over an abandoned bowling alley/archery range that had lay deserted for 23 years. It was a cave, and that's no exaggeration. But there is still room for improvement.

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President's Perspective (cont.)

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Suggestions included a redecorating of the bathrooms, including new toilets, a handicap toilet in the ladies room, general painting and updating. Other areas targeted were the ceilings, back stairs, (which really look bad now that the front stairs have been so dramatically improved), better chairs, signage outside and a kitchen facelift. One person wants a stove in the kitchen and I can tell you that is something that will never happen. I know that other clubs have stoves, but technically, that means that you are cooking. If you are cooking for the general public, you have to have a restaurant license and health inspections. I don't think we are ready for that inconvenience and expense.

There were two suggestions of adding an elevator. I realize that we are not handicap accessible and we duck that requirement by being a private club. We have had handicapped exhibitors and have always been able to get them up and down the stairs. An elevator, I found out as we priced one for our church, would run about \$150,000. If we can raise that kind of money, I'd suggest we move to a bigger place that wouldn't need an elevator.

Web Site

The Web Site came in for some critique primarily that it needs better updating. Things like Instructor Bios and Pictures, a Brag Page, posting the club by-laws and a more detailed schedule of activities were suggested. Two people want an entirely new Web site.

Other Ideas

I'll just list through them here. Several people asked about ways to increase volunteerism, perhaps by having a sign up option on the Web site, and posting opportunities on the whiteboard at the club. Several people asked about moving to a large facility. I can tell you that the current lease we have, which is for terms we could never get anywhere else in the Twin Cities, does allow us a 120 day notice of termination. But unless we could find a comparable place for, basically, free, there is no plan in the foreseeable future to move.

Perspective (cont.)

Some people asked about outdoor training, something that was tried years ago, primarily for agility. Storage of equipment is the issue there. There was one request for a live person to answer the phones. There was one request for better food at the trials. And there were two requests to move the banquet to a different location, something that will be addressed at our next board meeting. There were people who would like to see more community activities, such as a demo team.

The final issue in this category was a request for a better coat rack. I am personally offended by this as I'm the one who donated the coat racks we have now. ;-)

What this all comes down to is more help. I invite you to pick an item on this list that you'd like to work on, contact a board member and let them know what you'd like to do. It is only through the strength of our members that we improve as a club. Join in and do something in the next few months to accomplish something that you personally have been wondering about. That way, every time you walk into the club you can look with satisfaction on that one thing you've helped take care of for everyone's benefit.





By Kristi Portugue

Welcome spring by entering or volunteering at the upcoming SPDTC shows! We're hosting Agility Trials on April 9, 10 & 11, and Obedience Trials on April 30, May 1 & 2. See the club website for more information on the shows. This year marks the first time non-purebred dogs will be allowed to show at AKC obedience shows. SPDTC will welcome mixed breed teams at our obedience shows in April, October and January and embrace these changes in the dog world. Any dog and handler can compete in an obedience show once they have reached and trained at the third level, or Novice as it's called. Please feel free to discuss the possibility of showing your dog with any of your instructors. There are no dumb questions and we have lots of answers!

Following are updates on the SPDTC obedience and agility programs. In addition, you'll find the first in a new series of articles to introduce you to our fabulous instructors. Enjoy!

Obedience Update

As usual our popular Beginner's class is running at full or near full capacity. SPDTC is now offering AKC Canine Good Citizen (CGC) testing upon the conclusion of the ten week sessions, and this has been very successful in itself. The decision was made to continue offering CGC testing every ten weeks and it is open to all students. Check the club calendar for the tenth week of Beginning Obedience class for test dates.

SPDTC is also having great results with our move-up program. By moving up from Beginners to Intermediate and then Intermediate to Novice we have some very good teams and handlers that are making us proud. This resulted in having to add an instructor to the Novice class and to add an extra half hour to accommodate everyone. While we may not be everything to everybody, with our great instructors and support staff we strive to improve our offerings and help our students get the best training and demonstrated performance possible. We'd like to extend thanks to all involved!

Agility Update

Over the weekend of January 29-30, 2010 St. Paul Dog Training Club hosted a series of agility workshops with internationally known trainer and handler **Dana Pike**. Dana shared her thoughts and techniques with agility teams ranging from Excellent level competitors to puppies just beginning their agility training. Her training emphasizes the establishment of a firm foundation with the dog before moving into more advanced handling skills. The actual transition proves quite easy, because the dog and handler have established a level of communication and understanding before the task becomes difficult.



One of the sessions focused on work with a single jump. Dana demonstrated how the understanding of how to execute this single obstacle formed the basis for all of the more complex handling maneuvers and skill sets that are needed in agility. The session for very young dogs and pups centered on the development of an attitude of cooperation and respect between the dog and handler that would form the basis for future work. A high priority was placed on handler-focus and attention on the part of the dog. In the Advanced, Intermediate and Beginner Handling sessions, Dana showed her quick and easy understanding of the problems facing each team. People got specific help and advice they needed to address the many problems of Agility training. While the workshops

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Training Update (cont.)

Update (cont.)



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were organized for club members (who participated at a reduced rate) there were also participants and auditors from outside the club. Many of these individuals spoke highly of our facility and the friendliness of the SPDTC members.

Instructor Spotlight

The new Instructor Spotlight feature is intended to introduce club members to our fabulous instructors, and provide additional information on the instructors you're already familiar with. The instructors were asked to provide information about themselves, answering any of the following questions: favorite dog breed, how many years have you been involved with dogs and dog training, when did you first start teaching and/or training at SPDTC, in what venues do you currently train and show, favorite training tip to pass along to SPDTC members, and what do you like to do when you aren't training and showing dogs. In each newsletter we'll feature several of our instructors.

Instructor Judy Fey, Puppy Einstein

I started training and showing Boxers in 1980, I trained other dogs prior to this, but didn't compete with them. I have shown my Boxers in Obedience and Agility and thoroughly enjoy and love the breed. However, as I have gotten older I decided to downsize to a Boston Terrier, as they have many similarities to my Boxers and are a very fun little

dog. My Boston Terrier Story is being trained in Obedience and Agility. She has earned her RN title and hopefully will be ready for obedience and Agility by summer.

I started teaching puppy classes about 5 years ago. It is lots of fun to watch both the handler and puppies grow in their training. A few training tips would be to really enjoy your dog, HAVE FUN, then be patient, consistent and persistent as you teach them.

When I am not training or playing with my dogs I enjoy spending time with my grandchildren and I also enjoy knitting.

Instructor Karen Coffee, Beginning Obedience

Beginning obedience is my game; Karen Coffee is my name. I got my first dog when I was in the third grade. She came from the Cities on a train to SW Minnesota. My first Vizsla was a research dog bred at the U of MN. My favorite breed and only breed now is the Vizsla. It is a perfect breed for me because they think I am wonderful and I think they are wonderful too. Also, I have carefully started about 16 in obedience, often with high scores and have had about 7 that went all the way thru utility and one that died about the time he was ready to show.

I have learned that there are many ways to train, and a happy dog is the easiest to train. I helped my daughter start her Vizsla in obedience when she was 9 and the dog was 3. Their novice work was excellent and at 14 she was showing the dog in utility. I have taught Vizslas Only classes and 4H and puppy classes. I have been teaching Beginning obedience at SPDTC for 2 years. I started my first dog in obedience because someone said that I could not cut it. In addition, I have even tracked a dog. I have had several rescue Vizslas. I have the greatest respect for each dog's intelligence.

We teach people to train their own dogs. Many people come to class well trained by the dog and we

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Training Update (cont.)

(cont. from page 4)

have to help them be the alpha one in the team but with methods that make the dog want to learn. I know that people have no idea how much time and good humor it takes to train; we know when the handler is not being fair to the dog by doing homework. Some people do not think that they can do training because they have never tried it, but we understand that too. It makes us sad when people miss classes because each week builds quickly on the other.

I have and have had other hobbies: I did show Quarter horses every weekend with many, many state trophies and raised horses that excelled nationwide including a Champion All Around Stallion. My daughter at one time won all the High Point awards in dogs and horses in Dakota County 4H. My other hobbies are mowing (I guess that is a hobby--I have a huge yard on 20 acres), gardening, and orchids. I use 15 gallons of water on them every week.



Update (cont.)

SPDTC has many friendly dog lovers that understand your training problems and want to help if they can and are willing to listen to you talk about your dog.

Instructor Paula Ellis, Beginning Utility & Utility

I really don't have a favorite breed. I do have a few I am not fond of. The first dog I obedience trained from a book and watching others in class in 1966. Doing the math, that looks like about 44 years ago. Boy, am I old! After begging a ride out to Como Park Pavilion to watch the St. Paul Dog Club train their dogs, I would go back home and try what I saw them do.

I believe I started being a instructor at St. Paul Dog Training Club about 4 years ago. I currently teach beginner utility and regular utility class on Tuesday night. At the present time I am active in rally, obedience and conformation. All my dogs for the past 20 years have been champions and had obedience and agility titles.

Favorite training tip: Know when to try something else, if what you are doing isn't working.

When I am not training or showing, you likely find me building, fixing or making something.

Instructor Paul Howe, Obedience Run-Thrus

I have been involved in obedience pretty much continuously since 1975 or so. I have titled a St. Bernard, a few English Springer Spaniels and a couple Golden Retrievers in obedience and have done a very little bit of agility. At SPDTC I do as many Friday Run-Thrus as I can. I simply love Friday Run-Thrus as they give me a chance to watch novices progress as well as a chance to learn from observing.

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↩ ***Skeggox is ready for spring!***



Training Update (cont.)

(cont. from page 5)

Instructor

LeRoy Pilarski, Beginning & Intermediate Obedience

My name is LeRoy Pilarski and I've been training dogs for 70 years, 26 years at SPDTC alone. I currently teach Beginners on Wednesday mornings at 9:00 a.m. and Intermediate on Tuesday nights at 7:00 p.m.

I am now retired from training my own dogs but have owned and titled so many dogs I can't fit them onto this one page. I'll be glad to tell you about each one though. My training tips to students are to keep your dog in good shape and keep them happy!

When not training I still love to fish, dance and travel. If you pass a Dairy Queen you just may see my car there as I believe in keeping my wife and myself happy as well.

Instructor

Bev Olson, Foundations of Agility

I have been involved with training and showing dogs for the past 19 years. I have had several different breeds. My two favorite breeds are Rottweiler's, which I no longer have, and my current breed – Border Collies.

I have been with SPDTC since 2002, and started teaching the Agility Foundation class two years ago, when it was brought back to the training program at SPDTC with a new curriculum I developed.

My Border Collie is currently training for his Utility title in Obedience and working on his MACH in Agility. I also compete in Dock Dogs with him.

I enjoy seeing how amazed the students are when you teach them or their dog a new maneuver.



Teach Your Dog a Trick

Teach your dog a trick: High Five

1. Teach you dog to target you hand with her paw for a click and treat.
2. Present you hand as the target in various positions until you can hold your hand up, palm facing the dog with fingers toward the ceiling. Click and treat you dog for touching you hand with her paw.
3. Practice this until you dog is quickly raising her paw when she sees you put your hand up.
4. Verbally label the behavior High Five when it is happening on a regular basis.
5. Add in distractions and work on having her do it with other people as well.

Trick Tips: Mind your Cues

Sometimes you'll want to use a different cue or hand signal than the one you started with when you are teaching tricks. There is an order that must be followed before your dog will perform the behavior on the new cue. You must present the new cue before the old cue or the dog will not pay attention to the new cue.



Courtesy of AllDogsWorld.com Woof Woof!!

<http://alldogsworld.com/2009/03/28/high-five-tric/>





Doggie Profile: Casanova

Obedience Is Next to Dogliness



Big Accomplishment for Little Dog

Casanova earned his grand champion title for UKC title April 19, 2009, as well as his first high in trial. As for the 2007 ranking by Front and Finish for AKC:

- Rally he ranked 3rd by breed and 10th by group
- Obedience he ranked 4th by breed and 5th by group

Casanova also visits retirement homes during the holiday season.

Owner: Carol Lauren-Schmidt



What's best for the team? by Phil Rustad

When showing in obedience, one of the things that I hear from fellow exhibitors is that they are uncomfortable in the ring. They feel rushed and out of control. They say things like “We were going along just fine and then I had to send my dog on the go out just as the handler in the other ring was throwing their dumbbell” or “I felt so rushed, I just couldn’t get my dog to pay attention to me.” When this happens, I always feel that they have been cheated out of their entry fee. You need to remember that you are the customer in this event. The show isn’t put on for the club or the judges. It’s put on for you.

So how do you get the most out of your investment? The first thing you have to determine is “What are my expectations?” Some people show for titles, some try to win so they can get points toward a higher title or championship, some just for fun. No reason is better than any other. But you have to be the one who decides what it is you are attempting to get out of the showing experience. This used to be easier than it is now.

In days past, we had many Fun Match and Sanctioned Match opportunities to go to with our dogs and get them seasoned for the trials. We no longer have those chances so many times we are showing green dogs in licensed trials. Now you are faced with the decision of what to do to make this a positive experience for you and your dog. This is something that you should decide before you go into the ring, although your goals may change as the run proceeds.

Here are some pointers to help you take control of the ring. Pacing, or the speed at which the run proceeds, is very important. When you are at a show, take some time to watch other classes and experienced exhibitors. Some like a very fast pace – pausing only briefly between exercises to reset and get ready. Some take a moment between each exercise to praise their dog and congratulate them on their performance. One of my favorite handlers in our area takes a pause after she sets up to kneel down next to her dog and give him a hug. There is nothing in the rules that prevents this. You have to decide which will get you the results you are looking for. The problem comes when your pace and the judge’s or the other ring’s begin to conflict.

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Obedience (cont.)

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If you are being rushed your attitude will go right out of your body and into your dog's head and he will feel that something is wrong. For most teams this results in a less than stellar performance. You will come out of the ring frazzled knowing that you did not have your best performance that day. You need to take control and slow down the pace. You can do this by taking a moment at the end of each exercise to praise your dog. You can take a breath after the judge asks if you are ready, though it is best if you say "No" in answer to the judge's question before taking the breath. (This keeps the judge from interpreting your breath as a "Yes").

What about the case where the activity in the other ring conflicts with what you are doing? This is what is called "Situational Awareness." You have to know or feel what is going on in the other rings as well as what you are doing. Situational Awareness is important in many human activities from flying an airplane in combat to quarterbacking a football team. The best Quarterbacks seem to know just when to duck to avoid that big defensive tackle that's about to blind side them. They felt it without really looking at it. The same skill applies in showing your dog. You need to "know" what's going on the neighboring rings to avoid a situation where you are doing a recall just as the other ring is doing a group down. Or you are about to give a signal to your dog just as the neighbor is throwing their dumbbell.

O.K., I'm paying attention. I see that there is going to be a problem. But what do I do if we are about to have something happen like what I've described above?

You take control of the pace. If you are about to do something that has a good chance of conflicting with the other ring, that might be a good moment to re-tie your shoes, adjust your arm band number or roll up your sleeves. If you think the dog next door might really like to jump the baby gates and get your dumbbell as he does his go out, that might be a good time to answer "No" to the judge's ready question, break the sit and re-set the set up. Any of these or a myriad of other stalls will get you through the moment and you'll quickly be ready to go on. Of course, the reverse of this is true too. If you are outside the ring be aware of what is going on inside the ring you are about to walk by. Don't be

Obedience (cont.)

playing "bouncy, bouncy" while someone is trying to do signals ten feet away.

Finally, you should be mentally prepared to "Throw the run." If things are going poorly and you feel it's in your dog's best interest for future events to go ahead and make this into a training opportunity, go ahead and do that. Most judges will allow a certain amount of training in the ring, as long as you don't move toward the dog, don't make corrections or use harsh or loud commands. They've been in your shoes and understand what you are doing. Just make sure what you are doing is positive and upbeat.

But there is a chance that you'll have one of "those judges" who doesn't allow anything and they will excuse you. Is that so bad? Probably not. If you've gotten what you needed out of a second command or a broken exercise then you'll have made it a positive experience. At that point you've flunked. Who cares if they excuse you? You get to take your dog out of the ring and praise them and give them treats and really make it positive. In many cases – that's what you should do.

Next time you are at an obedience trial, watch the most experienced talented titled handlers in the building. They do all of these things because they know that, in the long run, it's what is best for the team.





Headstart Puppy Agility

The first Headstart Puppy Agility class came to a close March 25, 2010. I have never seen a 10-week block go by so fast. Working with puppies and their handlers was such a joy. I was so proud of the progress my students and their wee dogs made from start to finish. The next Headstart Puppy Agility class starts April, 1, 2010 – no fooling.

A picture is worth a thousand words, so without further ado...





Headstart Puppy Agility





Headstart Puppy Agility





Calling All Canines for Doggie Profile

Hey, would you like to see your dog profiled in the SPDTC Newsletter?

Just send high-resolution photos of your dog along with your dog's story to:

momatomyhomework@gmail.com

Canine Photo Quest

Please, send high-resolution photos of your dog or dogs for use in the SPDTC Newsletter.

Photos can be e-mailed to:

momatomyhomework@gmail.com

Thank you!

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Got a Brag & Wag?
Just e-mail your B&W to:

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