

Dog Bytes

WVSSA Newsletter

September 2007

Eight Reasons to Obedience Train Your Dog

by C. D. Fisher

Obedience training is one of the most important things you can do to improve the quality of your dog's life. It isn't always an easy process – in fact, it's usually a long road requiring both patience and perseverance.

For the sake of clarity, I'm speaking of obedience in terms of the big five commands: sit, down, heel, stay, and come. There are other important commands that you may also consider teaching your dog (such as "off", "drop it" and "leave it"), but the majority of obedience training effort is typically spent on getting the basics down first. After understanding how to teach your dog to perform the big five, both you and your dog will have both the knowledge and capacity to move on to more specialized commands.

With that in mind, the most important thing to remember when deciding whether or not to obedience train your dog is this: you will have a happier pet when you get finished. Seriously. Forget about any notions you may have that dogs are happiest in their natural state (i.e., footloose and fancy-free); first, that natural state has rules of its own, even if you can't understand or recognize them as such; second, those rules of conduct are unavoidable for both you and your dog, so if you do not provide them, your dog most certainly will; third, dog's don't control their

environment, people do. Like it or not, this world is run by humans and not canines. Since you are your dog's link between the canine world and your own, it's up to you to bridge the gap and teach them how to behave appropriately in situations where people, not dogs, have the final say.

So what about obedience training will make your dog happier? It seems they don't have a choice anyway, so how would learning basic obedience commands improve their quality of life?

A Happier Dog

The first reason that obedience will make your dog happier is that it will make you happier. You are the most important person in your dog's life and your attitude sets the tone for your dog's behavior more than you suspect. A dog is extremely good at reading body language and is quite sensitive to changes in your body chemistry (thanks to their highly-tuned sense of smell).

If you're angry, your dog knows it, whether you think you're acting angry or not. Same thing when you are sad, frustrated or excited. When your dog is behaving properly (in the real world, the world where people call the shots) you will be more comfortable and at ease. You will, in effect, be happier. Since your dog is a four-legged



lightning rod for all things you, this will translate to a comfortable, at ease, and happier dog.

A Confident Dog Makes a Calm Dog

Along with your new-found comfort will come a fresh wave of confidence – in both you and your dog. Confident dogs, like confident people, are far more likely to react correctly to new situations and the unknown. A confident dog is less likely to back out of it's collar, for example, when someone unfamiliar approaches. The same goes for situations where your dog may feel threatened, as confidence can often be the difference between bared teeth and a wagging tail. Perhaps more importantly, the confidence you feel in your dog will enable you to take them more places and experience more of what life has to offer.

A Solid Bond Yields a Solid Dog

Being happy and more confident when you and your canine companion spend time together will increase the bond between you. Bonding is an important part of the obedience training process, and it produces a cascade of side-effects that will greatly enhance life with your dog. It's a fairly well-known fact amongst animal behaviorists and seasoned dog trainers alike that dogs crave leadership, and without it, will assume the role of leader themselves.

Remember when I said that the dog-world having rules of it's own? Those rules are negotiated between dogs immediately when they are introduced to each other. I mean within seconds. One dog will instantly assume the leadership role between the two. If this hierarchy is not determined quickly (or both dogs think they deserve the mantle), a dog fight will ensue. This is how important establishing a clear chain

of command is to your dog. Believe it or not, finding its rightful place within this chain of command will actually increase your dog's affection for you (or decrease it, if the dog thinks you're on the bottom end). Unlike their human counterparts, dogs do not automatically mistrust authority figures. Quite the contrary, they seem to understand and appreciate them completely.

“Thinking” Dogs are Well-Behaved Dogs

Obedience training is also challenging to your dog mentally, and will provide an excellent opportunity for them to flex their mental muscles. Honestly think about your dog's daily routine. How often are they presented with a positive, challenging mental puzzle? The odds are that very little comes along in an untrained dog's life that provides any kind of mental stimulation. And dogs will find their own puzzles to work on when left to their own devices, and you don't even want to guess at what they'll come up with. Many kinds of behavioral problems are actually expressions of your dog's creativity when bored. Keeping things lively and challenging in your household by introducing some obedience training can help eliminate many of the more common behavioral problems simply because the dog is engaged in a rewarding activity with you.

An Obedient Dog is a Well-Rounded Dog

So, its vacation time and you and your family are considering hiking in the Rockies, building sand castles on the Outer Banks, or visiting friends and family in the Big City. Your dog would love to accompany you – see the sights, breathe the smells, and feel the sand and earth between their toes. But, is this feasible? If you have an obedient dog, the answer is yes! Dogs who are properly obedience

trained are so predictable, so confident, and so well-behaved that you can take them virtually anywhere and know that they will be on their best behavior. Even if they do get a little excited when chasing those seagulls, you know that they will respond to your down command or recall.

Dogs are not on this planet for a very long time, and obedient dogs get to experience more of it while they are here. Even if this means taking them to the pet store with you every week, or taking walks in the park, or even going across the street to a neighbors cook-out. If your dog is obedient, you will not have to think twice about bringing them to enjoy the party. That, and your friends and family won't sigh with frustration when you ask to bring your dog along. In sum, an obedient dog gets more out of life than a dog forced to stay home or be kenneled while the family is away.

A Calm and Healthy Dog

When properly obedience trained, your dog will know the correct way to act in a variety of situations. It will also be less agitated and more comfortable out and about in the human world and therefore have less of a tendency to react adversely to stress. In terms of physical health and well-being, a dog that knows what to do is less stressed than a dog that does not. Less stress, as we know from our own hectic lives, equals better health.

Fewer Life-Threatening Accidents

Not to be overly dramatic, but obedience training (especially the big five commands) can save your dog's life. Even though you are the best resource for your dog in terms of the human world, there are still situations that may arise which you didn't expect. During these types of situations, having a dog that is trained to follow your lead is critical. There

are thousands of examples where untrained dogs have been killed simply because they did not know how to stay or recall effectively. Often these incidences are blamed on the dog's foolishness in chasing a cat across the street or wandering into a guard dog's yard. Remember, your dog is not foolish -- it is simply untrained. It's a hard thing to admit, but most of these tragedies can be avoided by spending the time to obedience train your dog.

Ambassador to the Human World

The last item for your consideration regarding obedience training your dog has to do with domestic canines everywhere. A well trained and well-behaved dog is a pleasure to be around and goes a long way toward dispelling stereotypes about the breed, dogs as a whole, and the proper place of our four-legged companions in human society. Everyone knows at least one person who, for whatever reason, dislikes dogs. Some of these people are in positions of power in government or positions of responsibility for the overall safety of the population. As such, when presented with evidence that dogs are indeed uncontrolled (or uncontrollable), they will seek to create legislation that severely restricts the freedom of dogs and dog owners. Having an obedience trained dog will show that you are doing your part for both dogs and people. The more positive examples of dog ownership and behavior exist in the community, the more apt that community will be to welcome them as valued additions to the population.

Hopefully this article has given you the motivation to begin on an obedience training program with your dog right away. It's a long road but one well worth traveling. Good luck, and happy training!

Future Meetings

September Meeting

The September meeting is on the Saturday the 8th, after judging. The meeting will at Papas Pizza at 1577 Coburg Road, Eugene, OR.

Directions

From I-5 North or South - Exit 195B which merges onto Beltline west towards Junction City/Florence. Go about 1 mile and take the Coburg Road exit. Turn left onto Coburg Road then 1/2 mile to Willakenzie Road. Turn left on Willakenzie and then take a right into the driveway about 50 feet.

October Meeting

The October meeting will be Saturday, October 27th, after judging, at Ken & Cathy English's home, 19500 NE 17th Ct., Ridgefield, WA.

Directions

From I-5 North take Exit 9, drive straight through the light. From I-5 South take Exit 9, turn left at end of ramp and left again onto 10th. Turn Right onto 194th street (Spinal Fitness Sign on corner, street is hard to see). At the top of the hill turn Left onto 17th Ct. (private drive), second house on Left. The color is light brown with white trim.

Braggs & Wags

- CH G&J's ESSpecial Lakota Winds was WD/BOW at PKC for 2 points and WD-Best Bred By, at the PSESSA Specialty. He has finished his American Championship from the Bred By Class. Lakota is G&J's fourth champion. He is owned by Gary & Jan Sturm.
- Donahan's Searching For You VCDI AX AXJ NAP NJP received two legs in Agility Open Preferred at Mt. Bachelor Kennel Club. Echo is owned by Linda Coffel.

Show Results

Coos KC, 7/7

BOB/WD Coffel's Tracking You Down TD

Portland KC, 7/21

GP4/BOB CH Silverhill N Hunters All In
BOS/WB Oxbow's Heartstrings
BOW/WD G&J's Esspecial Lakota Winds
RWD Lakeview's High Rustler
RWB Laurelwyn Element

Portland KC, 7/22

BOB CH Silverhill N Hunters All In
BOS CH Marcur's Love Me Do
BOW/WB Cascadian's Touch The Sky
AX OAJ NF
WD Oxbow's Silver And Gold
RWD Lakeview's Doc Holiday
RWB Oxbow's Heartstrings

Umpqua KC, 8/4

BOB/WD Coffel's Tracking You Down TD

Umpqua KC, 8/5

BOB/WD Coffel's Tracking You Down TD

PSESSA 8/17

BOB CH Pawmarc's Northern Lights
BOS/BOW/WB Salulaire Beswin
Gifted
WD G&J's Esspecial Lakota Winds
RWD Mar-Ric Kayndee Walk The Line
RWB Ramblewood Here Fortheparty

Olympic KC 8/18

BIS/GP1/BOB CH Salilyn's Turbulence
BOS CH Dalin's Let Freedom Ring
BOW/WB Kadrian's Spot O'Pixie Dust
WD Mar-Ric Kayndee Walk The Line
RWD Saffire's Poka Dance
RWB Cascadian's Touch The Sky AX
OAJ NF

Olympic KC 8/19

GP41/BOB CH Cerise Kay'n Dee
Return Of The King
BOS CH Woodridge's Chantilly Lace
BOW/WD Avonleah's Tradewind Traveler
RWD Synergic's Winners Circle
CDX RN
WB Cascadian's Touch The Sky AX OAJ
RWB Ridgewyn Vintage

Coming Events

Conformation & Obedience

September 1-2, 2007

Longview-Kelso Kennel Club, Inc.
St Helens, OR

Saturday: Elliott B. Weiss

Sunday: James R. White

September 6-9, 2007

Emerald Classic Cluster
Eugene, OR

Approved

Thursday: Keke Kahn

Friday: Norman L. Patton

Saturday: Kelly L. Photopoulos

Sunday: Nancy S. Cowley

September 15-16, 2007

Wenatchee Kennel Club
Wenatchee, WA

Saturday: Robert Stein

Sunday: Jerry M. Watson

September 22-23, 2007

Gig Harbor Kennel Club
Shelton, WA

Saturday: Col. Joe B. Purkhiser

Sunday: Carole A. Beattie

September 29-30, 2007

Richland Kennel Club, Inc.
Kennewick, WA

Saturday: Robert D. Ennis

Sunday: Bernard Schwartz

September 29 - October 7, 2007

ESSFTA National Specialty
Lexington, KY

October 11-14, 2007

Treasure Valley Dog Shows
Boise, ID

Thursday: Dr. Steve Keating

Friday: Dorothy D. Nickles

Saturday: Stephanie S. Hedgepath

Sunday: George J. Heitzman

October 27-28, 2007

Vancouver Kennel Club
Ridgefield, WA

Saturday: Gloria Kerr

Sunday: Honey Anne Glendinning

November 10-11, 2007

Willamette Valley KC
Salem, OR

Saturday: Barbara J. Young-Smith

Sunday: Denise C. Reel

November 17-18, 2007

Whidbey Island KC
Monroe, WA

Saturday: Richard G. Beauchamp

Sunday: Debra L. Davis

December 8, 2007

Greater Clark County KC

Saturday: Carl Gene Liepmann

Sunday: Cindy Vogels

January 11-13, 2008

Western Washington Cluster
Puyallup, WA

Friday: William S. Geshwiler

Saturday: Libby O'Donnell Naimo

Sunday: Sandra Olsen

January 18-21, 2008

Rose City Classic
Portland, OR

Friday: William R. Russell

Saturday: Desmond J. Murphy

Sunday: Bud DiDonato

Monday: Dolores H. Maltz

AKC Agility

August 31-September 2, 2007

Hood River, OR
Central Point, OR
Auburn, WA

September 7-9, 2007

Bremerton, WA

September 15-16, 2007

Oak Harbor, WA
Albany, OR

September 17, 2007

Snohomish, WA
Albany, OR

September 21-23, 2007

Monroe, WA
Ridgefield, WA

September 28-30, 2007

Prineville, OR

Sequim, WA

Pocatello, ID

September 30 - October 1, 2007

Lexington, KY

October 6-7, 2007

Auburn, WA

October 12-14, 2007

Boise, ID

Wenatchee, WA

October 19-21, 2007

Union Gap, WA

October 26-28, 2007

Olympia, WA

Rigby, ID

Central Point, OR

November 3-4, 2007

Auburn, WA

November 10-12, 2007

Auburn, WA

November 17-18, 2007

Ridgefield, WA

November 23-25, 2007

Olympia, WA

December 8-9, 2007

Elma, WA

December 29-31, 2007

Elma, WA

January 5-6, 2008

Ridgefield, WA

January 11-12, 2008

Puyallup, WA

January 20-21, 2008

Portland, OR

Coming Events Con'td

Tracking

September 9, 2007

Fall City, WA
TD, TDX

October 7, 2007

Lexington, KY
TD, TDX, VST

October 14, 2007

Cottage Grove, OR
Spokane, WA
Bow, WA (TD)
TDX

October 28, 2007

Sprague, WA
Bow, WA (TD)
TDX

November 11, 2007

Bow, WA
St. Paul, OR
TD, TDX

November 18, 2007

Rickreall, OR
TD

December 9, 2007

Yelm, WA
TDX

December 16, 2007

Eugene, OR
VST

Hunt Tests

September 1, 2007

Rochester, WA

September 3, 2007

Rochester, WA

September 8-9, 2007

Boise, ID

September 29, 2007

Sadieville, KY

Field Trials

October 13, 2007

Rochester, WA

November 3, 2007

Ft. Lewis, WA

December 3, 2007

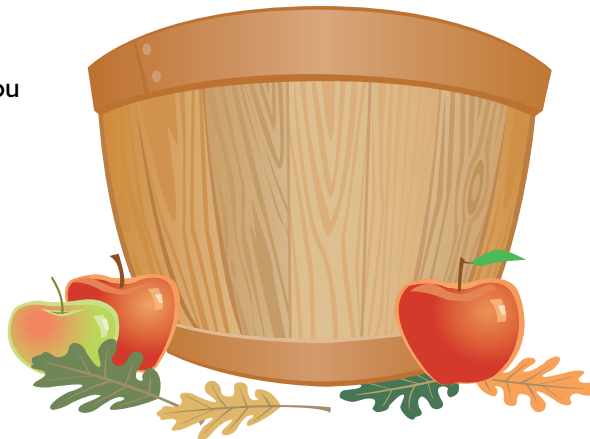
Mansfield, WA

Help Needed with National Basket

The National Specialty is fast approaching and we need items for the Silent Auction Club Basket. The silent auction helps support ESSFTA's sponsorship of the National Specialty.

The basket should have items that represent Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. The items can also be Springer and/or Dog related. In the past our baskets have done very well, let's make this years another outstanding basket!

Please contact Sharon Stewart if you would like ideas on items to include. Bring your items to the September meeting.



2008 Calendars are Here!

Get your calendar now. Featuring the wonderful dogs of WVESSA. You can preview the calendar on the website: <http://www.wvessa.org/calendarstore.html>



Dog Bytes is bi-monthly newsletter published by the Willamette Valley English Springer Spaniel Association.

Any questions, comments, or article submissions can be forwarded to the editor. The editor reserves the right to edit or to refuse any copy.

Kelly J. Callahan, Editor
5305 NE 70th Circle
Vancouver, WA 98661
(360) 834-8005
callahankj@earthlink.net

Kelly J. Callahan, Editor
5305 NE 70th Circle
Vancouver, WA 98661

2006 Officers

Marsha Caldwell, President

1150 South End Rd.
Oregon City, OR 97045
(503) 557-8206
marcur@teleport.com

Ken English, Vice President

19500 NE 17th Ct.
Ridgefield, WA 98642
(360) 887-8139 • toupy@aol.com

Cathy English, Corresponding Sec.

19500 NE 17th Ct.
Ridgefield, WA 98642
(360) 887-8139 • Englishkc@aol.com

Janeé Kemp, Recording Secretary

33730 S.E. Francis St.
Gresham, OR 97080
(503) 663-1335 • dj Kemp@teleport.com

Carol Callahan, Treasurer

5310 S. Bates Rd
Spokane Valley WA 99206
(509) 927-5917 • donahan@aol.com

Board of Directors

Includes all officers plus:

Susan Crane

(503) 244-1464
SGCCCPA@aol.com

Carol Jansen

(503) 581-1826
cajansen1@comcast.net

Dave Kemp

(503) 663-1335
dj Kemp@teleport.com

Debbie Kirsh

(503) 787-8194
debjeffkirsch@hotmail.com

Melissa Ratzlaff

(541) 620-9810
melissa.ratzlaff@att.net