

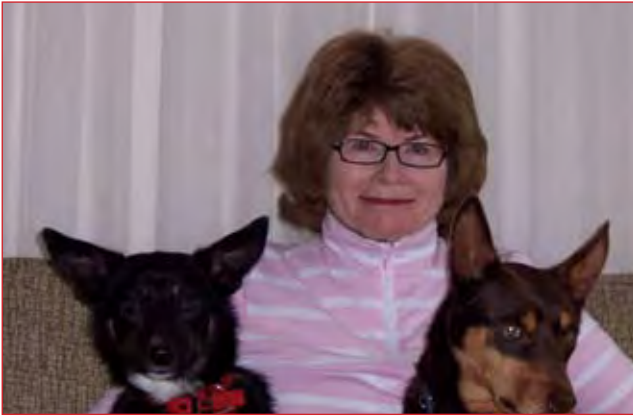


Belconnen Dog Obedience Club Inc.





A Note from the President



Hi fellow dog lovers, and welcome to our new members who started in Session 5.

Following our AGM in August we have a reduced committee who are busy ensuring that our Club continues to function. A list of the new committee is included in this Newsletter.

We are still desperately short of a Secretary for our office work, particularly in the area of processing new memberships in the office. If you can offer some support (or know someone who might be interested) please get in contact with me at 6241 3070 or bbrown@webone.com.au.

Following the inclusion of the articles on taking your dogs on holidays, I have had many enquiries regarding finding places to walk your dog while traveling.

There are some good books, and I find a useful website, (particularly if you are going to be in Sydney or Melbourne) is www.whereis.com which is a mapping website. With their partner 4Legs, they have included a wonderful service for us dog lovers, providing information about local parks. Just select 'park' in the search facility of Whereis.com and then choose a locality. You may be surprised at how many places you can take your dog, both on and off-leash. Parks friendly to dogs are shown

as a paw print on the right. If you click on the 4Legs marker on that particular park, full details regarding dog use of that park are provided. If only all parks of all Aussie towns were included!

For those folk who live in the suburbs surrounding Hall, the Hall vet website www.hallvet.com.au has a great series of maps showing where you can exercise your dog. These maps are much easier to access than TAMS.

And, of course, if your dog doesn't come back to you when called – particularly if there are distractions, don't tempt fate with off-leash exercise unless the area is fenced. Stick to on-lead exercise.

Our Canine Companion Syllabus was implemented for the start of Session 4. I have had many positive comments from members who have enjoyed learning some of the new behaviours that are now included in the syllabus.

At the Session 4 Assessment Days, the first Beginners, Bronze and Silver certificates were presented to members who completed the requirements of these levels.

Remember, there is only one Assessment Day at the end of Session 5 and this year, it is on Thursday 28 November 2009, commencing at 7.00pm.

This will be the final Club day for 2009 until classes commence on the 28th and 31st January 2010. please see the BDOC website for details of class times.

Happy dog training,
Barbara Brown
President

bbrown@webone.com.au

BDOC Committee 2009-10 President and Acting Secretary

Barbara Brown

Vice-President

Elaine Temby

Treasurer

Maki Koyama

Assist Treasurer/Secretary

Ronnie Huriwai-Hawkes

Committee Members

Sally Berridge

Rhonda Cameron

Dean Gardiner

Ray Leckie

Carolyn Shrives

Lucy Williams

Office hours

Thursdays 7–9 pm

Sundays 9–11 am

Address

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Sandford Street Mitchell ACT

Contact details

Phone

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Email

bdoc@bdoc.asn.au

Website

www.bdoc.asn.au

Parking

Please note that parking in front of the club house is for **instructors and committee members only**. Please join us in parking there – just become an instructor or a committee member!



Please note Session 5 Assessment Day – Thursday 26 November

The final Assessment day for 2009 for both Thursday night and Sunday morning classes is now Thursday 26 November.

Assessments and Games will commence at 7.00pm

The annual Club awards (including the Best Junior Handler, Best Lady Handler, Best Gentleman Handler awards) and awards for excellence in obedience, agility, and flyball will also be presented.

A free sausage sizzle will be provided by the Club.

Please put this date in your diary now. This is the final Club day for 2009.

Training will commence on Thursday 28 and Sunday 31 January, 2010.

Training times Session 5

Obedience

Thursdays:

Beginners and Silver at 7 pm

Bronze and Gold at 8 pm

Sundays:

Beginners and Silver (Levels 1 and 3) at 9 am

Bronze and Gold (Levels 2 and 4) at 10 am

Agility

Mondays and Wednesdays only 6.30–8.30 pm

Flyball

Tuesdays 6.15–7.15 pm Beginners (Baby Bullets)

7.15–8.15 pm Bullet squad members

BDOC Canine Companion Syllabus

Our basic training is called the BDOC Canine Companion Syllabus and it commenced in Session 4 2009.

The names of the training levels are:

- Beginners Level (for both puppies and adult dogs - dogs are separated in Beginners classes according to their age)
- Bronze Level
- Silver Level
- Gold Level

A Members Handbook is available for all members which contains information about our Club, about our training methods and training terms, an explanation of the behaviours you will be taught at each level, and information about the other dog sports taught at BDOC – Competitive Obedience, Agility and Flyball.

Some new behaviours are included in each level of the syllabus, behaviours which are fun to learn and useful in living harmoniously with your canine companion.

Please remember to pick up a copy of the Members Handbook before or after your first class.



The BDOC Member of the Year – The Cappy Award 2009

Shirley Stewart was awarded the Cappy Award for 2009 at the recent BDOC AGM. This prestigious award is awarded to a most valuable club member who is not on the committee.

Shirley is one of our unsung heroes. She is an instructor who regularly takes classes (and loves puppies). She was a member of the syllabus sub-committee that developed the new Canine Companion Syllabus and Members Handbook. This year she has also been seen cleaning the club, including the toilets and kitchen, dusting and vacuuming the clubhouse, cleaning out the storeroom, pulling out weeds and picking up dog poo, helping out at the working bee, and arranging for the new certificates to be printed.

Shirley is most worthy of this award.

2009 Cappy Award recipient Shirley Stewart (right), is presented with her award by Suzanne van Strien (left), who received the 2008 Cappy Award.



History is made!

The first teams for the new syllabus are assessed.

This was the first assessment for teams training at the new Silver Level.

Thursday evening group

On the evening of Thursday 24 September, judge Patricia Looker assessed eight teams.

Gaining their Silver Certificate were: Scott White and Nahla; Karen Strauss and Piper; and Barbara Brown and Dazzle.

Receiving their Encouragement Certificate for working towards gaining the Silver Certificate were: Bas Gintings and Punky Beau; Lyn Boyer and Rob Roy; Andrew Craig and Indie; Claire Scarlett and Kirra; and Andy McClure and Moss.

Sunday morning group

The morning of Sunday 27 September was the coldest recorded September day for 30 years.

With Bear Paintain judging, five teams braved the fierce weather for the Silver Assessment. At the conclusion of the judging, the fingers of Judge Bear Paintain were almost too cold to write up the certificates!

Gaining their Silver Certificate were: Paul Peters and Amigo; and Pam McDougall and Josie.

Receiving their Encouragement Certificate for working towards gaining the Silver Certificate were: Meryl Causebrook and Sandy; Caroline Pappas and Deska; and Iris Carter and Pogo.



From the left, Judge Bear Paintain, Iris Carter and Pogo, Caroline Pappas & Deska, Meryl Causebrook and Sandy, Pam McDougall, Paul Peters.

Congratulations to all these teams who have spent time training and playing with their dogs to achieve these certificates.

The photo shows the Sunday teams with their ribbons and certificates.



Thank you to Jan Horley

Jan Horley stood down as secretary of BDOC at the AGM in August. Jan has been Secretary for the past three years – a marathon effort for which we all extremely grateful. Jan gave many hours of her own time to make sure that the Club ran smoothly, and that all those intakes (five every year) were suitably organised.

Most people would have come in contact with Jan – either as a friendly face around the Club, on the phone, at the front desk, or by email as she patiently answered your questions by email, or as a fellow dog trainer on the grounds.

Thank you Jan for all your hard work, and we wish you every success in your next endeavour.

Thank you to our instructors



A basket of flowers and a big thank you to all these BDOC instructors for giving up their time to take classes in Sessions 4 and 5.

Jay Arthur, Cliff Brock, Sharon Brookes, Barbara Brown, Cassie Butterworth, Jill Campain, Lyn Clyde, Meryl Causebrook, Jenny Drake, Sally Druhan, Charlie Giles, Ange Gintings, Angela Hagedorn, Lesley Hayes, Lesley Hopkinson, Deidre Johnson, Sandra Johnston, Jane Keogh, Ivana Leonard, Hannah Leslie, Anne Lewis, Patricia Looker, Pam McDougall, Poppy McLean, Pauline Murphy, Karl Newport, Bear Paintain, Julie Rebbeck, Werner Roth, Shirley Stewart, Suzanne van Strien, June Su, Joycelyn Taylor, Dai Thomas, Elaine Temby, Lucy Williams.

Position vacant

BDOC is looking for a casual office assistant.

Duties include manning the office, answering queries about membership and class times, processing memberships and entering details into the club database, general office work including filing and receipts. Hours are varied but include 2-3 hours on the Sundays mornings and Thursday evenings when the club is open, plus some additional hours during the week which will be flexible in number and time depending on work load. The Club is closed through December and January but some hours (day or evening) will be required to process memberships and class lists through these months.

If you are interested, please contact Barbara Brown at bbrown@webone.



2009 was another successful year for the Belconnen Bullets. The club competed in numerous Australian Flyball Association sanctioned competitions and dog demonstrations that helped raise the profile of flyball throughout Canberra and NSW. Two Bullet teams—the Speeding Bullets and the Rusty Bullets—competed in the National Australian Championships held this year at the Castle Hill Showground in Sydney on 17 and 18 October.

The Speeding Bullets were placed 4th in the Fifth Division and the Rusty Bullets were fourth in the Eighth Division. Both dogs and handlers spent the two days competing and enjoyed the camaraderie that is shared by all participants at the championships.

Speeding Bullets

Maddie, Zeke, Shoga, Bonnie and Panda.

Rusty Bullets

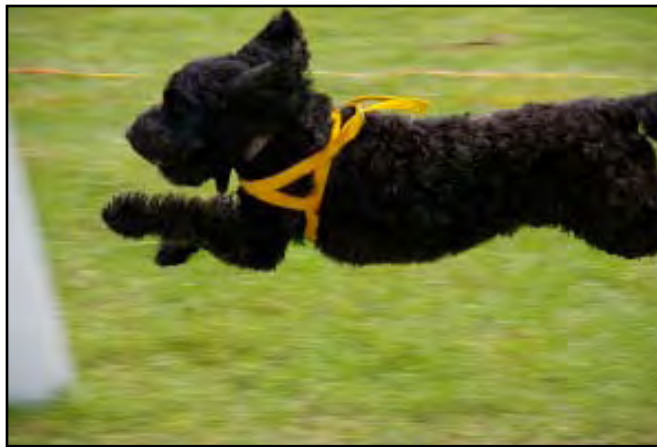
Jezzabel, Woolly, Chilli, Ernie, Max and Damsel.

Baby Bullets

Several Baby Bullets (dogs in training) are approaching the end of their initial skill and training phase and are nearly ready to join the ranks of the senior dogs and commence their next education phase. They will soon be joining the squad dogs at training to enable them to expand their relationships and eventually become part of a Bullets competing team. All these dogs and owners will be a welcome addition and will assist in providing a greater diversity to the range of dogs that currently represent the Bullets.

In memory of SHADOW
a member of the Bullets family

Below is an excerpt from the Australian Flyball Championships ‘dogalogue’.



Sadly, a dog entered in this year’s Nationals will not be playing flyball with us. Shadow, a height dog for the Belconnen Bullets, was tragically killed in an accident two weeks before the Nationals.

The competition organisers felt Shadow should still be included in the ‘dogalogue’, and we hope to see her mum and dad, Cassie and Nathaniel back in the flyball ring soon.

Shadow, Cassie and Nathaniel became part of team Bullet in October 2007 and quickly embedded themselves within the Bullets family.

Jumping at 9”, Shadow became a vital member of the Speeding Bullets and was always strongly focused on getting the ball and bringing it back.

Beyond flyball, as one of BDOC’s Obedience Instructors, Cassie has consistently been a great advocate for flyball and more specifically the Bullets and the significant benefits we all gain from being more active with our dogs. For his part, Nathaniel was always prepared to help the timing table, and became a regular fixture on the desk at recent Canberra competitions. With Shadow, Cassie and Nathaniel brought great support and humour to our team that we will all sorely miss.

We all keenly await Cassie and Nathaniel’s return.

Competition update

The Bullets have had an extremely busy year to date, with teams travelling to competitions far and wide.

Boorowa Irish Woolfest

On the 4th October 2009, two teams of Bullets travelled out to Boorowa for the K9 Crusaders annual competition as part of the Boorowa Irish Woolfest.

On arrival, the team learnt of

the untimely death of Shadow the night before. With that news fresh to hand, both teams made a commitment to run for Shadow. Despite both teams running in a combined division format, they both managed to get the wins when they were needed most, with both teams coming home division winners for the day.

The team was also able to celebrate with Carolyn and Tully (below), who in their first competition were able to come away with two clean runs and are now just one point away from their first flyball title.



Tully also strutted her stuff in the dress-up at Boorowa.

Division 2 Winners

Speeding Bullets – Zeke, Maddie, Shoga, Bonnie, Sheppa and Tully.

Division 4 Winners

Rusty Bullets – Woolly, Chilli, Ernie, Jezzabel, Panda and Damsel.

Kioloa Surf'n'Turf

The 5th September saw X-Factor host their annual flyball competition at the coast. In what is always a good excuse to get away for the weekend,



L to R Rhonda Cameron with Zeke & Jezzabel, Michelle Gilbey with Woolley, Carolyn Shrives with Ernie, Max Darvill and Maddie, Leigh Cameron and Max.

two Bullets teams trekked down the mountain for a weekend of relaxation and flyball fun.

Taking advantage of the opportunity to test out the running order for the teams heading to Nationals, the Speeding Bullets, competing in Division 3, came close to setting a new club record with a best time of 21.484 seconds, and finishing the day in third spot in their division.

Racing in a different format, the winner of Division 6 was determined through an elimination format. Despite having an average win/loss record through the round robin, the Rusty Bullets were able to make it count it when it mattered most through the elimination rounds, winning their Division and adding another trophy to the BDOC trophy cabinet.

Speeding Bullets – Maddie, Shoga, Zeke, Bonnie, Shadow and Sheppa.

Rusty Bullets – Woolly, Chilli, Ernie, Jezzabel, Panda and Damsel.

Albury – Border Challenge Cup

On the 25th July 2009, the Bullets made the annual trip across the Border for the Albury Border Challenge. Racing in a combined division format, the Chocolate Bullets raced against teams in both Division 4 and Division 5. The Bullets once again had an excellent day of racing, finishing second in their division on count back, being narrowly beaten by the home team, Advance Flyball Dogs 4.

The day was also capped off by widespread success in the host club's raffle where everyone in the team managed to win a prize. The team consisted of Maddie, Panda, Damsel, Sprockette, Ernie and Shadow.

Dapto – Flyball Goes to School

On the 11th July 2009, a small group of Bullets travelled to Dapto for the Flyball Goes to School competition. This was the first time the Bullets had taken a team down Macquarie Pass, and after a very early start, the Chocolate Bullets had an admirable day of racing, having moved up to a faster division. Despite getting faster as the day progressed, the Bullets



finished in fourth place with a fastest time of 24.936. The team consisted of Zeke, Sprockette, Woolly, Ernie and the ever-reliable Jezzabel.

Southerly Muster – Sutherland

On the 8th August 2009 the Bullets travelled to Sutherland with some team members and dogs opting to stay overnight in Sydney for the 7.30am start on Saturday.

The Chocolate Bullets not only won Division 5 with a best time of 23.397 but also managed to take back to Canberra the much coveted Rabbitt Trophy which is award annually to the team that has the highest percentage of “clean” runs against the number of heats run. The Bullets took the trophy with 95% clean runs for the tournament. The team consisted of Zeke, Woolly, Ernie, Max and Maddie, with Jezzabel as back-up dog.



Michelle and Woolley, the Rusty Bullets lead dog, in action at the Australian National Championships

Have you changed your email address?

If you want to receive Club notices about class times and session times, ground closures etc, please make sure we have your correct email address.

If you have changed your email address, please email the Club or drop into the office and let us know your correct address. Perhaps we were unable to read it correctly from your application form so that it was entered incorrectly?

The following emails were not deliverable and have been deleted from the Club’s records. Is yours one of these?

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>jlthom@iinet.net.au</i> | <i>davos-s6@hotmail.com</i> | <i>cocbox@bigpond.com</i> |
| <i>arnit.barkay@zenithineriors.com.au</i> | <i>critters366@optusnet.com.au</i> | <i>pajarob@bigpond.com</i> |
| <i>vching@lrt.org.au</i> | <i>zorro@webone.com.au</i> | <i>pokojo@bigpond.com</i> |
| <i>natalie.winslade@calvary.act.com.au</i> | <i>moragr@homemail.com.au</i> | <i>gcgolta@tpg.com.au</i> |
| <i>reneet@webone.com.au</i> | <i>had_6_82@hotmail.com</i> | <i>elisshs@tpg.com.au</i> |
| <i>diaathome@iimetro.com.au</i> | <i>2monty@optusnet.com.au</i> | <i>scothewins@hotmail.com</i> |
| <i>etloami@bigpond.com.au</i> | <i>cateturnbull@netspeed.net.au</i> | <i>vinay.khadabadi@hotmail.com</i> |
| <i>jlthom@iinet.net.au</i> | <i>carp@alphalink.com.au</i> | <i>hotpies5@grapevine.com.au</i> |
| <i>asmoncur@bigpond.net.au</i> | <i>julie_cd@tpa.com.au</i> | |
| <i>deb.blakie@bigpond.net.au</i> | <i>alanna.hallah@three.com.au</i> | |
| <i>whteedjbm@optusnet.com.au</i> | <i>optusux@hotmail.com</i> | |
| <i>tory.nat6@bigpond.com</i> | <i>gl3turner@hotmail.com</i> | |

News from the energetic agility people

Lucy Williams

Agility Sub Committee Coordinator

Two agility trials, one run by the ACTCA and the other by BDOC, were held over two days on the long weekend in October at the BDOC grounds. We had two interstate judges, one from sunny Queensland, Tim Fairchild, and the other from Sydney, Brian Hillier.

Both trials went well, with around 250-280 runs each day, despite the inclement weather.

Sunday proved to be interesting... a lot of folks forgot that daylight saving started that morning! However, the food van proved to be a great asset, keeping everyone warm with baked potatoes and hot chips, not to mention great cappuccinos.

Some of the people who had volunteered to be stewards had little or no experience with agility trials; they deserved a special vote of thanks for a great effort! I won't name all those who assisted, because I know I'd forget someone, and goodness knows there were so many people that offered a hand over both days. Thank you all!

A very special thank you must also go to Pam McDougall who wrote out most of the qualifying cards on Sunday, what a massive job that was! The trial would have not run as smoothly as it did without her hard work in the clubhouse and indeed on the field, and we all appreciated her effort. Jenny Drake also did a fine job on the trial catalogue! Also a thank you must go to Dean for arranging mowing and also doing the preparation of the grounds. Many of the visitors from Sydney were very surprised to find such reasonable looking rings! Thank you also to Charlie for assisting us prior to the day with check lists and reminders of "to dos".

Another agility trial (judged by Terry Griffin) was also held on our grounds last Monday evening, (19th Oct); our biggest ribbon trial entry so far, with approximately 78 runs! We had quite a few visitors from other clubs and interstaters too. A couple of people from our pre trailing class tried their hand at their first jumping trial, the first of many, no doubt. (One of those was your editor: my very first disqualification!)

Many thanks also to Charlie Giles for acting as Trial Manager and for bringing the nice weather back with him!



For sale

1. 48 inch (120Lx75Wx85H), black wire collapsible crate, very good condition (\$150)
 2. Ferplast blue plastic dog basket, 80x50cm, very good condition (\$40)
- Contact bethcharles10@gmail.com or 0422 236 556.

Also

Medium-sized plastic crate, suitable for air line travel. Excellent condition. \$100 or near offer.

Contact sallymb@home.com.au or 6241 7001.



So why do you put a collar and lead on your dog? If you have answered “so I can control him” then you need to read on! The correct answer is the same reason you put on your seatbelt in a car – to keep you safe. That’s it. There’s nothing more. The lead and collar are not handbrakes, steering wheels or handlebars or devices to allow you to vent your anger on ‘Mutley’.

From now on, look at the collar and leash only as a mechanism to keep Mutley safe while you train him and not as a tool either to get him to do something or to punish him. The best thing you can do with your lead (bearing safety in mind) is to clip it to your belt. Yup, forget it’s there. It’s just you and Mutley and that amazing relationship you want to develop.

It will take patience, good timing and consistency from you to teach Mutley to walk acceptably. Mostly it is us humans who have to put aside our preconceived ideas so we can learn to teach Mutley to walk nicely. It is your responsibility to be a good leader and a good teacher and not pull on Mutley, vent your anger, or get frustrated and give up.

If you’re thinking “but he needs to learn his place so I have to smack/pull/yell at him to let him know when he’s doing the wrong thing”, you are living in another century. Next time you see a killer whale jump through a hoop, ask yourself how much ‘punishment’ was dished out. Would you want to ‘smack’ a killer whale and then get in the water with him? We’ve come a long way in learning about animal behaviour and now know that getting what we want from

them is all about US – how well WE communicate what WE want and how WE reward that behaviour. If Mutley isn’t doing what you want, don’t look at him, look at yourself. What are you doing/not doing to make him get it wrong? Change your behaviour and you will have a high success of changing his!

The ultimate goal is that the relationship between you and Mutley will have him following your lead regardless of anything tying him to you – lead, food or that hidden tennis ball. Therefore, you need to be training exactly the same on lead as you would if Mutley was able to run free and regardless of the type of collar or other restraint on him.

It will take time for Mutley to learn that it’s his responsibility to walk nicely and not pull. Allowing him to find out by himself what will profit him (continued walk or treat) will ultimately work faster and be a better learnt behaviour than him waiting for you to ‘control’ him (tell him, push him, pull him – you know, all those things we humans love to do to get our own way!).

And Mutley will learn much faster if he isn’t stressed by an angry/frustrated/impatient YOU at the other end of his lead. Why would he want to walk with you if you are always ‘on his case’? How much do you want to go to work if you know a ranting, raving boss will be waiting for you? Now imagine going to work for a boss who both challenges you and rewards you appropriately ... how would your behaviour change?

Remember that if Mutley were

smart, he would be making you poached eggs with hollandaise sauce for breakfast, not learning to walk on a loose lead, so start treating him like the smart, willing dog he is rather than a disobedient child.

So from now on (yes, from now) you are going to do only two things when you walk (no arguments please!): reward Mutley for behaviour you like (walking without pulling) or STOP when he does pull. If you haven’t coordinated the whole mark and toss-a-treat thing yet, the STOP works remarkably well with walking because the reward is to go forward again.

The STOP is reliable in exciting situations (i.e, the dog park) where food rewards (yep, even bacon) might not cut it. It also works very well with longer or extendable leads where the mark and treat becomes difficult simply because of the time lag or that they can’t hear you.

So Mutley’s pulled and you’ve stopped. So shut up. Yes. You heard me. He knows his name quite well and doesn’t need to hear it from you while he’s focussed on that tree over there. And unless you want ‘come’ ‘here boy’ or any other number of words to instead mean ‘stand at end of lead and pull’, you can ditch those as well. Pretty much anything you say will just be ‘white noise’. A bit like when you’re watching your favourite TV program – you either don’t hear ‘noise’ or it’s just plain annoying and you wish it would go away. Or maybe that’s just me?

So STOP, stand and shut up. And WATCH. That is all you need to do until Mutley makes a



decision. Yes, a decision. On his own.

His first might be “Me pull harder to get to tree”. YOU do NOTHING. STAND. STAY. Good person.

Another decision? “Me sniff”. He will get bored of this within a few minutes (long or floppy leads a little longer). You can do some stretches at this point as long as you don’t move. A little stretch will also loosen you up – relax, and smile.

“Me can’t go forward, me sit”. More stretching.

“What this thing on me neck and behind me? Me go look”. And bingo! Maybe just a look, or maybe a step towards you.

What are you doing still standing there – MOVE. Good person! Walking forward is the reward – for both of you!

That’s all there is to it – BUT (you knew there was a but didn’t you..) it is EACH and EVERY time he pulls, not sometimes, not when he’s pulling hard.

ALWAYS.

So why not mark and treat when he looks / heads back to you. The answer is in timing. If you mark you HAVE TO treat. No if’s, but’s or maybe’s. With walking, by the time you have said or used the marker and got the treat out, Mutley has probably pulled again and then you’re stuck treating at a bad point. Therefore it’s best to just use the moving forward as the reward. So just don’t mark. However, this is when you can use your ‘good boy’ or other nice words while the lead is loose and you are walking. Just not the marker.

You really don’t need any words for walking without pulling - Mutley will work it out. The less you interfere, the faster that will be. Some sessions/days will be hard going so don’t be on a time limit. If you are – go back and forth over a couple of hundred metres so you can get back on time. Remember that you can

NEVER let him pull from now on. Yes – I see you let your dog pull you all the way from the car park to your class – get there a little earlier and use this as a lesson as well. Hopefully one Sunday morning will be like watching musical statues.... Mutley can learn his lesson – can you learn yours?

Ask anyone with a dog that works well both off lead and on and I can pretty well guarantee that they went through the same ‘learning to walk’ frustrations. You certainly get better with practice and it has little to do with the dog and everything to do with how well you learn timing (pull=stop, loose=go), consistency (not sometimes, every time) and patience (smile, look at the sunshine and birds and enjoy the experience).

What was that again, ah, yes, SMILE!

Forgot your mat, again? Tsk, Tsk!

Don’t want that nasty instructor to make you put your nice jacket on the grass?

Keep a spare mat or towel in the car for your session or grab your car foot mat!

A cheap bath mat is a great choice too as it’s rubber backed, easy to roll up, light to carry and won’t blow away.

Your dog will thank you in the end.



Training Assistance Dogs

Che Forest of A.W.A.R.E. Dogs talks to the public seminar audience

Maki Koyama

On Friday, 4 September, a small but enthusiastic crowd gathered for a special occasion. This was the second public seminar BDOC has held as an Adult Learners' Week event, and this year we were fortunate to welcome Che Forest of A.W.A.R.E. Dogs, from Kuranda, near Cairns, to talk to the audience.

Before starting, Che asked the audience to rearrange the chairs to form a smaller circle. He and his assistance dog, Knuckles, sat as part of the circle, creating a close and intimate atmosphere. Yes, Che is an assistance dog trainer but also he is a person with disability himself, and is entitled to travel with his assistance dog. From this, he has first-hand experience on what a life with disability and assistance dog can be like, and this gives his organisation an edge as an advocate for people with assistance dogs and their public-access rights.

Che explains that there are many people with disability who cannot have assistance dogs from major providers for various reasons: either they may be too disabled or not enough, they may have more than one disability, etc., etc., and A.W.A.R.E. Dogs' mission is to let those people have assistance dogs who otherwise would not have been able to receive them.

With some assistance dog provider organisations, you are not allowed to have any dog other than the dog they provide. Under such requirement, a disabled



person who has an existing pet dog would have to get rid of the pet dog in order to receive the dog from the organisation. A.W.A.R.E. Dogs' approach to such cases would be to assist the dog owner to train his/her own dog to assist him/her.

Che recognises that dogs' aptitude for assisting the disabled vary, as is the case that some people have certain skills and not others. But he says most dogs can be trained to assist to a certain level. Several Canberrans have signed up to attend his sessions and he is planning to return to Canberra sometime in November this year.

The talk was interactive, and we were able to hear the experience of one of our club members, whose dog, without any specific training, is already assisting her daughter with epilepsy. Questions and answers occurred concurrently and the allocated one hour disappeared quickly, so the talk went on for further half an hour. The participants then gathered and socialised over a light Turkish supper. Knuckles had a share of Turkish pide as well!



Che Forest and his assistance dog Knuckles

A quality of an assistance dog is to remain close to the handler quietly for any length of time, even on the handler's lap!

Che is aiming to have A.W.A.R.E. Dogs' branch in every capital city and Canberra is getting close to having one. BDOC is yet to establish formal partnership with A.W.A.R.E. Dogs but is willing to continue talking with Che about the way in which we can facilitate his work in ACT. An example of such collaboration is to organise training session on our grounds. If you are BDOC Club member and interested in A.W.A.R.E. Dogs' activities in the ACT, please contact us and we will do our best to facilitate the training of assistance dogs.

On our way to the airport the next day, Che said we all should have a mental picture of our dog's success and believe in it 100%. If not, we are breaking the mutual trust and will send out the wrong message to the dog leaving him confused. Food for thought for all dog owners.





CAN YOU READ THE BODY LANGUAGE OF THESE DOGS

give me space

Having your dog tied up or even on lead restricts its ability to react naturally to dogs (or people) that approach. They can't run or hide if they are frightened or anxious. This can lead to dogs becoming nervous or even aggressive around other dogs.

Here are some suggestions to help limit problems and help make sure that your dog enjoys coming to school.

- ▶ Avoid letting your dog approach other dogs that are tied up.
- ▶ Avoid tying your dog up in 'high traffic' areas (like right outside the clubhouse doors), and limit the amount of time you leave your dog unattended.
- ▶ Before taking your dog up to 'say hello' to another dog, check with the dog's owner that it is okay to approach.

●●● **Learn how to recognise signs that your dog is stressed or over-excited.** If your dog starts to show these signs, **move them away from other dogs.** This gives them the space they need to feel comfortable, helps them relax and makes classes more fun for them and for you.

Wanted: Dog Buddy

I am looking for someone with compatible dogs who would like to go for a walk occasionally with me and my spaniels in Belconnen. Also we could do the occasional weekend swap. And sometimes I may need to go away for a few days with Red Cross Emergency Services, where I volunteer, and I would rather not put them in kennels. Anyone interested?

Contact Sally: sallymb@home.com.au

**Do not throw your cigarette butts away on our grounds
– this includes the carparks.**

Cigarette butts are toxic to dogs, especially small puppies.

As well as being unsightly and dangerous, they are unwanted rubbish that has to be cleaned up.



Place your butts in the bin where they belong.



COLLARS AND LEASHES

Angela Hagedorn, BDOC Instructor

There are many different types of collars available each with their own advantages and disadvantages which you need to consider in view of your dog and you as the trainer.

The first thing you need to do is consider the following questions:

How old is my dog? Puppies will grow fast and will need a couple of collars along the way. They are also delicate (yes, truly), so for puppies (up to 6 months) consider the 'Flat Collar' option.

Do I want to trial (i.e., do obedience or agility) with my dog? You won't be able to use a head collar or harness in the trial ring. While you can train using these, you're best to start with a soft collar and training methods that are going to create a 'team'. Our Silver and Gold classes are aimed at creating this 'invisible string' both on lead and off.

Is my dog's head to neck ratio similar? Look at the martingale to avoid the case of the disappearing fido!

How strong is my dog? Think plastic vs metal buckles and if you decide on a head collar always use a flat collar as well and clip to both collars for safety.

How strong am I? If your dog pulls or lunges and you often find yourself pulled off balance, dragged or constantly worried about what person/dog/object he'll get to next, consider a head collar or harness for extra assistance.

Am I going to leave my collar on my dog all day? Dogs get up to all sorts of things on their own and collars can get caught on fences, bushes or just about anything. Look at break away collars if this is your intention.

Am I going to need to tie my dog up in his collar? If you have decided on a head collar you need to know that you should NEVER tie your dog up by this or leave it on him unsupervised, so you will need a second collar.

Getting a picture here?

FLAT COLLARS



Flat collars are simply a strap fastened around the dog's neck and fastened with a buckle. This is the collar of choice for a puppy or young dog and most other 'average' dogs where you have the time to train them.

Things to think about (other than your favourite colour) are:

- Buckle type - metal vs plastic buckles – plastic quick releases are just that, quick, but not as strong as a metal buckle so look at how big / strong your dog is and if he is a boisterous puller and/or lunger where a lot of pressure may be put on the joint.
- Material – is your dog in the water a lot where plastic might be a better choice or a two dog family where they might chew on each other's collars?
- Rounded (rolled) leather are long wearing and often kinder to thick fur and likely to handle a little friendly necking a little better.

Puppies and large breed dogs will go through a number of collars as they grow and it's important to check each week that two fingers fit under the collar.

If you intend leaving your dog's collar on all day (so, for example, he has his identity tags) then you should look at a break away collar.

Here are two types of flat collars (there are many more). You can see that one would have pressure directly on the clasp while the other is offset by a simple overlap, making it much more secure.

BREAK-AWAY COLLARS

Most collars can be dangerous if left on a dog unsupervised as they can get caught on any number of things around the home and could result in the dog being strangled or injured. If you are looking for a 24/7 collar then the break away collar could be what you are looking for.

These collars are similar to the flat collar but have a special safety feature where the buckle will break away on a pull, such as if it becomes caught on something and your dog pulls away.

The leash is hooked through two loops, one on each side of the buckle, so you can walk your dog without the risk of the collar breaking away.

After 'breaking', the safety buckle can be snapped back together for continued use.

MARTINGALE COLLARS

The martingale or 'slip' collar is designed to fit fairly loosely around the dog's neck but tighten to a snug fit when pulled, thereby preventing him from slipping out of the collar. The difference between the martingale and slip collar and a 'choke' collar is that the martingale or slip will only tighten to a specific degree, enough to prevent the dog from being able to slip the collar, but without putting undue pressure on the neck or choking the dog.

If you have a dog with a smaller or similar head to neck ratio such as the greyhound, or a breed with excessive/ thick neck fur, or you simply prefer a looser fit for your best friend, then this might well be the collar for you.

There are a couple of different options from a loop or chain connector to a single piece slip collar.

At their widest, these collars are generally able to slip over the dog's head, so another plus is that you don't have to mess around opening and closing buckles. Slip collars tend to sit a little looser and therefore can slip off once the lead is removed so an extra strap may be required for free running.

Similar to the flat collar, there is a risk of injury if left on unsupervised.

You can make your own 'emergency' slip collar and lead out of a length of rope (nylon works best) by tying a small loop in the end, feeding the rope back through to make a collar size loop, and tying a knot at the point where it would be snug on the dog – a great emergency lead to keep in the car!



Jemima (above) is modelling a martingale collar – these come in a variety of materials and widths (some at 2-3 inches).

Rosie (below) is sporting a slip collar (a little large as it belonged to her big sister German Shepherd, but models don't always get to choose...).

HEAD COLLARS

The head collar (i.e., the Halti or Gentle Leader) fastens around the back of the dog's head (but up near the ears rather than at the neck) as well as over the top of the muzzle.

When pressure is placed on the head collar by the dog pulling, his head is directed inwards to the lead and thereby towards the handler. Most dogs generally dislike both the pull and going forward with their head turned which is why they will stop or slow.

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Having the dog's head turned in towards you provides you with their attention and the opportunity to communicate, such as using the 'mark and reward' or simply praising the moment the pulling stops. You can also use the stop method, particularly if he has already slowed once or twice – take it to the next level and STOP!

Without the training to mark the correct behaviour, many dogs will simply learn to tolerate the head collar and learn to 'push through' the discomfort. You will also often notice that a dog taught only by a head collar without the correct training will pull the moment it comes off, so make sure you are using this as a training aid and not making it the trainer!

The pressure on the head collar should be that of only a few fingers – try holding the lead to the head collar with just your left thumb and forefinger - that's all the pressure you should ever need!

Any rough use of a head collar such as jerking the lead (by both the dog and handler) can cause considerable pain and neck injury so they require a very gentle touch – be aware of this if you have children handling the dog or your dog lunges! Similarly you should never tie your dog up to his head collar and you can't leave them on unsupervised, EVER.

Head collars are not super secure (just a take a look at the small plastic fasteners) and given you are likely using one for a strong dog they really need to be used in conjunction with a regular (flat) collar and for the lead to be attached to both. As mentioned above, hold the head collar lead with a very soft touch and have a firm (but loose lead) grip on the lead to the normal collar.

As the effect of these devices are generally 'disliked' by the dog they can be seen as a form of 'punishment' however mild and self inflicting it may be. Additionally, they can increase submissiveness in some dogs due to the pressure placed on the nose which is a dominating hold.

Take into account your dog's temperament – if his behaviour changes significantly while wearing the head collar (overly submissive, moping, not interactive or wanting to play with other dogs) even after a week of proper



'introduction' (and ensuring a correct fit and use), please speak to your instructor.

Your dog should be able to do practically all normal activities in a head collar, such as drinking or picking up objects, so if there are any problems, please check this out with your instructor.

Head collars don't work well with long leads or with retractable leads where there is always a degree of pressure.

As well as assisting with pulling, with the correct training head collars can also be effective in stopping lunging, jumping and sometimes barking. They can also curb aggressive or anxious behaviour but this could also be due to the handler being calmer simply by having more control and therefore not pulling or getting upset.

HARNESSES

There are two types of harness – the pressure (head collar but for the body/shoulders) style and the fixed harness. Both sit on the dog in a similar way and put the pressure on the dog's chest and shoulders rather than his neck and throat which makes them great for dogs with medical issues or who are overly submissive or bothered by a head collar.

Training with fixed harness is exactly the same as for a collar. While they don't lessen the ability for the dog to be trained, problems can arise if the dog is strong enough to pull the handler, thereby defeating the idea of learning by stopping. There is also the danger of being able to pull to other dogs and causing disruption in a class environment. A Chihuahua in a fixed harness won't be much of a problem but I can guarantee you a German Shepherd can pull most people where it wants to go!

The pressure style harness works in a similar way to the head collar by controlling the dog's shoulders and thereby his movement. While a pressure style harness may assist in training, control of a large or particularly unruly dog in a hyped up state should be considered. If possible (i.e., no medical issues) combine with a flat collar.

Just missed the Cup, but the fashion in the field choice is a lovely red harness. Just perfect for a little princess' day out.



A last note...

Whichever collar/s or harnesses you decide on (or are changing over to) you will need to introduce these slowly and in a positive way. As with everything, baby steps will provide for a happy dog and happy owner. Step one might be just showing it do the dog and mark and treat, then clip on and off, then clip on just on for dinner, then just a few minutes, then with a lead – all the while marking and treating until your dog faints with joy at the sight of his collar!

Talk to your instructors about your choice/s and when you've decided, look at all the different makes and models as each will have slightly different fittings, options, etc.

Ask the shop if they will change it if it's not right for you. Take Mutley to the fitting and get help from someone who knows what they are doing. Grab an instructor at the club or try the RSPCA. Make sure Mutley has had a walk and is as calm as he can be so you can fit a few collars without bodily injury. Ask questions

TIP: If Mutley is lunging at another dog and you can't just STOP and wait because he is too close, try moving to the side and pulling him that way (okay, this is the only time you can pull him because there is a safety risk). It's really hard to hold or pull a dog from behind but relatively easy to turn them towards you from the side.

You will often hear from doggy people that if you control the head you can control the body. Wouldn't you rather control the mind so you have not only the body but the heart as well?

BBQ free to a good home

A BBQ surplus to BDOC needs is available if you will take it away.

Contact Barbara Brown

bbrown@webone.com.au



Brief moments at BDOC

*We came to BDOC June 2009 to see if we could cope,
and cheerfully were advised by a quote whilst signing up,
“Beagles are like teenagers with headphones on !! Did you know?
Hard to train, why no, just this breed are in their own world.”*

*In August 09 Ronnie joined the BDOC committee to extend her support
Meeting a great team of dog people volunteers and instructors
Who impressed with their commitment, knowledge and generous zeal.*

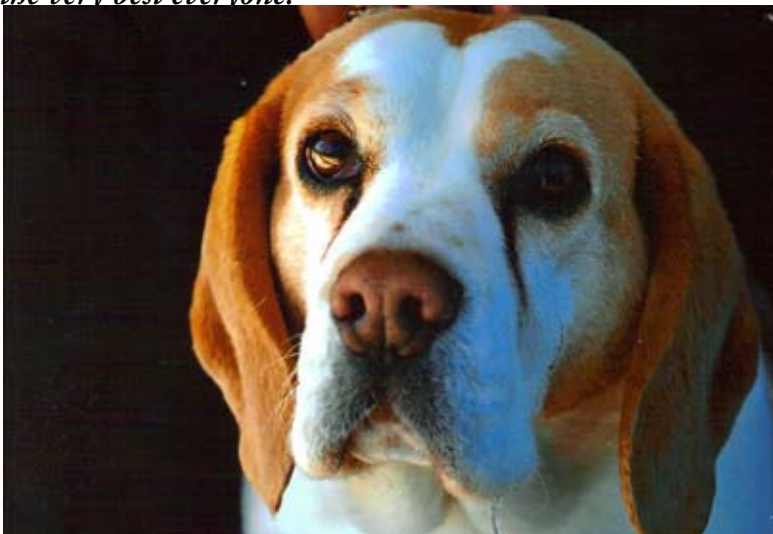
*Session 4 Beginners we joined Instructor Sharon’s group, loved the lures
Happy to work with treats, what? Cut back on these – nope not a good idea
Why? I am a Beagle for goodness sake, we live for food.*

*But as with life and its unpredictability
In Dec 09 we fly out of Canberra to Rotorua New Zealand
To live as temporary residents for two years, possibly longer.*

*With this sad attempt at prose we wish to thank everyone
Who patted and spoke with me, and guided Ronnie
Through the maze of BDOC committee work that keeps
This club vibrant and very very special.*

*Our thanks to Barbara, Lucy and all the members of the Committee, who work so hard
Thank you to all the Instructors and members
Who advised and encouraged us, over and over again.*

All the very best everyone.



Ronnie Huriwai-Hawkes and Harry Potter

(Photo of Harry taken by Hannah Leslie-O’Neill in September 09)

November 2009

Thanks, Ronnie for your work on the committee. We will miss you, and wish you and Harry all the best for your adventures in NZ.

A special word for Harry - focus in and watch out for geysers. They are not edible.



Red Alert – Seed Season is Here!

By Maki Koyama

It's that time of year again. Yes, the nightmare season for all dog owners. – Seeds! I don't have specific stats but every year we hear about our Club members paying hefty vet bills because of grass seeds. It should therefore be worth your while to take all precautionary measures to avoid as much as possible those seed hazards.

Seeds can harm dogs in a few different ways. They can penetrate dogs' skin and travel subcutaneously or lodge themselves in ear canals, causing irritation, serious inflammation and pain to the dog. Dogs often ingest them as well and they can get stuck in the throat, oesophagus, stomach or intestine.

Know your enemy

It's vitally important to be able to identify the plants whose seeds are hazardous to your dog. For instance, one of the most offensive plant species storksbill, or what we commonly call 'corkscrew weed', has often been talked about during our Club Management Committee meetings. I've been on the Committee for the past three years and have seen its corkscrew-shaped seed plucked out of a dog's coat, and yet I did not know exactly what the plant looked like until fairly recently. As we often discuss the issue as part of grass seed problem, the image of an oat-like thin-blade grass with massive seed clusters stuck to my mind (not to imply that this type of plants are any less harmful). After properly identifying the plant, I was horrified by the thought that I may have been steering my dog away from a lot less hazardous plants and drawing towards this more disastrous one, which, now I notice, is virtually EVERYWHERE. Arming yourself with knowledge is the first line of defence.

Storksbill (*Erodium* spp.)

More commonly known as "corkscrew weed" this is arguably the nastiest weed for dogs and the like in our neighbourhood. According to "Flowers of the ACT Region - A Field Guide" by Don and Betty Wood, there are two species, Long storksbill (*Erodium botrys*) and Common (or Redstem) storksbill (*Erodium cicutarium*). Differentiating between the two is unimportant, as they are similar in shape, out around spring to summer and probably equally dangerous. They belong to the geranium family and bear pink (majority) to blue (rare) small flowers in spring. The appearance of these flowers is somewhat deceptive and often reminds me of Gremlins in cute "Mogwai" form. Only it doesn't require you to feed them after midnight. Storksbill will form nasty spiky seed capsules when the time comes, and that's guaranteed!

Once mature, each seed capsule will produce five pointy seeds with spiralled tail. It can penetrate dogs' skin, literally drill into dog's body and move subcutaneously very quickly, sometimes up to dog's armpit in a matter of one day. If this happens, the seed can be removed only by surgery, a traumatic experience for the dog and the owner alike.

Despite the apparent damage the storksbill causes to livestock (see <http://tinyurl.com/weed-damage>), and the fact that they are not native to Australia, the species are not a declared noxious weed in ACT or nearby NSW. There is a reference (http://montana.plant-life.org/species/erod_cicu.htm) that suggests *E. cicutarium* is edible and has medicinal or other uses, although the benefits don't seem to outweigh the damage it does to dogs and their owners.

Native grasses and herbs

Being a member of Australian Native Plant Society–Canberra Region, I'm usually a fierce defender of local native flora. Even so, some species are not truly welcome around where I walk my dog. I would actively avoid walking through Kangaroo grass (*Themeda triandra*) (<http://tinyurl.com/Themeda-triandra>) and burr daisy (*Calotis sp.*). Kangaroo grass has thin, hard and pointy seeds and even though it doesn't have a drilling structure like the Storksbill, it can penetrate skin and cause injury or at least some pain and irritation.

Burr daisy, as the name suggests, produces burrs that attach themselves to any furry surface. It is particularly troublesome if you have a long-haired dog. I often have difficulty removing burrs from hairy grooves between digital pads of my Golden Retriever girl. This form of seed probably isn't as menacing as others mentioned here. However, this is dogs' equivalent to our walking with a small pebble in a shoe and that can't be a pleasant thing.



Summer is a hazardous season for dogs



Storksbill flowers in pink and blue.



Erodium cicutarium - red stem storksbill (Photo: Steve Hirst, provided by ARS Systematic Botany and Mycology Laboratory, MD, US.)



Flea comb (left) vs ordinary comb (right)

Checking and removing seeds

It's not just long-haired dogs like the Golden Retriever that need attention and regular check-ups. Long-haired or thick-coated dogs may pick up more seeds, but their skin is better protected by the thick coat. It's the short-haired dogs that need more caution as those piercing seeds would have easier access to the skin. It is therefore vital to check your dog's body, particularly paws, after a walk through grassy area. Start with the top side of the paw and in between the digits, as many seeds seem to lodge around here initially. Try feeling the grooves between digits with your fingertip without applying too much pressure. Seeds come in all shapes, colours and sizes and, depending on the colour of your dog's coat, it is often difficult to spot them by sight alone. If you are dexterity-challenged, a pair of tweezers, narrow but not too pointy at the tip, would come in very handy. If you've been with us from puppy class, this is where the "gentling-and-handling" exercise gets a reality check.



Storksbill plants

Most dogs are actually ticklish, particularly in the hind paws. If your dog is not co-operative in this paw examination, go back to kindergarten and start with small increments with lots of praise. Use a flea comb for the rest of the body.

Be careful, also, where you discard the removed seeds. Remember, these are seeds, which, come the next year, can germinate and infest your own backyard if mindlessly left on the lawn or compost heap.

Be vigilant

Even if you do examine your dog's paws and body often, there is no guarantee that your dog will not succumb to seed-related injury. Always pay attention to what your dog is doing, such as frequent shaking of head, excessive scratching, limping, licking, etc., etc. If there is any spot your dog refuses to be touched or visibly swollen take him/her to the vet a.s.a.p. Well, ok, so after all that effort to avoid seed hazard and you may still end up with big vet bill. But it's all about caring the furry member of your family after all and for that you can never be too careful, right?



Pointy grass seeds tend to be lodged at the top side of paw (left) while burrs are often found in between pads (right)



YOUR DOG NEEDS YOU!

**BDOC FUNDRAISER
ANNUAL TRIVIA NIGHT**

Come to a fun-filled evening of frivolity, trivia and entertainment and in the process support your dog club in purchasing much needed equipment.

WHERE: BELCONNEN LABOR CLUB

WHEN: Friday 19 February 2010

PRE-PAID TABLES OF 10 COST \$100.00
OR

\$12.00 A HEAD FOR PAYMENT ON THE NIGHT

To avoid disappointment book your table now
Email Rhonda Cameron at rhonda.cameron@home.com.au.