



DOBE CLUB NEWSLETTER

MARCH/APRIL 2005

Sheena provided these lovely sage words for the March newsletter:

IF A DOG WERE OUR TEACHER, WE WOULD LEARN THINGS LIKE:

- *When a loved one comes home, always run to greet them.*
- *Be loyal. Never pretend to be something that you are not.*
- *Avoid biting when a simple growl will do.*
- *Take naps and stretch before rising.*
- *When you're happy, dance around and wag your entire body.*

And MOST important of all:

- *When someone is having a bad day, be silent, sit close by and nuzzle them gently.*

INTRODUCTION

Hi all

I have recently returned from two weeks away in the Garden Route - Sedgefield to be exact. Not only is it always great to be away, relax and take time out, but I am fortunate enough to be able to take Sultan and Jamie with me, and what a joy it is to have them there. It is really special to spend quality time with my pooches. They love running on beach, fetching sticks, swimming in the sea and the vlei, digging up molehills, hunting for mice, meeting other dogs and generally having a ball. They travel really well and are generally well-behaved. I'm sure they also came home feeling relaxed!

Does anyone take their dogs on holiday with them? Share your experiences with us. How do you find travelling with you dogs, do you find accommodation easily, any special considerations we should know about, etc?

APOLOGIES!!!!

I must begin this newsletter with apologies for some errors and omissions in the first newsletter.

First, apologies to some of you whose names I spelt incorrectly. I know that this can be mildly to excruciatingly annoying. I know because both my name and surname are not exactly the easiest to spell correctly most of the time! So sorry to those who I re-named.

A **HUGE APOLOGY** for an important omission to our training classes information. Clearly the sea air turned my brain soggy. I did not include our **IPO & Schutzhund** classes that we offer at the Club.

IPO & SCHUTZHUND

The Dobe Club is rather special in that we are only one of three KUSA affiliated Clubs in Gauteng that offer regular IPO & Schutzhund training and one of the only Clubs in Gauteng regularly holding trials. We are also the only club to regularly have Dobses in training.

Our IPO & Schutzhund classes are held on **Monday and Wednesday evenings** at the Club. Please speak to **Hymie** (082 456 6705) or **Angela** (083 379 7913) if you are interested in attending these classes or would like more information.

Hymie informed me that Cara's Top Shelf (aka Topper) is currently campaigning in Italy. He has qualified Schutzhund 3 & IPO 3 (the highest IPO & Schutzhund level) and has just competed in Italy and qualified for the Italian World FCI team. He placed sixth in the Italian Trials. He is the first Dobermann to **ever** qualify for the team - a truly fantastic achievement.

Cara's Top Shelf is the son of Hymie's late imported Cara's Skeeter, American Champion, and qualified ZTP V1A, BH and Schutzhund 1. Faramir ZTP, is the sire of Hymie's champion dog, Bulka. Bulka, ZTP, is at present the only Dobe who will compete in the trials to take place at the club in late May (Top breed quality and working ability). She is the mother of Zin Zan, the excellent working male belonging to Rhona who also trains on Monday and Wednesday nights at the club. Just shows you the top quality dogs we have in this country!

We have held several IPO & Schutzhund demonstrations at the club, but for those of you for whom this sounds totally 'out-there', here is a little more on this very demanding discipline.

WHAT IS IPO & SCHUTZHUND? - PART 1

Schutzhund originated in Germany over 100 years ago. The German word, 'schutzhund' means 'protection dog'. It is Germany's second largest sport, after

soccer. IPO and Schutzhund are today run on identical rules. Schutzhund was originally intended for the German Shepherd Dog and governed by the SV (the GSD parent club in Germany). IPO was subsequently brought about by the FCI who wanted the other working breeds to have a similar test of their overall abilities.

IPO & Schutzhund consists of three parts, tracking, obedience and protection work. Dogs that compete in this sport therefore have to be extremely well-rounded and of course, exceptionally well-trained. It tests a dog's mental stability, endurance, structural efficiencies, ability to scent, willingness to work, courage and trainability.

The tracking phase begins with a temperament test by the overseeing judge to assure the dog's mental soundness. When approached closely on a loose leash, the dog should not act shyly or aggressively. The track is laid earlier by a person walking normally on a natural surface such as dirt or grass. The track includes a number of turns and a number of small, man-made objects left by this person on the track itself. At the end of a 30-foot leash, the handler follows the dog which is expected to scent the track and indicate the location of the objects, usually by lying down with it between its front paws. The tracking phase is intended to test the dog's trainability and ability to scent, as well as its mental and physical endurance.

The obedience phase includes a series of heeling exercises, some of which are closely in and around a group of people. During the heeling, there is a gun shot test to assure that the dog does not openly react to such sharp noises. There is also a series of field exercises in which the dog is commanded to sit, lie down, and stand while the handler continues to move. From these various positions, the dog is recalled to the handler. With dumbbells of various weights, the dog is required to retrieve a heavy dumbbell on a flat surface, over a one-meter hurdle, and over a six-foot high vertical A-frame. The dog is also asked to run approximately 50 meters in a straight direction away from its handler on command and lie down on a second command on an unmarked point as directed by the judge.

Finally, each dog is expected to stay in a lying down position off lead, for about 20 minutes, with the handler out of sight and far away, despite the distraction of another dog working close by on the obedience field, completing the above exercises. All of the obedience exercises are tests of the dog's temperament, structural efficiencies, and, very importantly, its willingness to serve under very difficult circumstances.

The protection phase tests the dog's courage, fighting spirit and will to fight with the decoy, its physical strength, and agility. The handler's control of the dog is absolutely essential. The exercises include a search of up to six "hides" or hiding places, finding a hidden person (acting as a "bad man" decoy), and guarding that decoy while the handler approaches. The dog is expected to pursue the decoy when an escape is attempted and to hold the grip firmly to prevent a further escape. The decoy is searched and transported to the judge with the handler and dog walking behind and later at the decoy's right side. When the decoy attempts to attack the dog or the handler, the dog is expected to stop the attack with a firm grip and no hesitation or command.

The final test of courage occurs when the decoy comes out of a hiding place at the opposite end of the trial field. The dog is sent after the decoy when he charges directly towards the handler shouting threats and waving his stick in a threatening manner.

All bites during the protection phase are expected to be firmly placed on the padded sleeve and stopped on command and/or when the decoy discontinues the fight. Judging the quality of the protection abilities of the dog are largely based on the fullness and strength of the dogs bite on the "sleeve". Judging is also based to a very large extent on the control the handler can exercise on the dog during the test whilst the dog is "high" in drive. The protection tests are intended to assure that the dog is neither a coward nor a dangerous menace.

Look out for more information on this sport and what it takes to be an IPO & Schutzhund dog in **Part 2** of the next newsletter.

CLUB NEWS

- Remember that classes resume on the **3rd of April**. If you don't know which class you should be attending this term, please call Maria on (011) 782-2719.
- There is a **Kindergarten/Prep 2** talk with Renee on the **3rd of April at 08h30**. There is **Baby Puppy/Prep 1** talk with Gordon on the **10th of April at 10h45**. These talks are invaluable in assisting with all aspects of dog ownership. Please speak to Maria if you have not yet attended one of these talks.
- Did you know that as of end February, the Dobe Club clubhouse - that's the building where you buy your brekkie, see Maria in the office, and listen to talks - is **21 years old!** This can be confirmed by viewing the commemorative

plaque on the wall facing you as you walk in to the clubhouse (just behind where the breakfast is prepared). Some Dobe Club history for you!

- A reminder that **videos** can be **hired** from the Club. There is a refundable deposit of R100.00 and hire costs R20.00 per week. Please enquire at the office if you are interested in hiring any of our fantastic videos.

SHOW NEWS

IPO & SCHUTZHUND CHAMPTIONSHIP SHOW - 27TH & 28TH May 2005

Obedience & Protection Venue	The Dobermann Club, Marks Park, Emmerentia	Obedience commences on Friday 27 th May @ 17h00
Tracking Venue	The Grass Farm, Witfield, Boksburg	Tracking commences on Saturday 28 th May @ 07h00

All eligible breeds welcome.

Please speak to Hymie should you require further information.

BIRCHACRES TRAINING SHOW

Birchacres will once again be holding an inter-club training show. Look out for further information in a forthcoming newsletter. Please speak to your instructor if you are interested in going to this or any other show.

TRAINING TIP: HOMEWORK

The word 'homework' probably makes anyone feel rather nauseous. Who ever enjoyed doing homework? When I was at school (many, many moons ago!), homework was annoying, it was something that prevented me from having fun, being outdoors and doing things that were generally more pleasant.

So why homework, why is it important and why bother doing it - isn't training supposed to be fun? Well, the fact is that homework plays a very important role in training, and perhaps in this context, we should call it, 'continuation of training at home'.

When I was very young and at school, I remember diligently practising my times tables. I had to commit them to memory initially. I still remember walking around the house, chanting, "2 times 2 is four, 2 times 3 is six, 2 times 4 is eight". The point is that had I not done this, I would not have easily been able to progress to the next level in maths, for example, the 11 times table, or the 75 times table (yeah, right! Are calculators allowed yet in school?). You have to master one step before you can go to the next one. Anyone who has ever participated in a sport, or hobby, knows the old adage 'practise makes perfect'. It is so true.

The same concept applies to dog training. At training, we teach an exercise, for example, taking the toilet roll, as the first step to working with the dumbbell. Now some dogs find this a rather unusual or unnatural request. Add to this the excitement of being at the Club and distractions like other people and dogs, which are normally not present when at home, and it becomes a rather demanding environment. Sometimes the attention span and focus is not what it is at home. So now we have an environment where a new exercise is being taught under often challenging circumstances. If this is the only time you ever practise working with the toilet roll, well, simply put, your dog is going to take much longer to get the hang of it, than if it is practised during the week. If you work on the exercise at home, you will find that at your next training session, you will be able to progress and move onto more advanced requests, such as holding the toilet roll for a second. You also won't get left behind the rest of the class.

Homework can also be really fun, and quick. Many of us have extremely busy schedules and find it difficult to make that gap in our day to do homework. Well, it's easier than you think! Even five minutes of practice at feeding time can be hugely beneficial. I practice 'focus' using Sultan's food bowl instead of the sausage and his reward is his dinner. Talk about motivation!!! And it takes less than 30 seconds.

So, for example, you can pick one exercise, and spend five minutes a day at dinner-time practising. For an extra 20 minutes a week, you will find training a lot easier, your dog will progress quicker, and you're investing in your training, for which you are giving up your Sunday morning and hard earned cash. Of course, this is a minimum. You can practise more often, but don't make the sessions too long. Also, when you get what you want, reward the behaviour, and leave it on a good note. Don't do it again and again and again. It gets boring and frustrating for your animal. Once you've mastered something, you can ask for a little more perhaps in the next few sessions. But don't push for too much too

soon. Remember, we all learn by taking small, progressive steps, and certainly with training, 'less is more'.

Make training worthwhile and more rewarding and **do your homework!**

Send your training questions to shaynet@worldonline.co.za and watch for the answers in upcoming newsletters.

FEATURED DOG OF THE MONTH: NISHA, by ROSEMARIE AUST

Rosemarie Aust informed me that her dog, Nisha, must be one of the oldest dogs, at 13½ years old, still in active training. Rosemarie writes,

Now I *am* excited to have my old girl as your "dog of the month". I could write a book about her, but lets keep it short.

Nisha, or as the pedigree reads, Romarash Mnisha, was born on 6.10.1991. We picked her out at four weeks from a litter of about six dogs. We did not have puppy socialising at that time and it was very much the common thing to wait for all the inoculations to be done before taking a puppy out into the world. I had other ideas and told the breeder straight that if I get Nisha she will be going to dog clubs with me immediately. We started training with Vera at Marks Park when she was about four months old and have been with Vera ever since.

Nisha absolutely loves training and has only been trained with the reward method. She is ball mad and will do anything for her ball, which made it easy for me to train her. Except that she was always over the top and had to do things at double the speed. She was the dog jumping around in fast pace in a C test, bringing send-away markers back and chewing retrieve articles. In scent, she has a habit of chewing the scent cloth and poor Vera has countless scent cloths with holes in them - all of them are a souvenir from Nisha. But she made Obedience Champion and she also has CD and Schutzhund and of course Canine Good Citizen.

She was a terrible puppy. She would not have lasted long with anybody else. She chewed carpets, the telephone etc. You name it - she chewed it. After a year or two she gave up that habit and behaved more acceptably. She became a quiet, well-behaved dog at home, which is something nobody believed when they met her at the training ground. There she was very

vocal and exhibited her intense displeasure that other dogs were allowed to do all the things she wanted to do, e.g. send aways. retrieve etc. She would constantly moan and jump around till it was her turn. Then only was she happy.

She also has the habit of rescuing birds. The first little featherless thing she brought me is still living with us. It's a little dove, Peanut, which at the time I never thought would survive. But here he is, and he is the boss. About a year ago she found two Hadedda babies under a tree in the garden and came to alert me. This saved the two from certain death.

Nowadays, whenever Vera trains on a Saturday morning, we are still there. I could never bring myself to not go, because even though she is a bit slower and gets tired more quickly (Nisha is now 13½ years old! - Ed), she still gets excited when I pick up the lead and she knows she can go to training. She still dislikes it when other dogs get their turn on the field and she has to watch, as she still thinks she is the one and only dog that should have the pleasure of doing all those fun things. She is the most exciting and fun dog I have ever owned and I hope that we will still attend Vera's training for some time.

All the handlers who know her must have learned one thing - what motivational training can do for a dog. I have never come across such an enthusiastic dog amongst all the ones trained with the old choke chain and pulled around the field for an hour.

Thanks Rosemarie for Nisha's story! It makes for wonderful reading.

Send in your nominations for 'Dog of the Month' to me at shaynet@worldonline.co.za



IMPORTANT NOTE ON BUYING PUPPIES:

Are you considering buying a puppy for your children? Have you thought about factors such as the breed's temperament, behaviour and **SIZE** the dog will grow to? Have you considered the time required, space and activity level the dog will need?

There are important considerations when purchasing a puppy, but especially important when you have children. Buying that sweet Great Dane puppy is fine - for the first month or two. How will your children manage when there is a 60 kg fully grown dog in the house, who may not always be in control of those oversized limbs, that exuberant personality and desire to sit on your lap?

Please consider this aspect. It is often overlooked, and we do see some difficulties when dogs quickly outgrow the kids, the kids are no longer able to manage or control the dog, and of course, the latest I heard, you cannot re-home your kids!!!

I will include a breed profile in each newsletter, starting with the next one, so that you can consider the breed requirements before you buy a puppy. There is also a lot of breed information contained on the internet, and your local bookshop will usually have books dedicated to specific breeds. Do your research **BEFORE** you buy!!!! Thanks to Sheena for this input.

GENERAL:

Community outreach

- The instructors intend to visit the **SPCA** on occasion and work with dogs looking for new homes, in order to help them become more 'adoptable'. Thanks to Ash for this great idea. Look out for feedback on our visit in a forthcoming newsletter.
- **Roy and Vanah** do demos and visits at the 'old folks' home, and this is supported and appreciated by residents. Many older people, especially those who live alone or in aged homes either miss their previous pets or long for the company of a pet but cannot keep one. Roy does great work in bringing joy to those elderly folk at the home.
- The Dobe Club has its own **Dobermann Rescue Scheme**, which is run by **Maria**. Maria does a fantastic job in re-homing Dobes who can no longer stay

with their families. If you can provide a rescue Dobe a good home, or if you have to part with your Dobe, please contact Maria. Sultan came to me from the rescue scheme and is a very special person! It is really a worthwhile and rewarding path to pursue if you are looking to purchase a new member of family. If it's not a Dobe you're after, please consider the SPCA or the rescue schemes that many breeding associations run. There are so many dogs out there in need of homes! Perhaps you can be one of those lucky ones to have a special rescue animal in your life. Sultan is my second rescue Dobe, and it is true that there is something very special about a rescue - whether or not they know they've been saved, or that they know they have a second chance, the relationship is at a different level (getting rather teary-eyed so will move onto the website of the month now).

Website of the month - <http://www.leerburg.com/schusa.htm>

To find out more about IPO & Schutzhund, please visit this site. It provides a wealth of information, not only about this discipline in particular, but about many other dog training related topics.

Contributions welcome! Do you have a funny training story, a success or insight you want to share? Do you want to provide feedback on your training class or the club in general? Have ideas for improvements? Want your dog to be the featured dog of the month? Send your comments or stories to shaynet@worldonline.co.za

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