

Best Friends Forever Conference

Thursday, August 5, 2010
Exton, PA

Pre-Conference Lecture

2:00 – 5:00 PM
The Ties That Bind
Pia Silvani, CPDT-KA

As training professionals we know that a well-trained and behaviorally healthy dog is more likely to stay in the home and enjoy a deeper bond with the family. So how do you best meet your clients' goals of having a great family companion in the classroom and through private training? Being prepared and effective with your protocols and teaching is the key to student achievement and satisfaction, but how do you keep your students interested, motivated and coming back?

As you attempt to align your curriculum, assessment, and instruction, you must begin by looking at the big picture and finding the over-riding ideas set forth by your community's standards. What are they looking for and what do they need? By thinking about the end result and imagining various levels of proficiency and connection between dog and owner, you begin to define yourself and what you teach.

This workshop will focus on the development of lesson plans for the classroom and private training. How much is too much? Are you teaching them what they want/need to learn or what *you* think they should know? Have you thought about the subtle messages behind your techniques or how your attitude influences the student's relationship with her dog? Are you providing the family and the dog with skills that work toward building an unbreakable bond? And most importantly, is it possible to inoculate dogs against homelessness or poor quality lives through creative, proactive, responsive curriculum? We think so!

Best Friends Forever Conference

Friday, August 6, 2010

Exton, PA

9:00 – 10:30 AM

Emotions: Don't Leave Home without Them

Patricia McConnell, Ph.D., CAAB

Keynote Address

Learn the biology behind emotion in both you and your dog, and why an enhanced understanding of emotions will help you understand your dog even better. We'll talk about emotions themselves (slippery critters!), what emotions we share with dogs and what exciting, new research is telling us about the biology behind the magical relationship with our four-legged best friends. (Soon even your doctor will be saying: "Take two dogs and call me in the morning!")

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM – option A

Fear Factor – Working with Fearful Dogs

Pia Silvani, CPDT-KA

Fear is an emotion that induces a stress response in dogs. For most it is a fleeting and manageable evolutionary behavior. For some dogs the fear can be so consuming that the behavior is debilitating and impacts the dog's quality of life. Many fearful dogs have socially limited lives and the owners struggle to understand, manage, and deal with the dog's behavior.

This talk will look specifically at dogs that have primarily freeze and flight responses. Their behavior may include - startling easily, freezing, shaking, backing away, bolting, screaming, shutting down, and not responding. How can you work with a dog that is exhibiting fear, or can you? If so, what can you do to help? When do you push forward and when do you back off? How do you know if you are choosing the right technique? While classical and operant counter conditioning can be extremely beneficial, problems may result if you are not careful or aware of the triggers, do not understand the underlying problem, and more. Being a good observer is essential and ensuring that the client understands that there is no "quick fix" is critical. Videos and case studies will be shown and discussed.

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM – option B

Common Myth-Understandings about Aggression

Nancy Williams, MA, RVT, ACAAB

Numerous misconceptions exist concerning the reasons why dogs react aggressively toward people, dogs or other animals. When the reasons for aggression are analyzed incorrectly, the problem will not respond well to poorly conceptualized behavior modification plans that do not consider the many variables that require attention. In addition to the dog's relationship with the target(s) of the aggression, and control of behavior consequences, many cases are resolved by attention to underlying medical problems, and changes in the daily care and husbandry of the dog that are contributing to the aggressive behaviors. In this presentation, participants will see examples of the analytical and data collections skills needed to properly analyze a problem case so that a relevant behavior modification plan can be created.

1:30 – 3:00 PM – option A

The Use and Misuse of Punishment

Suzanne Hetts, Ph.D, CAAB

In some dog training circles, "punishment" - meaning positive punishment - has become a dirty word. Dog owners rarely use the term, preferring instead to ask how they can correct, discipline, or get their dogs to stop engaging in unwanted behaviors. Is it realistic to believe that all behavior problems can be solved without ever employing an

unpleasant consequence for an unwanted behavior? And why has this debate become so polarizing in the dog training community? Leave your emotions at the door, and let's have an objective session about how science, practical experience, and guidelines for humane training can shed light on the use and misuse of this behavioral consequence.

1:30 – 3:00 PM – option B

Dog Aggression – The Generation Gap (Young vs. Old or Old vs. Young)

Nancy Williams, MA, RVT, ACAAB

When assessing aggression between family dogs, it is important to recognize how differences in the ages of the dogs can complicate most interdog aggression problems. The inevitable changes between dogs that occur as a puppy matures and as a dog ages are rarely taken into consideration. We will examine how to recognize these changes and how they influence the methods used to treat ongoing problems. Of even more importance is a discussion of techniques that can be used to remedy “low-level” problems between dogs that can lead to serious aggression later. These include training techniques that are based on the often over-looked concept of response prevention.

3:30 – 5:00 PM – option A

Where's the Data: Beyond “Pop” Ethology

Suzanne Hetts, Ph.D, CAAB

While hearing about scientific research is certainly valuable, learning about it through experiential exercises is even more so. This session will allow attendees to experience how scientific knowledge about dog behavior is acquired and to formulate research questions and collect data. By participating in this process, attendees will leave with a richer appreciation for what it takes to acquire scientific knowledge, and for how much we don't know about dog behavior.

3:30 – 5:00 PM – option B

Another Puzzle Piece

Carolyn Barney, CPDT-KA

Clicker training is an often neglected part of an overall program that can make a big difference in the resolution of behavior issues. Along with identifying triggers, managing the environment and classical conditioning, the operant conditioning plan has the power to facilitate positive changes in many dogs' lives.

Professionals use many methods to teach dogs replacement behaviors in training and behavior modification but clicker training has some advantages that can make it particularly effective. Just like a jigsaw puzzle – every piece of your treatment plan needs to fit perfectly. This includes your operant choices and techniques. In this talk, Carolyn will relate how she integrates clicker training into all of her behavior and training programs. Pull out your clicker and get on the path to a more powerful training and rehabilitation strategy.

Best Friends Forever Conference

Saturday, August 7, 2010

Exton, PA

9:00 – 10:30 AM

The Dangers of “Dominance”

Suzanne Hetts, Ph.D., CAAB

There is a dramatic disconnect between what behavioral scientists know about social dominance and how the term is used by popular media about dog training. This is not just an academic argument, but has significant implications regarding the training and welfare of pet dogs. Learn how “dominance” myths are not only barriers to creating mutually beneficial relationships but also how techniques based on them have caused harm to dogs. Discover how to educate dog owners about how to raise a well mannered, safe and behaviorally healthy canine family member based on a respectful, trusting relationship that meets the dog’s needs and the owner’s realistic expectations.

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM – option A

Play, Play, Play: How to use Play to Love Your Dog Even More!

Patricia McConnell, Ph.D., CAAB

Play is fun, but don’t be fooled into thinking it’s just goofy or frivolous. Play is powerful stuff, and it has a profound influence on your relationship with your dog. Learn how play can enhance your relationship with your dog, improve your dog’s responsiveness, and provide your dog with the mental and physical exercise he or she needs. We’ll talk about up-to-date research on how to tell your dog you want to play (most of us aren’t very good at it!), some charming tricks and games to wow your friends, and how *not* to play with your dog. If you’d like a happier, more responsive dog and an enhanced understanding of play between dogs, this seminar is for you.

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM – option B

“Bigger is not Better” – Aggression Between 3-5 Dogs in a Family

Nancy Williams, MA, RVT, ACAAB

Cases involving serious aggression between family pets is steadily increasing as families acquire three or more dogs. Homes with multiple dogs, of different breeds, ages and sexes can pose a substantial risk when they fight. There is not always a “dominant” and a “subordinate” dog, and these roles can change based on the individual dogs and the situational context. As the numbers of dogs increase, particularly when the living space is small – so does the complexity of interactions that the behavior consultant will need to understand! Discover how the use of a scientific process can assist with the prevention and treatment of aggression in a multiple dog household.

1:30 – 3:00 PM – option A

Bully for You

Trish King CPDT-KA, CDBC

Big blocky head, direct, arresting eye contact, and a body that most weight lifters would die for. Those are our bully boys and girls. The bully breeds can make great companion dogs, but they do have special needs – a different kind of exercise regimen, and specific training techniques are just a couple. In this presentation, we’ll take a (video) look at some bullies, and discuss what to look for when adopting a bully, and what to do with him once you’ve got him!

1:30 – 3:00 PM – option B

A Brilliant Disguise

Emily Levine DVM

There are many dogs who have behavior problems simply as a result of mismanagement or lack of training and or structure. Qualified trainers are instrumental in helping these dogs and their families get on the right track. For other dogs, their behavior problems can be the result of, or exacerbated, by medical conditions. Some of the more common medical conditions that can be seen are: partial seizures, pain, sensory decline, endocrine disorders, and Central Nervous System disease.

Dr Levine will reveal important clues for cases that often disguise themselves as training or behavior problems that really need immediate attention from a veterinarian or veterinary behaviorist. She will also show video demonstrations of pets presented for behavior problems which had medical components/causes.

3:30 – 5:00 PM

Educating Feisty: Panel Discussion

Carolyn Barney CPDT-KA, Vinny Catalano, MBA, CPDT-KA, CPBC, and Trish King CPDT-KA, CDBC

Moderated by Pia Silvani CPDT-KA

Reactive dogs are part of every community. Possibly more than any other dogs, these dogs (and owners) need your help. Are you prepared for Feisty Fidos? Do you run specialty classes or integrate them into your regular classes? Are you getting the results your clients need and desire?

Our three panelists will each give a short presentation on how their organizations work with these special dogs/owner teams and what they feel are important concerns for anyone that caters to this population. Then with the guidance of moderator Pia Silvani, we will take questions from the audience and discuss how to best help the Feisty in your community.

Best Friends Forever Conference

Sunday, August 8, 2010
Exton, PA

9:00 – 10:30 AM – option A

The Power of Pets

Patricia McConnell, Ph.D., CAAB

You know it, and now biologists do too: the relationship between you and your dog has a significant effect on your health and happiness. We'll discuss new research in physiology and neurochemistry that explains why dogs are so good for us, and how the canine connection is powerful medicine in so many settings. Join Patricia in a celebration of the love that binds people and dogs together into one of nature's most miraculous of relationships.

We apologize that “The Domestic Dog: Our Ultimate Behavior Genetic Experiment” will not be presented as Dr. Moon-Fanelli is unable to attend. Dr. McConnell has generously offered to present *The Power of Pets*.

9:00 – 10:30 AM – option B

Match Making

Trish King CPDT-KA, CDBC

These days, it's considered a virtue to adopt a shelter or rescue dog, especially one snatched from “death row.” But people's moral values can occasionally override good sense. As professionals we need to have the skills necessary to uncover the personality traits and needs of both dog and people to create a compatible match. Trish will look at how to elicit information from the potential adopter as well as those who surrender or are fostering the dog, how to help steer a potential guardian in the right direction, and to how provide the assistance they need once the dog and his new human are residing in the same place.

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM – option A

Stressed Out!

Pamela Reid Ph.D., CAAB

What is stress and how does it impact on dogs' learning and performance? Loosely speaking, stress is a biological response that occurs when an organism perceives a threat to its well being. These days, the public is concerned with the welfare of farm animals raised for human consumption and of laboratory animals serving as subjects in medical and psychological experiments. A great deal of work has been devoted to understanding animals under stress because the presence of stress is taken to be an indicator of poor welfare. Stress is typically confirmed by measuring corticosteroid changes, such as cortisol in urine, blood, or saliva. In some individuals, heart rate and behavioural indices of stress are correlated with increases in cortisol; in other individuals, they are not. Shelter dogs are good subjects for stress research because shelters are clearly stressful environments, yet some dogs adapt quite easily. We know dogs take, on average, three full days in the shelter before cortisol drops to levels matching pet dogs at home. Yet during behaviour evaluations, stress appears to affect some dogs and not others. Likewise, dogs that compete in sports like obedience and agility vary in their responses to stress—some get distracted or “shut down,” others seem to get high. The science of animal stress can be applied to help trainers and behaviourists recognize signs of stress in dogs, immunize puppies against reasonable levels of stress, and teach mature dogs functional coping skills.

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM – option B

Different Breeds for Different Needs

Trish King CPDT-KA, CDBC

It's not only the bully breeds that require special ed. Dogs that look different act different, and – to a certain extent – their behavior can be anticipated. In this presentation, using case histories and video examples, we'll look at the guardian, herding and terrier breeds; their virtues and potential vices.

1:30 – 3:00 PM – option A

Bred to Fight

Pamela Reid Ph.D., CAAB

Prior to the Michael Vick case, it was routine for animals seized in dogfighting raids to be euthanized. Now the public supports examining the victims of animal cruelty to determine if they can be integrated into society.

Behaviour experts are being called upon to assess and rehabilitate animals rescued in dogfighting, hoarding and puppy mill raids.

The 2009 Midwest dogfighting bust provided a unique opportunity to study a large population of dogs from fighting backgrounds. The ASPCA and the Humane Society of Missouri worked together to gather as much information as we could from the seized animals. We compared the dogs' responses to real dogs and fake dogs in hopes of establishing safer, more humane procedures for evaluating dog-dog aggression. We tested puppies repeatedly to map their development and seek out early indicators of aggressive behaviour. The discoveries we made assessing over 400 dogs and following up with the ones who were adopted contribute to our understanding of this extraordinary breed type. As we gain more experience with these special "outlier" animals, we can develop decision criteria and best practices for evaluation and adoption procedures.

1:30 – 3:00 PM – option B

Canine Compulsive Disorder

Emily Levine DVM

Compulsive behavior is an abnormal and dysfunctional response to normal stimulation from the environment. It is characterized by sequences of behavior that are repetitive, consistent in form and orientation, and do not appear to serve an obvious purpose. Compulsive behavior is usually time consuming, may result in physical injury to the animal, may significantly impair the animal's ability to function normally and may impair the animal's relationship with its owner.

Dr. Levine works frequently with Canine Compulsive Disorder cases. She says CCD cases are actually one of her favorite clients to work with due to the complexity and importance of providing relief for the canine and the family! She will discuss the underlying neurobiology behind compulsive disorders and present updates on some of the genetics components involved. Videos will help shed light on this disorder.

Due to unforeseen circumstances Dr. Moon-Fanelli is unable to attend the conference. We are thrilled that Dr. Levine will be able to speak on the same great topic.

3:30 – 5:00 PM

A Glimpse into the Dog's Mind

Pamela Reid, Ph.D., CAAB

A huge challenge faced by psychological science is to discover the workings of the mind. The human mind is certainly mysterious—imagine trying to puzzle through an animal's mind when they are unable to relate their experiences to us. The investigation of mental activity in animals is a relatively new and captivating science. In the past few years, dogs have become a popular species for studying such mental gymnastics as object permanence, rudimentary language acquisition, and awareness of others' mental states. While our knowledge of canine cognition is limited, we do achieve occasional glimpses into the dog's mind. For instance, research reveals that dogs are exquisitely sensitive to our attentional focus and can adjust their behaviour accordingly—proving that dogs are indeed "sneaky." In fact, when it comes to interpreting human gestures, dogs even outperform our closest primate cousins. This presentation will review a selection of the research so that we may explore some intriguing questions. Does this research have implications for how we train and interact with dogs? Could these findings cause owners to attribute inaccurate cognitive capabilities to their pet dogs and thus, alter their expectations to the point that dogs' welfare is compromised?

* Topics and times are subject to change