

# Paws Express

Newsletter of  
Alexandra & District  
Dog Obedience Club



March 2020

Patrons: Betty Tulloch, Doug Norman B.Sc.(Hons), B.Vet.Sc.(Hons)

## Welcome!

Welcome back to our old members and a warm welcome to our new members and their dogs. With a current membership of around 55 and growing it was wonderful to see people arriving each Sunday for classes.

Unfortunately due to COVID-19 and the new travel restrictions, group events restrictions and safety procedures being put in place to keep us and our communities healthy and safe, **ADDOC has decided to cease all classes until further notice.**

Committee and instructors have yet to formulate any future plans but we will be in touch. We have a new training program format in place this year and committee and instructors are very enthusiastic about it, as we hope you will be when classes resume at ADDOC.

Thank you to everyone, please follow restrictions and keep yourself, your loved ones and your community happy and healthy.

Barb Tanner  
ADDOC President

*Yes, I'm working  
from home today.*

(Dog Lovers NI)



**\*\* Join the Alexandra & District Dog Obedience Club on Facebook \*\***

## Committee Members 2020

Barbara Tanner (President)  
Bronwyn McFadyen (Vice Pres.)  
Debbie Callaway (Secretary)  
Geoff Hyland (Treasurer)  
Ann Laherty-Hunt  
Jamie Laherty-Hunt  
Pam Poole  
Jeanne Roberts  
Julee Hosking  
Fiona Mackey

## Life Members

Betty Tulloch  
Greg Tulloch (Dec)  
Lynne Walter  
Maggie Hamill  
Julee Hosking  
Bronwyn McFadyen

## Honorary Members

Doug Norman B.Sc(Hons) B.Vet.Sc(Hons)  
Doug Walter  
Mike Hosking  
Chris Chester  
David Roberts

*Newsletter: Ann Jelinek*

## Welcome to new members

Felicity/Josh & 'Silvie' (WeimaranerX)  
Renee & 'Odie' (Bermese Mtn Dog)  
Michell & 'Bonnie' (Fox Terrier)  
Kerry & 'Paddy' (Labradoodle)  
Max & 'Dotty' (Border Collie)  
Lee & 'Rebel' (Heeler/CollieX)  
Zoe & 'Maggie' (Groodle)  
Michael & 'Ziggy' (mini Schnauser)  
Shannon & 'Dandy' (Labrador)  
Debbie & 'Alfie' (Border Collie)



## Training Tips



### The importance of “FOCUS”

A very warm welcome back to everyone for the start of our 2020 training year. It’s lovely to see so many familiar faces and wagging tails, and so many new ones as well!!

Let’s start off the year by looking at something that is introduced in the very first class you attend and emphasised in every class afterwards and that is:

#### “FOCUS” in dog training – What is it? Why is it important?

Very simply, FOCUS is your DOG watching and listening to YOU and ignoring all the distractions around him and YOU watching and listening to your DOG and ignoring all the distractions around you.

FOCUS is very important, because if you want the working partnership between you and your dog to be a successful one, then you need to communicate and really understand one another. This can only happen if you truly CONCENTRATE on each other and what you are both doing when you’re working together.

Your Instructors will give you lots of tips and games to play to build and strengthen the focus between you and your dog.

I would like to talk about why loss of focus occurs, how to recognise what is causing it, and, more importantly, what to do about it.

*“My dog gets distracted, loses focus, won’t listen!”*

Does this sound familiar?

Loss of focus is when your dog loses interest in you and what you’re doing together and stops watching and listening to you. One of the main reasons your dog does this is because, you, their person, lose interest in them and what you are doing together. If we become disconnected from our dog because we are learning, thinking, nervous, upset etc, then our dog is left without a leader.

You, however, not realising what’s happening, blame your dog!! You become impatient, frustrated, tense and embarrassed which your dog picks up on very quickly and so the situation goes from bad to worse.

Anyone who has ever owned a dog has been in this situation – probably more than once!!

It comes down to this: If you stay focused, your dog stays focused. But FOCUS is not a one-way street; it is a two-way highway between you and your dog so let’s look at some of the reasons that can cause a road block and then what we can do to keep the communication highway running smoothly.



Jenny with Maggie



Alana with Kobe



## Training Tips



### Some Reasons Why Dogs Get Distracted:

- When they are in a new, unfamiliar situation they have no previous experience of and we aren't giving them the information and support they need, for example, we are distracted; texting, talking on our mobile or to a friend.
- When they aren't getting any leadership from us so they are unsure what to do.
- When we become uptight and tense because they're not listening to us.
- When we're learning something new together. Maybe we've made it too hard or we're asking them to do too much, too soon?
- When the work or training isn't any fun.

This happens because "when we are learning, thinking, assessing, nervous, obsessing, freaking out ... we are disconnected from our dog. We are inside our head and our dog is basically 'out there' alone". WOW!! Our distracted, out of control, ignoring us dog IS NOT misbehaving – he's actually shouting "HELP ME!"

So ..... as the intelligent, responsible, loving partner in this relationship, what can we do?

1. Run through the following check list and make changes where you find a problem:

- Are your requests simple and clear?
- Are you really communicating with your dog using language you both understand?
- Have you just introduced a new concept? Don't expect to be perfect immediately – it takes time. Patience, awareness and being focused are qualities that are worth striving for.
- Do you have a common purpose? Do you both want the same result? Are you making it fun?
- Are you really committed to establishing a strong working relationship with your dog? Look at your successes to keep you focused and connected. Yes, there will be ups and downs along the way why not concentrate on the positive rather than the negative?

2. When your dog becomes distracted, check YOUR mental focus and connection to your dog.

3. LEARN from your distractions. What were you doing or thinking when you suddenly noticed your dog was ignoring you? FIND ways to reconnect with your dog.

4. Stay focused on what you are both doing and don't let your dog's distraction put you off – don't say "Oh! No!" and give up – instead bring him back to you and then both focus on the task at hand.

5. Encourage your dog to work with you as you work with your dog.

Finally, don't be too hard on your dog AND yourself. Relax and enjoy yourselves. It's not always simple. Mistakes will occur, but mistakes can be great learning tools!

Good luck and happy training, Jeanne



Ref: Kathy Kawalec. *Cognitive Dog Training*

*"Dogs do speak, but only to those who know how to listen".*

*~Orhan Pamuk. My Name is Red.*

**\*\* Check out more Training Tips in previous Newsletters on the ADDOC website\*\***



Ann's Zip in a spin

## More Training Tips



**Have you ever said this about your dog  
or, heard someone else say it?  
“He knows how to do it, he’s just refusing .....”**

How do we know that he knows? The only way we can tell if our dog knows how to do the behaviour we are asking, or even what we are asking, is that they do the behaviour. Everything else is just an assumption on our part.

Have you ever forgotten how to do something? Forgotten the words of a song you have sung along with 100s of times? Walked into a room and forgotten what you came in for? Forgotten the sequence of a routine you have done dozens of times? Left your wallet in the house and had to go back for it?

Is it not reasonable to give our dogs the same grace? Do our dogs not deserve that benefit?

There are two reasons our dogs will not do something we ask/tell them:

1. They do not understand, under those precise circumstances, what you are asking!!
2. They are not motivated to do it or, are motivated to do something else in that moment!!

The answer:

More training and more practice.

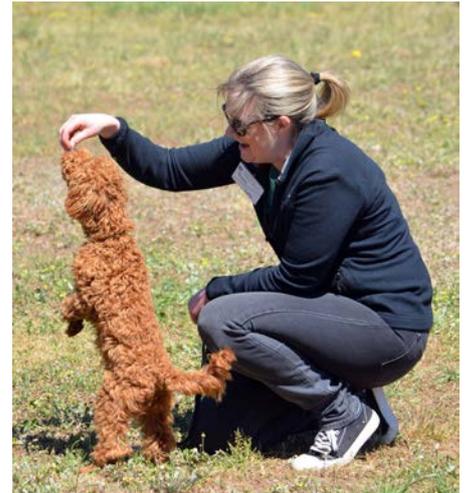
Keep going with your dog, understand his needs and work as a team, with each other, not against each other.

John McGuigan

Glasgow Dog Training

<https://glasgowdogtrainer.wordpress.com/>

**FCC3 Class**  
Alana & Kobe  
Fiona & Mac  
Kristen & Heath



Trudie with Lola



Lyn with Penny

## More Training Tips - Recall exercises

### “Send Away” Game

Use long lead.

- \* Handler to stand in one spot.
- \* Show their dog a treat and throw it a short distance away.
- \* The dog will run out to get the treat. Handler can use the cue “Away!”
- \* The handler should wait while the dog eats the treat and then looks back at the handler. At that moment, call “Come” in a happy, excited voice.
- \* The dog should return and sit or stand in front of the handler.
- \* Repeat several times.

This is a good game to play off lead in a secure, safe area.



Byron & Lola

### Fast, flowing and fun - through your legs or around your body

- \* Throw food away from you and let your dog chase and get it.
- \* The moment the dog looks back at you, mark with a “yes”.
- \* Throw food through your legs and let dog chase it running through your legs to get the food or, for large dogs, around your body.
- \* Turn in time for dog to see you throwing the food through your legs. Can add “get it” cue.



### Alexandra & District Dog Obedience Club Inc.

Training on Sunday mornings in Alexandra (except for public holidays, days of Total Fire Ban and a break over December & January).

Memberships - Due February (C5 vaccination certificate to be sighted)

#### Annual membership

1 or 2 dogs/1 handler (single) \$15.  
1 dog/2 handlers (dual) \$20.  
2 dogs/2 handlers (same family) \$15 each.

Cost per class \$3 -  
\$21 per block of 7 classes paid in advance and is non-refundable.