

# Saccarappa Yapper



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## The next meeting will be:

*Wed, July. 22, 2020*

*At 7:00 PM at:*

*1-877-596-8938*

*Code: 518 867 8329*

*Refreshments:*

*Brownies and Ice Cream*

## MINUTES FROM THE STATED MEETING

The regular monthly meeting of the Saccarappa Obedience Club held on 7/22/2020, was called to order by president Sandy Cloutier at 7:03 PM. The secretary called the roll. 21 members were present on the conference call.

The Secretary's report was accepted as read.

There was no Treasurer's report.

The Corresponding Secretary reported about the By-Law change. It will need to go out to all members two weeks before the next meeting. The Yapper will need to be sent by August 12, for the meeting on August 26. We have added a clause about telephone and/or video conferencing meetings.

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Committee Reports

Training committee- Brenda says the weather has not co operated for Bob's Scent work classes outside. Cindy Lester has moved her class inside due to heat. August 27 we will be starting 4 dogs doing self-practice, plus Brenda's class. Thursday classes are proceeding well. No complaints of problems. Claire says that star puppy will be starting a second session on August 17.

## Unfinished business

Elissa is checking with AKC on our question about secret ballots. She has not heard back from them about use of a survey monkey. After some discussion we decided to continue using survey monkey for our secret ballots when needed. Sandy will send one out for Michael Constantine to make it official.

## New Business

The standing rule committee was working on a change to allow the trial chairpersons to be able to compete at our trials, as long as one of them is available for competitors and judges. Nanci made the motion, and MJ seconded. The motion passed.

Barbara Belicose reported on the trial which is scheduled for Sunday, November 1, 2020. Obedience has been approved and we are waiting for Rally. Nanci Hayes will be our judge. We will discuss stewarding after we have the number of entries. A short discussion ensued.

Brenda says the Scent Trial premium list is up on Infodog. The trial will be October 17, with 75 runs per trial. Interiors, Containers, and Exteriors, Novice and Advanced only. We need limited stewards, and there will be few people in the building at the same time. No spectators.

Drema asked if anyone is interested in participating in a Gorham Festival parade. It will be sent out on Google groups to see if there is interest. The parade is September 12. Details are not available yet.

Our next meeting will be by conference call at 7 PM on August 26. We will need to set up a nominating committee at that time. Meeting adjourned at 8:01 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Drema Shaw, Recording Secretary.



# Revised Bylaw Changes

Pursuant to Article VII of our Constitution and Bylaws, attached is the proposed amended Article II of our Bylaws. Underlined in red is the proposed new language. Bolded, in parentheses, and with strike through is the old language.

## **ARTICLE II**

### Meetings and Voting

#### **SECTION 1: CLUB MEETINGS**

~~(A regular meeting of the Club shall be held each month in the greater Westbrook, Maine area)~~ The club membership shall meet a minimum of six (6) times per year in the greater Westbrook, Maine area, or via telephone conference call, or by video conferencing, at such hour and place as may be designated by the Board of Directors. Written notice of each such meeting shall be given by the Secretary, at least 10 days prior to the date of the meeting, by mail, or email as outlined in Article XI of these Bylaws. The quorum for such meetings shall be 20% of the members in good standing.

***To be voted on on August 26, 2020***



# **Concept Training**

By Nicki Taylor of Wild Meadow Farm

## **Training through Games with absoluteDogs**

**In part 2 of our introduction to Concept Training, we'll take a look at some of the fundamental games and how to apply them to your training program.**

**At this point, there are a couple hundred videos of games on file in absoluteDogs' (aD's) Training Academy. The video library grows continuously as new games are developed and added. There's some overlap at times and occasionally similarities between games, but that's not a bad thing. Not every game is for every dog or handler, however, there are many from which to choose. Some are very simple, some more complicated. There's a remarkable variety. aD pride themselves on having a game for any training or behavior issue a dog owner might face. "There's a game for that!" is one of their mantras. Each game has a unique name and can be looked up in the library by name, or found in a listing under the concept or struggle the game is meant to improve.**

**To see how the aD games would be incorporated into your training program, let's imagine a scenario where you have a dog that is difficult to walk. We all tend to pay attention to things we don't like (our dog's struggles), so what you are experiencing is, your dog pulls on lead, drags you from one tree, post or clump of grass to another, and lunges and barks at other dogs encountered on your walk. Your first step toward fixing all this is to step out of negativity (what you don't like) and envision what you'd rather see, i.e. Your dog walking calmly beside you, aware of your presence and ignoring distractions in the environment. To achieve this desired version of the picture and help you and your dog develop a happier and less stressful walk, you will want to enhance the concepts with which your dog is struggling. In this case, some of these concepts might be Optimism - to help lessen your dog's fear that every dog approaching means danger; Confidence - to build trust that you and he can handle the situation; Proximity - to build your dog's interest in staying close to you; Focus on you - to help your dog keep his attention on you; disengagement - to increase your dog's ability to ignore things in his environment; and Impulse Control - to steady your dog and curb lunging. Examples of games to play could be as follows (remember, there are many games you can choose):**

**Optimism - I'm a Believer, Novelty Surprise Party, Food Finder**

**Confidence - 2 Feet Up, Middle, Cardboard Chaos**

**Proximity - Orientation Game, Funder, Proximity Vortex**

**Focus - Fast Focus, Hand Touch, Kerpow**

**Disengagement - A to B, DMT, Food Prison**

**Impulse Control - Premack Games, Mouse Game, Boundary Games**

It's also very important to stress here, that aD has another training mantra to live by which sets them apart from most other training programs. They believe we get better results and have a happier, less stressed dog, if we **"Train for the situation, not in the situation"**. In other words, in this case, you are going to limit and change your dog's walks to avoid putting him in the situations he can't handle while you work on enhancing his abilities. This may mean no regular walks for three weeks or more while you train. This prevents two things: first, he won't be adding to his stress levels (and yours!) because of repeated encounters with environmental distractions, and second, you'll be putting a stop to rehearsals of the behaviors you don't like, because "You become what you do."

To begin, let's say you settle on training these three concepts: **Confidence** (optimism and confidence are very similar) to help your dog feel more comfortable on walks, and less threatened by other dogs; **Proximity** to build his desire to stay close to you; and **Disengagement** to help him learn how to ignore distractions. Due to space, I'll have to limit detail, but following, I'll give you a rough idea of how and why to play each of the games I've listed in the examples above:

## CONFIDENCE

**Two Feet Up** - Here you encourage your dog to stand on an object with its front feet. You may use various objects of various heights (books, steps, curbs, tree stumps, rocks, benches, wobble cushions). This builds confidence and provides you with a way to engage with your dog when in a challenging area. Taking a familiar object with you to play this game in many different locations also builds confidence.

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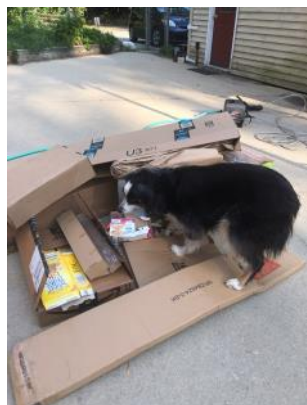


**Middle** - This game has your dog eventually running to sit, stand or lie down facing forward between your legs. You start by luring your dog into position from behind you, and gradually work your way around the clock so the dog will run around you to get into position from anywhere. Middle keeps your dog close to you and out of trouble, as well as providing a safe and secure spot for dogs who need that extra security. There are a number of additional games that build on Middle.





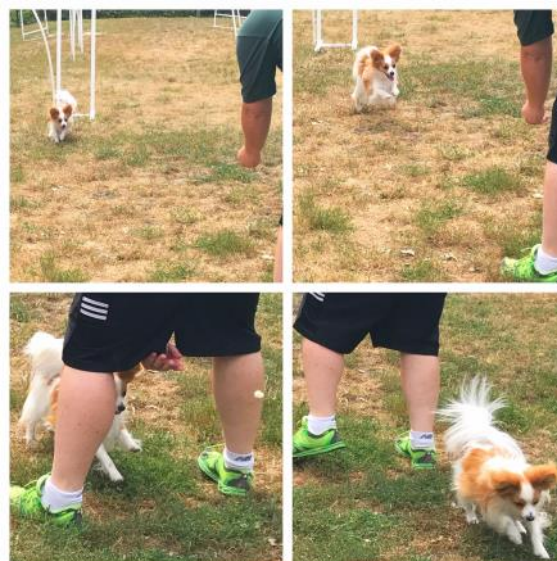
**Cardboard Chaos** - Here's a fun way to build confidence in your dog while you entertain him and yourself. Assemble a collection of cardboard boxes and other safe recyclables and objects. I've been known to use, plant pots, buckets, pillows, blankets and dog beds, among other things. At first, scatter them about an area. Later, piling them up makes for more of a challenge. Then scatter your dog's meal, or equivalent, in and around all the boxes, etc., and release your dog to search for it's supper. This is a fun confidence builder as dogs learn to push their way through the boxes, climb over them, put their heads inside, and burrow under to find the treats. It's also a great way to lengthen feeding time from 15-30 seconds eating out of a bowl, to 10 to 20 minutes searching for food while building confidence and having fun.



### PROXIMITY

**Orientation Game** - Depending on your space and dog's ability, toss or roll food away from your dog for him to chase and eat. As soon as he eats his treat, raises his head and orients back to you, mark it (say YES). As he runs back to you hoping for more, toss another treat out for him in the other direction, so he starts running back and forth with you in the middle. With this simple game we lay a foundation of wanting to be close to you, always returning for more fun.

**Funder** - Funder comes from the words Fun and Under. It's an adaptation of the orientation game. After tossing the treat out for your dog, and marking her orienting back to you, toss the next treat behind you through your legs, so she can run under the bridge you make. Turn quickly to face her and repeat. Start by tossing the treat only a short distance and build from there. Be sure to use treats easily spotted by your dog. This is another fun game promoting racing to get close to you.



**Proximity Vortex** - Similar to Orientation Game, with this one you use two different values of treats. You toss a low value treat out away from you. Then after your dog returns to you, you reward with a high value treat. The distance you throw the food can be adjusted to your dog's ability and to increase or lower the excitement level. You may also add in restraint to increase drive. This game teaches your dog that the value is found being close to you.

## **DISENGAGEMENT**

**A to B** - Here we have a game very useful in getting you and your dog out of tight, tense situations - a "Get out of Dodge" game. With both hands on the lead, you slide the hand that's next to the dog from position A near the handle end of the lead, to B, a position snug up against the collar, front clip harness or head halter. As you do this, you quickly turn your dog to go in the opposite direction. You may turn right or left, whichever feels right or makes the most sense in the potential scary situation. It would be best to practice both turns. You rehearse this action repeatedly when there is no threat, so your dog starts following you without hesitation as soon as you slide your hand down the lead. You may or may not wish to deliver a treat after making the turn. This game provides you with a safety maneuver to use at times when you suddenly find yourself face to face with an unexpected, major distraction, or when you feel you are getting your dog too deep into an environment he isn't ready to handle.

**DMT (Distraction, Mark, Treat)** - One of the most useful games with a huge variety of purposes, DMT's effectiveness defies its simplicity. Any time your dog notices something (Distraction) - in the beginning, even if you notice something your dog does not - you Mark it with a calm, drawn out "Yes" or "Nice", and give a Treat if possible. In some situations it may be beneficial to toss the treat behind you and the dog, to further promote disengagement. There will be times when your dog will be too scared or excited to take a treat, but those times should be guarded against when possible, because it means your dog is in a situation he can't handle, and will not be learning much due to high arousal. There are multiple stages to this game. Moving from one stage up to the next is totally driven by your dog's actions, not your wishes. The final result/stage you will be looking for is when your dog notices a distraction, but turns to check in with you before you can mark it. It is important to DMT nothing and sometimes everything to avoid having your marker become an alert that a distraction is present. The applications for this game are many, from calming a shy dog that startles easily, to helping reduce alert barking in the home, to improving loose leash walking. Playing this game can benefit all dogs making them calmer and steadier companions.

From



To



**Food Prison** - There are several similar games to teach disengagement. Food Prison is a fun one to play with puppies and young dogs, but can be played with any dog. In this game, you'll want to use a crate, but a big box or milk crate might also work. You'll also need some of your dog's tasty food. The value level of the food will be determined by your dog's attraction to food. You want her very interested, but if it's too exciting, it may take too much for her to disengage. Let your dog know you have the food. Give her a piece, and place a container with a few more of the treats inside the crate and lock the door. Allow the dog to sniff and examine and try to get to the food in the crate.



Eventually - and it may take a while - she'll back off and stop trying to get at the food. When she orients back to you, mark the behavior, and reward with a bit of food. Then open the crate door and allow your dog to climb into the crate to get more. You want to keep the dog's interest in the food. Once she's done, close up the crate again and start over. This game teaches your dog that disengaging and choosing to reconnect with you pays off in a big way. There are two more advanced levels to play after this.

Some final things to point out about playing the games. They are meant to be played in short sessions - just 3-5 minutes 1-3 times a day, or worked into your daily life. It's important to keep the sessions light and fun. Don't stress too much over your mechanics or your dog's ability to catch on. Play with your dog. Focus on fun. The technical aspects will follow. Begin playing the designated games in your living room or kitchen. Gradually add in distractions or move outside to your yard or driveway. Eventually you'll be able to move into more and more challenging environments. Along the way, you'll begin to notice improvements in your relationship with your dog, and in his or her behavior choices.

Next month we'll delve further into concepts and reshaping brains.

