

OCTOBER 2020

# Saccarappa Yapper



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## The next meeting will be:

**Wed, October 28, 2020**

**At 7:00 PM at:**

**1-877-596-8938**

**Code: 518 867 8329**

**Refreshments:**

**Candy, candy, candy, candy**

## MINUTES FROM THE SEPTEMBER MEMBERS' MEETING

The regular monthly meeting of Saccarappa Obedience Club was held on September 23, 2020, by conference call. The meeting was called to order by President Sandy Cloutier at 7:01 PM. The Secretary called the roll, and seventeen members and one guest (Jennifer Borque) were present.

The Secretary's report was approved as printed in the Yapper.

The Treasurer reported income and expenses and said that the insurance has been paid.

The Corresponding Secretary said that the survey monkey poll was sent out for the By-law change. 20 members voted and 20 members agreed with the change. Now we will wait to hear from AKC. Someone will need to change it on our web site.

Brenda reported for the training committee. Bob C. started a new Intro to Scent class on Monday night, and we also have Rally and obedience going. Thursday classes with

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Merrillynn are ongoing. Scent classes will move to Thursdays in November. Claire said that Puppy class is full and the Beginner 101 class has two openings. New classes start October 12.

The nominating committee has not met yet. The list of officers is due in November.

The election of our new member, Jennifer, will take place by survey monkey. She has Great Danes and has been training for about ten years. She will fill out the application and probably have it signed on Monday night by Jeremy.

### **Unfinished business:**

Per Barbara Belicose, our trial in November is full. She sent out a certified letter to the competitors in Massachusetts, but it will be unnecessary as the governor has lifted the quarantine requirement. The stewards are almost set, but Barbara would like someone to manage the traffic at the door. Competitors will exit through the side door. There should be plenty of time to allow easy coming and going, and it went well at our "mock trial" last Thursday. Barbara and Mary T. will work on the judging program, and try to note the limited schedule and need for distancing. Happy Tails is using their lobby doors now so the red door can be left open, if needed.

### **New Business:**

Deb Lawler has been watching the taping of Rally for AKC judging, and suggested the club purchase a GoPro camera, shatterproof case, and tripod for use by the club. The quality is much better. There was some discussion about where, and how to store it and keep it safe. Mention was made that our grooming table, used by handling class, is missing. The approximate cost of filming equipment seems to be about \$300. A motion was made by Lois, and seconded by Nanci to purchase. Deb says she will make the purchase and keep the camera for now. Motion passed. (continued on next page)



Congratulations to Brenda

and

Seasea!

Earning Rally Novice Title and  
Novice Exterior, Buried and Container Titles!!

# MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST MEMBER MEETING

The August meeting of the Saccarappa Obedience Club was held o. August 26, 2020. The meeting, by conference call, was called to order at 7:04 PM, by Vice-president Deb Mazjanis. The roll was called, and twenty members and one guest, Jennifer Borque, were present on the call.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Secretary's report as written.

The Treasurer reported that we have another month in the minus column. We had no other bills.

The Corresponding Secretary said that she has received information from AKC. Our electronic vote for the change in the By-laws will require a percentage of members voting, a copy of the notice to the club, and a clean copy of the change to be sent to AKC. Maybe Sandy will handle the electronic vote again.

## Committee Reports.

Training- Brenda says that Bob will be starting a new Intro to Scent on 9/14. We will also be starting Obedience and Rally practice runs. We will be critiquing each other. Brenda would like a count of attendance for Happy Tails. We may have up to 50 people in the building. Our Advanced Scent Work class at 4:30 is still ongoing and full.

Sharon S. is still not getting mail through google groups.

Trial update by Barbara Belicose. Obedience is full, with 25 entries, and a waiting list. Rally has 7 open slots. We discussed the CDC requirements for folks coming from Massachusetts, and Barbara will be in touch with them with the appropriate guidelines. She will send a certified letter as proof of informing them, in case there are issues. We will not allow any exceptions to the Maine state rules. We will have a limited number of people in the building, and no spectators will be allowed.

The Scent trial is scheduled for October 17, and entries open on September 9. We will need stewards, timers, and gate keepers. Deb is chief steward for the trial.

Lois said our new ribbons have arrived. We will use ribbons for our upcoming trials, but no trophies except three cash prizes: High in Trial, High Combined, and High Combined in Rally.

There was no Unfinished business.

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We had a short discussion about the trophies usually given out at the banquet. At this time, we don't know what special awards may have been earned. The club would like to plan on getting trophies, as appropriate, and maybe having a Zoom meeting to give out awards. They suggested that the trophy committee send out a message on Google groups, and set a cut off date for trophies. (Suggested Dec. 31?). Maybe we could put off our award "ceremony" until sometime in February.

Our next meeting will be on October 28, by conference call.

Meeting adjourned at 7:36.

Respectfully submitted,  
Drema Shaw, Recording Secretary.



Zero enjoying a sunset with our new member, Jennifer Bourque. Who is Jennifer?  
Learn a little more at the end of the Yapper!

# MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER BOARD MEETING

The October board meeting for Saccarappa Obedience Club was held on 10/14/2020 at 6 PM by ZOOM. The meeting was called to order by President Sandy Cloutier at 6:03 and 8 members were present.

The Treasurer reported a financial gain for September!

The Corresponding Secretary says that everything needed has been sent to AKC for the By-law change. We have no confirmation that it has been received yet.

MJ reported that the Nominating Committee is close to being ready, and should be finalized by tomorrow night. It was hard to find a Treasurer.

The survey results were a unanimous vote to accept Jennifer Bourque as a new member.

## **Unfinished Business**

The Scent Trial: Four refunds were sent because exhibitors earned their titles at another trial. We discussed the entries from out of state, but that does not seem to be a problem at this time. (Entries for the November trial are mostly from Maine, with some from New Hampshire and Massachusetts.)

An email has been sent out for the Scent trial and Mary will send one for the November trial reminding people that masks are required. We will need to follow state and Happy Tails rules for both trials. MJ suggested that we have a package of masks and hand sanitizer at the entry point. Has everyone signed a Covid waiver. Maybe we should also have a package of pens?

## **New Business**

We have had some concerns about the Monday night run-throughs, especially regarding non-members, and times of "classes". This was discussed. Should it be more formalized? Maybe try a sign-in list? Are we sub-letting the space? Sandy will reach out to the training committee to re-evaluate. The every-other-week schedule adds to the confusion, and now we have added people with pet classes. The confusion, number of people, and noise level is a problem.

The Board agreed to accept Rebeccah's request to be exempt from meetings.

Sandy addressed the question of future meetings as it seems that Covid is an ongoing issue. She suggested that we purchase a ZOOM license for \$150 / year. We can have up to 100 people on a call for unlimited minutes. It does not come with an 800 number so it would be expensive for anyone without ZOOM capabilities. There would be a long distance charge for them, but the club could pick up the cost. We discussed scheduling the use of ZOOM and maybe adding a calendar to our "members only" page where we could sign up for committee meetings, etc. Maybe we could have speakers or inservices, too. The Board agreed that this would be a good idea and Sandy will bring it up to the club at our next meeting.

The next Board meeting will be November (how is that possible?!) 11 at 6 PM.

The next club meeting is October 28 at 7 PM.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:10.

Respectfully submitted, Drema Shaw recording secretary.

# CONCEPT TRAINING - PART 4

## Growing Calmness through Concept Training

By Nicki Taylor

"One of the best lessons you can learn in life is to master how to remain calm." aD

As pointed out in the article last month, when dogs are calm, they are going to choose acceptable behaviors. They also get a chance to relax and lower their stress hormones which is important for their health. It is to our benefit as well as our dogs' to do what we can to grow calmness. To understand how to do this, we'll start out with a discussion about buckets.

### Every Dog Has A Bucket



As presented by Dr. Tom Mitchell of absoluteDogs (aD), each and every dog comes with an ever-present bucket, a bucket that is unique to that dog and represents levels of arousal due to stress hormones in the dog's body. These buckets come in different sizes but are not dependent on the size of the dog. It could be that a particular Chihuahua has a bucket the size of a gallon drum, while a certain St Bernard has a thimble-sized bucket.

Buckets vary from dog to dog, but they all collect 'stuff'. The stuff can be good or bad, but it comes from all the activities and events a dog experiences throughout the day - fears and anxieties, excitement, fun, frustrations, over-stimulation. All the good and bad stress that makes up the dog's life pours into the bucket. Those dogs with small buckets, anxious dogs or ones with very stressful - good or bad - lives, dogs that don't or can't calm down to relax will find, at some point, their bucket overflows and their arousal level goes through the roof. It is at this point that a dog's brain races to its behavior boxes and begins pulling out behaviors.

The behaviors may be passive ones such as staring, sniffing, going still, or they could be active behaviors such as barking, screaming, zooming, being destructive, nipping and more. Whether passive or active, these behaviors indicate the dog has reached maximum overload. They are the dog's stress-reducers and actually help lower its stress hormones. These behaviors are also an indicator that the dog is in a bad place and needs help. In fact, it would be best if it were never allowed to get to this point, because the stresses can add up day to day and week to week.



Buckets collect "stuff." Training spaces, elements of training, stresses from a loud tv, radio, passing cars, squirrels, neighbors, neighbor's dog's barking, are always pouring into the buckets each and every day. Some dogs buckets fill faster than another's.



It takes some dogs 72 hours or longer for their stress hormones to drop down to a normal level - and that's if they aren't faced with additional stressors. If the hormones can't drop enough on one day, they are carried over to the next and begin building again from there. As it continues, the dog starts making bad behavior choices repeatedly day after day.

Following is a scenario to illustrate: Let's say you're entered in Open in an obedience trial on Saturday. Your dog's a nice guy, but a little on the anxious side and has been known to get frightened by some loud sounds. While in the ring competing, you get to the retrieve over the high jump, and your nerves get the better of you. You throw your dumbbell smack into the jump, making a sudden, loud noise. With that, your dog startles and begins pacing and circling. You get him back to heel position to continue, but he refuses to take the jump. When you get home, you go out to drill that retrieve exercise to make sure your dog will do it the next day.

Early on Sunday, you have success, so you're happy, but unbeknownst to you, this day you had to set up your crate near a door to the parking lot, and while you stayed near the ring to cheer on your friends, your dog was experiencing the loud clanging of that door whenever anyone came or went. To make matters worse, he started associating the scary door noise with dogs entering. He locked eyes with some of them, and they've growled at him in his crate.

On Monday you take your dog to class as usual. It's been since Saturday that he got frightened. He appeared to do well on Sunday, but his stress level is still high. He didn't get to rest much on Saturday and got further stressed doing drills over the jump. He managed to keep it together for Sunday, but his stress has gone up, not down, because of more unsettling noises and dogs. At class, he's not able to focus well or give you the attention you want.



You wonder if it has to do with the heaters turning on and off and making squealing noises. You're getting frustrated and find yourself tightening up on the lead. When your lesson is over, you have to fight your way through a group of people and dogs to get to your chair and training gear. As you do, your dog and another brush against one another, and your dog whips around and air snaps at the other dog who cries out in fear, even though it wasn't touched. The crowd backs away, glaring at you and your dog, and you're left there defending yourselves saying, "He's never done that before!" All this because of a bucket that spilled over with stress levels that never got a chance to lower. At that point, all it took was a relatively mild trigger, a usually inconsequential event, to result in an over-arousal or fear-based response.

The good news is we can help our dogs. Through training and management, we can help and teach them to relax and default to a generally calm behavior that keeps their buckets relatively empty. Then, when a challenging event occurs, they have room in their buckets to handle it. Moreover, not only have they made better behavior choices, but also, they have reserved their energy for activities and sports you've planned instead of wasting it on things they could have been ignoring.

## A Plan Comes Together:



### Know Your Bucket

To help, we need to be aware of the size of our dog's bucket - how much it can hold, and how quickly it fills. And specifically, what fills it? It isn't just the big events like performing at a trial or an hour at the dog park. Little day-to-day things are often the major contributors. Some dogs are on alert all day long. Every move you make is noted, plus the movements of companion dogs. In addition, things like play, exercise, packages delivered, squirrels racing around outside, and sounds - wind, construction noises, phones, kids playing, microwaves beeping....They all have the potential to add to the arousal bucket. We need to take note and do the best we can to protect our dog.

One thing in our favor is the bucket itself is adjustable. We can improve it. Besides what pays into it, there are some characteristics of the bucket we can influence. For one, there is a hole in the bottom of the bucket. This hole allows stuff to drain out and lower the levels. This may be enough to help many dogs. Even with a small bucket, if the hole in the bottom is big enough, the stressors simply run right through. On the other hand, a big bucket with a tiny hole will eventually spill over if enough stress pays into it. With the correct games, strategies and protocols, we can enlarge our dog's bucket, as well as the hole in the bottom. You may have heard of 'stacking'. It's a term used by some trainers and behaviorists to describe the building of stress until it goes over threshold. Personally, I like using the bucket analogy, because it helps me remember there are two ways to work on stress problems - restricting stress from entering the situation, and reducing it if it has built up.



Once you have an understanding of how much your dog's bucket can hold, how fast it fills and empties - how quickly your dog can recover and lower its arousal level - you can use that information to plan your day or events accordingly. Additionally, when you have an understanding of what things cause the bucket to fill, you can try to avoid those things. However, there's more we can do using aD's concept training, strategies and playing their games.



## Strategies and Protocols

There are a number of things we can practice to promote calmness. Here is a quick look at some of them.

- aD's Calmness Triad - a way of life for you and your dog. This is a set of strategies for training and management, divided into three groups, through which you can rotate through the day to ensure your dog has opportunities to relax. One grouping is *Passive Activities* such as providing food puzzles, stuffed Kongs, long lasting chews, Snuffle Mats, simple scent games and scatter feeding which can all encourage calmness. Another grouping is *Calmness Protocol* where you feed/reinforce any calm behaviors, plan to provide passive activities in conjunction with potentially stressful events, and be alert to problem situations from which you should protect or remove your dog. The third grouping is devoted to *Rest*, providing safe places such as crates, ex-pens, beds and separate rooms where your dog can relax or sleep, kindly removed from stressful happenings.



Snuffle mat

- Ditch the Food Bowl - Instead of simply handing your dog a bowl of food to devour, use some of your dog's daily food allowance to provide food puzzles such as stuffed Kongs and snuffle mats, as well as scatter feeding which all encourage calmness. You may also want to use it to reward any calm behaviors you witness.
- Ditch the Routine - Predicting when events will occur is an important lifesaving skill for dogs in the wild. For some dogs in our homes, routines may be comforting. However, if your dog is so inflexible as to be unable to handle inevitable changes in routine, or if their prediction of coming events results in crazed anticipation, you will find routine rears up to complicate your life with your dog. How crazed is your golden retriever as you drive up to your favorite swimming hole? How much screaming, choking and gagging is going on at the end of the leash as you walk your cockapoo along the route that leads to its favorite field to play with a buddy? aD recommends avoiding routines, changing things up, and playing games to improve flexibility in order to avoid these issues.
- Calm Zones - If you want to be able to eat, practice your yoga or watch TV in peace, plan to keep those areas training- and play-free. Those become areas in which your dog is expected to settle, relax on a bed, or lie calmly beside you. Dogs become what they do. Calmness creates more calmness. Be sure to adjust your energy level to that which you want from your dog, and designate another area where the excitement and activity of play and training are allowed.
- Time Out - Give your dog a break. Getting enough sleep and rest is essential for calmness. Be sure to provide safe sleeping areas for your dog away from the distractions and hustle of normal home life. Protect them from kids, strangers, unusual or hectic activities and noise. Use of crates, ex-pens, or a quiet, separate room will not only provide a layer of protection from disturbances, but also, restrict the dog's access to inappropriate choices that disrupt or prevent rest. Time out areas should be a welcomed, pleasant space to be, not a punishment.

- Game On/Game Off - Develop a cue to indicate to your dog when it's time to pay attention and engage for training, as well as, one for when you're done, and it's okay to chill.
- Ditch the Walks or Exercise - Exercise can be very arousing. Walks can present repeated opportunities for over-arousal. Many people respond to their dog's over-activity by increasing exercise to wear the dog out. However, if your dog is one that spends much of its life in high arousal with a small bucket sloshing over at every turn, you and your dog may truly benefit from avoiding walks and exercises that promote high arousal. Taking a break to give your dog that 72 hours or more of time to decompress could be what is needed. To maintain fitness during these breaks, work on quiet strength training rather than high activity cardio.

## The Power of Games

Following are several examples of games you can play with your dogs while, at the same time, teaching their brains to relax:



- Reward Calm - Simply reward any calm behavior you notice. The treat or attention you give your dog may raise their arousal level again, but they will gradually learn they need to relax to get another reward. Make sure your reinforcement, whether food, petting or praise, is presented calmly. Also, be aware of and don't reward 'fake calm', where dogs struggle to look calm by doing things such as pressing their heads down or lying still but watchful, trying to will you to deliver treats.
- Reward Nothing - Using some of your dog's daily food ration, promptly, but calmly reward your dog for not reacting to any usual triggers such as a dog barking, a person entering the training area, or a bicycle speeding by. In time, this will lead your dog to check in with you when something happens and at the same time remain calm.
- DMT (Distract, Mark, Treat) - Here we have a very effective game that also teaches a check-in along with calmness. Any distraction noticed by you or your dog is calmly marked and rewarded. There are a few developmental stages your dog will go through as you practice this. At first, you may mark and reward with your dog unable to register what's happening. It helps to begin by marking mild distractions or very distant ones, so your dog isn't overwhelmed. Eventually your dog will associate your marker with the treat and turn away from the distraction. In the end, you're looking for your dog to notice a distraction, turn away from it and check in with you before you can use your marker.
- Slow Feeding - The entire experience of feeding your dog is more reinforcing to the dog than the actual consumption of the treat. We can use different techniques of treat delivery to our advantage. To instill calmness, we can deliver treats extremely slowly, requiring the dog to remain still and quiet to get the treat. If the dog leans forward or grabs at the treat, simply move the treat away and start again. You are looking for self-restraint as the dog waits patiently for food to be delivered to its mouth. This game serves multiple uses such as teaching focus, self-control and how to be gentle when taking treats.



- Two On - Lure your dog to step up with its front feet onto a relatively low and stable object that has a non-slippery surface. Deliver the treat when the dog's front feet are on the object and the dog is still. This game is a first stage of several other games and tricks. As your dog develops this skill, you may want to increase the challenge. However, in this case we are working on calmness, so building steadiness and stillness is the goal. This is a good game to use on the road to help anchor an anxious dog. It's also important to note, luring is a much calmer training technique than shaping, and can be used as needed.



- Figure 8 Walking - This game is a nice one to perfect for calming a dog while out and about or entering new environments that might otherwise cause frenzied activity. At aD, they liken it to meditation in motion. Use two objects to mark the turns of the 8 and begin walking very, very slowly with your dog on leash. Do the best you can to walk with a loose leash. It's something that may need a bit of practice, especially since it's recommended to avoid using food. Instead, you're looking for your dog to gradually relax into a slow, steady rhythm of a walk over the same familiar territory, without any new distractions, so it can calm down and focus on you rather than the environment.

Boundary Games - These games promote calmness by teaching a dog to go to and relax on a mat or bed or other defined area. When done well, it resembles crating without a crate. It's very useful for keeping the peace in multi dog households, providing a place for dogs to relax during exciting activities/training, giving the dog a place to be to prevent over-excited greetings of visitors or counter surfing, and providing the dog designated locations to rest or stay out from underfoot. There are many applications for Boundary Games, and besides calmness, they can contribute greatly to training impulse control, stays, and release cues. Teaching boundaries is a process that will go through several stages of development. aD devotes an eBook and video program to the subject.



These games and more can be played and rehearsed until they become very familiar to the dog. Taking them on the road will help build Flexibility. They also give you tools to manage your dogs' arousal levels, and help them focus and engage with you in new and exciting or scary or frustrating locations.

It bears repeating that calm dogs are well-behaved dogs. Employing the recommended strategies and games from aD, to ensure keeping arousal buckets at a low level, will aid in developing calmness. This will make your life with your dog a happier place for you both to be, and your dog's life a happier and healthier way to be.

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This is the final article in this series about absoluteDogs and Concept Training. I hope you've found some useful training information, or, at the very least, some interesting ideas to contemplate. Concept Training offers a different approach by looking at the bigger picture, the overall view or concept, to tackle struggles with a specific dog behavior, rather than pinpointing that particular behavior. Moreover, the games are played out of the situation, away from the problem triggers and avoiding the conditions that would contribute to the dog's stress levels. They've taken Positive Reinforcement to another level that will give you real life results.

To learn more about absoluteDogs and turning your dog's struggles into strengths, check out

[absolute-dogs.com](http://absolute-dogs.com) to read their blog. In addition, visit their Facebook page, absoluteDOGS, to watch videos of some of the games and lessons, and check out their podcast, Sexier than a Squirrel, where you can experience their training recommendations and techniques.



**AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB™**

## **Obedience & Rally**

### **Suggested Best Practices for the Well-Being of Dog Sport Participants**

The AKC supports each club's informed decision to reschedule, postpone or cancel their respective events, as well as supporting clubs ready to hold events in locations that are open and permit gatherings. As events resume across the country, people need to feel safe while enjoying their dog activities. The AKC urges clubs to take appropriate precautions for the benefit of their participants. Events need to be held in a manner that emphasizes the safety of participants and event officials over efficiency.

The following is a list of suggested best practices that may be helpful when planning or attending an event. Event locations, facilities and dates will differ. With a situation that is continually evolving, it is up to the clubs to determine the guidelines that best fit their event. In order to inform participants, specific guidelines established by the club should be published in the premium, club website and posted on signage/flyers at their event.

#### General Practices

1. Clubs, officials and participants are required to follow state, local and facility guidelines that apply to the area and site where the event is held.
2. Practice social distancing consistent with current guidelines. Avoid congregating to the extent possible.
3. Consider wearing masks when in close proximity to others. Clubs should provide masks if desired for officials, judges and volunteers.
4. Consider wearing disposable or washable gloves.
5. Have plenty of hand sanitizers placed for people to use.
6. Wash hands as frequently as possible. Have disinfecting spray at bathroom facilities for people to spray door handles (or anything else they touch).
7. If you utilize portable toilets, please ask for a hand washing station to be delivered as well.
8. Avoid shaking hands or hugging.
9. Avoid touching dogs that are not your responsibility.
10. Avoid common use pens/pencils – bring your own.
11. Disinfect surfaces in common use areas as often as possible (tables, chairs, doorknobs, etc.) Clubs and facilities may consider not providing chairs.
12. Meals – No potlucks. Avoid or stagger group lunches/dinners if possible. It is recommended that clubs supply boxed lunches for judges and volunteers. Hospitality areas

should avoid community items such as salt and pepper shakers, condiments, creamers, etc. Participants should consider bringing their own lunches/drinks.

13. Parking areas – Park with increased distance between vehicles if possible. This is especially critical if handlers are required to crate from their vehicles.

## Event Planning

### 1. Limiting Entries

- Clubs may choose to limit trials based on the number of handlers allowed in the event space. For example, 50 people (handlers, volunteers, judges, event committee) and entries not to exceed 100 for the trial.
- If possible, schedule in shifts to reduce congregating.
- Outdoor events where people can spread out may be able to accommodate larger entries.

2. One Trial Over Two Days – In order to reduce the number of participants on site at one time, clubs may hold their trial over two days.

3. Two Trials in One Day – If more than one trial is offered per day, to minimize the gathering of people, clubs should consider holding concurrent events rather than consecutive events.

### 4. Scheduling

- Consider scheduling participants in specific time blocks within a class in order to reduce crowds. The Trial Secretary can assign a specific number of dogs/armbands to a time block and publish in the judging program. For example: Dogs 101-120: 9:00a.m.-10:00a.m.
- Consider establishing smaller walk through groups to allow for social distancing.
- Participants can provide cell phone numbers for the event secretary to call or text to determine if someone is absent. Likewise, the Trial Secretary could provide a cell phone number for participants to report they will be absent. This prevents waiting and may streamline the event.
- Clubs may state in the premium that when an exhibitor is done for the day, they should leave the building in order to minimize congregating.

### 5. Event Set-up

- For indoor trials, open the exterior doors for better air flow if possible. Where possible, encourage one-way traffic flow with marked entrance and exits.
- Have a separate table for questions located at least six feet away from the Trial Secretary table.

### 6. Crating

- Consider crating outside weather permitting. If the club is planning to have participants crate from their vehicles, the club may need to supply indoor crating if requested due to a participant's health needs.

## Ring Procedure Modifications

- Judges, stewards and exhibitors should maintain the mandated required distancing throughout the event.
- Suggest a chair (or two, one for the in-ring exhibitor and one for the next exhibitor) be placed inside the ring for all classes. The exhibitor will be responsible for placing the leash on the chair when entering the ring and prior to starting the course.
- Once the course is complete, the exhibitor will be responsible for getting the leash. A steward may disinfect the chair between exhibitors. A second chair, for the next exhibitor, will allow for more efficient ring management.
- Ribbons/Awards may be placed on a pick-up table versus handed out. The judge may announce the awards and exhibitors may pick up the awards that were laid out on a table for the class.
- Judges, exhibitors and stewards may wear masks inside the ring.
- Judges should sanitize their ruler after measuring any dogs.
- Stewards should wear gloves or sanitize their hands between handling paperwork.

## Obedience Specific

- Rather than use stewards for the Figure 8 exercise, the club may use upright posts, tall pylons, or chairs as posts. The same object should be used for both posts and all exhibitors.
- Judges may wear gloves or use hand sanitizer between examination exercises. If a judge chooses to use gloves, a new pair of gloves will be used for each dog.
- Examinations – Ensure social distancing requirements are met during examination exercises. For the Utility Moving Stand for Examination, the judge should approach the dog at a slight angle to ensure distancing requirements from handler to judge are maintained.
- Novice Group Exercise – The distance requirement should be modified to 8 feet between dogs and rows to ensure social distancing guidelines are met.
- Directed Retrieve Exercise - Consider providing a grabber for the Steward to pick up the gloves. Wipe down grabber between exhibitors.
- Scent Discrimination Exercise – The steward responsible for placing the articles may wear gloves or use hand sanitizer. Tongs, when used, should be wiped down between dogs.

## Policies that Have Been Temporarily Suspended/Modified

1. Event Application Late Fees – Event application late fees are waived through the end of October. This provide clubs more flexibility in planning or rescheduling their events.
2. For events cancelled in 2020, AKC will apply Event Application fees to the club's next event of the same type.
3. Judges - The judge's assignment limitations of 30 days within 100 miles is waived until December 30.
4. Closing Date - Clubs are allowed, at their option, to have a closing date seven days prior to the event through December 30, 2020. This will provide clubs and exhibitors greater flexibility to decide what to do.
5. Obedience Figure 8 Exercise – Upright posts, tall pylons or chairs may be used in place of people in the figure 8 exercise through December 30, 2020.
6. Obedience Novice Group Exercise – The distance between dogs is modified to 8 feet (currently 6 feet) through December 30, 2020.

Participants are expected to follow state, local government, facility and event guidelines. Clubs should be prepared to enforce the guidelines that apply to their event.

These Suggested Best Practices may be periodically updated. Please check the AKC Rally ([www.akc.org/sports/rally/](http://www.akc.org/sports/rally/)) or the AKC Obedience ([www.akc.org/sports/obedience/](http://www.akc.org/sports/obedience/)) websites for the most up-to-date version.

CDC - How to Protect Yourself and Others:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>

For questions or additional suggestions, please contact the Club Companion Events Department at [Companion Events](#).

## **Stay Safe – Enjoy Your Dogs**





## **Jennifer Bourque**

### **Why would you like to become a member of S.O.C?**

I am looking for a club that offers consistent competition classes. My interactions with the members of SOC have been extremely positive and align with my philosophy and values when it comes to dog training.

To have fun. Respect your members different points of view and set each other up for success. Positive attitudes make for positive outcomes.

### **What assistance would you offer the club should you become a member?**

I am happy to assist in stewarding , setting up for classes, assisting instructors. Just ask :)

I just need a couple weeks notice to make sure I align my family and work schedule.



Jennifer was approved for membership in September 2020. She has attended at least two meetings and multiple classes with SOC. If you see her, please introduce yourself and say hello. If you aren't sure who she is, she'll be the one with the dog the size of a small horse. (Just kidding Jen!) Zero is a great Great Dane and has great pivots. Welcome Jen!