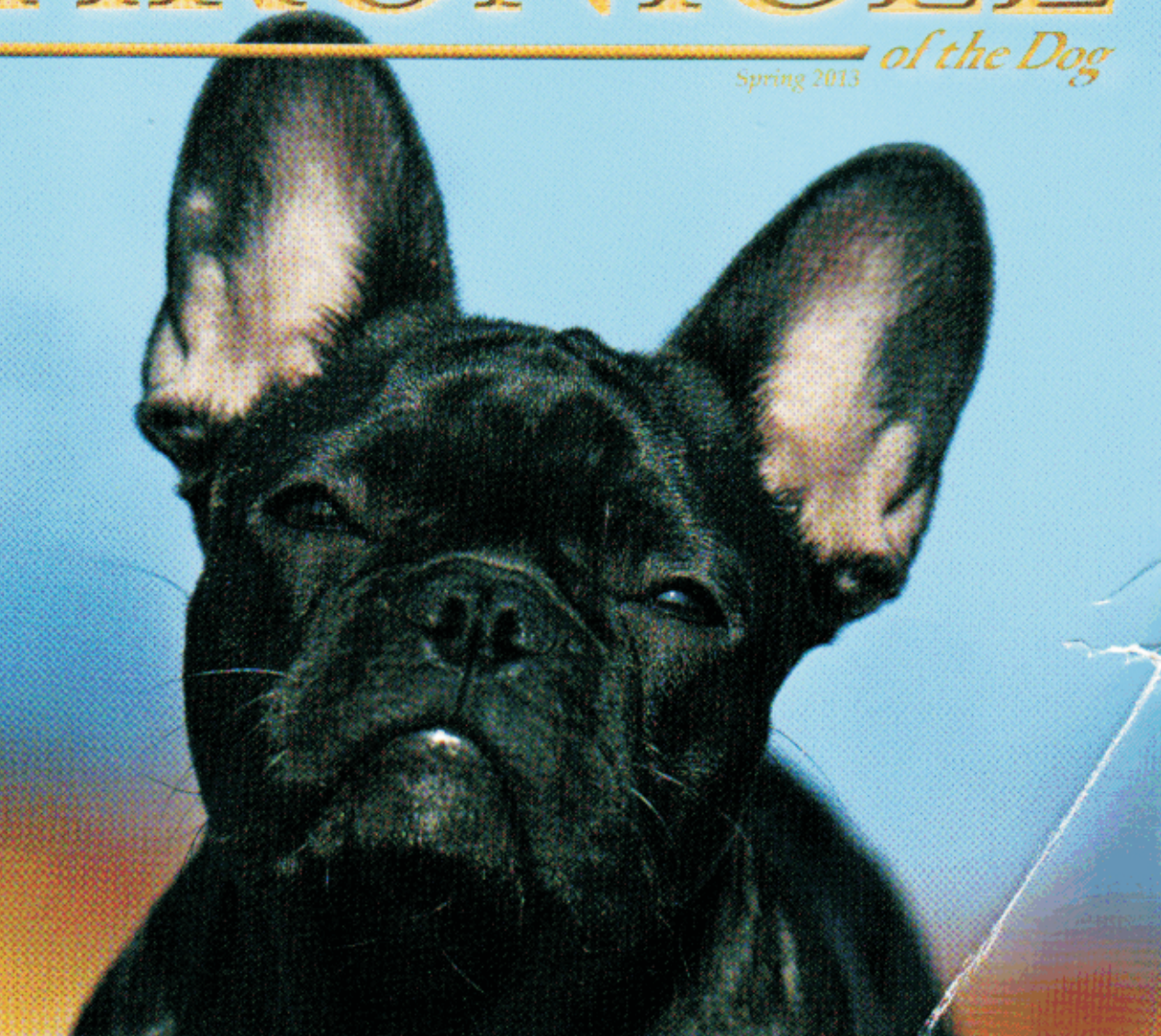


# The APDT CHRONICLE

Spring 2013 *of the Dog*



*Teaching by Example: The Legacy of Dr. F.K. Anderson*  
by Teoti Anderson, CPDT-KA, KPA CTP

*Socialization: Making It Work*  
by Karen Pryor

*The Kid-Canine Coach: Supervisor for a New Generation*  
by Barbara Shumannfang, PhD

*How to Upset a Good Dog Trainer*  
by Nan Arthur, CDBC, CPDT-KSA, KPA CTP

Splash! The overfed canvasback drops like a ton of bricks into the cold Minnesota River. I look over at my yellow Lab as he waits on my every move. In no more than a whisper, I cue him to go retrieve: "Fetch it up." He rushes into the water and happily brings me back the wonderful prize. This one's not for mounting — this big bird makes killer kabobs on the grill. It's fall in Minnesota and there is nothing better than bringing your best furry friend out into the duck blind to do what he was bred to do. He loves to hunt! Or at least I think he does. He has never known the likes of a field trial or a hunt test, but he seems to be quite enthusiastic, not to mention successful, at what he does. He hunts birds and I smile all the while, even if it is ice cold and five-something in the morning.

What does it mean to have a successful positively trained hunting dog?

To me it is about the expectations of the owner and dog. On mornings when I sit in the great outdoors, what do I hear? Or better yet, what do I feel? I feel joy and peace. I feel them even more strongly when I know my dog enjoys going with me on the hunt. I love to be out in nature, love to see and hear wildlife and love to watch my dog do what his genes tell him to do. He has retrieved all his birds without any force or intimidation on my part, and I know we both enjoy that fact. The great game feeds we have are just a plus! Every time someone asks how my hunting dogs were trained, noting that the birds they are eating at my cookout are so dang good, I will tell them.

My dogs were trained with patience, and an understanding of canine behavior and learning. They were trained by teaching them the right thing to do and rewarding them for that. They were trained with lots and lots of practice, and they got it. And I did it all without the use of traditional gun dog training methods. I hope these people will say, "What a great way to get a happy hunting dog! Can you teach me how?"

Gladly!

Unlike most of the dog training world, the gun dog world has not been well-introduced to positive training methods. In my experience, the majority of these dogs are still trained using traditional compulsion methods. Most clients who have gun dogs will send them away for months of training, which will almost always involve the use of force fetch and electronic collars.

What is force fetch? It uses negative reinforcement to train a dog to pick up, hold and release an object. Some trainers restrain the dog on a table while teaching force fetch. An aversive stimulus is applied to the dog, such as pinching the ear or inserting a dowel between the dog's toes and using a rope to compress them. This usually causes the dog to open his mouth, and then the trainer inserts the dummy into the dog's mouth and the stimulus is removed. Gradually the dog is required to hold the dummy for longer amounts of time, or to move forward to take the dummy before the stimulus ceases. With more training, the dummy is moved to the ground and the dog learns to end the stimulus by picking up the dummy on command. The command is then generalized to other objects and the distance is extended so that the dog needs to run out and retrieve the object and bring it back to the trainer. Traditional gun dog training also uses electronic collars in exercises like "force to pile" (using an e-collar as the dog leaves to pick up a dummy from a distant pile), or "water force" (same as above with a water retrieve). There is also an exercise called "stick force" (using a stick, applying stimulus as the dog leaves on a retrieve).

While traditional gun dog training does work, why not offer clients an alternative training method? We all know what clicker training has done for other dog sports. Most people in the gun dog world have no idea what positive training is all about. The biggest challenge is access to trainers who offer positive training methods for gun dog owners. At this point I can only refer interested clients to about a half dozen people in the entire country. While many trainers say that they offer "positive" gun dog

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## Positive Gun Dogs

training, this is most often more of a marketing term. I have found that many do not actually use that as their only (or even their primary) method in their gun dog training.

In 2008, I started Positive Gun Dogs of Minnesota, a resource for people who wanted to use non-traditional gun dog training. I started offering seminars for trainers and interested gun dog owners about how to teach their dogs to do gun dog work with positive training methods. While it has been slow going, I see that there has been an impact. People travel from all over the United States and Canada to learn this and take it back home. Even a NAVHDA (North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association) chapter, which historically has been very invested in traditional methods, came to a few seminars with their lead trainer in tow to check out what positive gun dog training is all about. They were thinking of offering their members an opportunity to try positive training at the club. Wow! When this happened, all I could think was, I did my job: giving people in the gun dog world an opportunity to try something new.

What about people who own hunting dogs but don't hunt? I have found that many owners who have sporting breed dogs are not interested in hunting but would love to see their dogs work doing what they were bred to do. My clients come from a variety of backgrounds. There are those who are recreational hunters, like myself. There are those who want to compete in hunt tests or field trials. And there those who just want to have some fun with the family dog. I started offering classes and seminars that included and focused on owners who want to try field sports with their family dog. I came up with a testing system called K9 Field Sports with these dogs in mind.

K9 Field Sports is geared toward dogs with a genetic heritage to retrieve, flush, or point. K9 Field Sport Awards gives dog owners a way to see what their dog was bred for. K9 Field Sports is very appealing to people who choose to use positive training methods, such as clicker training, as it has a heavy emphasis on basic foundation skills, such as steadiness, built into the training from the ground up. You do not need to be a hunter to play field sports, as live birds are not shot during testing. Field sports are for family dogs (of any breed or breed mix) that are energetic, like physical activity and enjoy playing fetch-type games. It is not a competition, but awards are given against a set standard.

Why would I offer field sports if there are already hunt tests and field trials? This is a good question. Field trials and hunt tests are great, but it is often difficult to apply positive training methods to the goals of these tests. Why try and squeeze a square peg into a round hole? Sometimes it is better to come up with a whole new system, one that supports your overall goals from the ground up. When using positive training in gun dog work, it needs to be systematic. It is all about the expectations of the owners and their dogs. If my clients

### Benefits of K9 Field Sports as a Hobby:

Field dogs are often strong powerful dogs who have been bred for hardwired hunting behaviors. We cannot train that out of them, but we can:

- Work with the dog's natural instinct, not against it.
- Prevent boredom and develop mental and physical fitness for both dog and person.
- Build a stronger bond between dog and person.
- Gain teambuilding skills outside at distances, where it counts the most.
- Learn a great new hobby that the dog was bred for!

do not want to hunt, no problem! They can try field sports, or I will offer them my antler shed hunting class. If my clients want to try hunting, no problem! They can try positive training as applied to the activities they will be doing while hunting for game. If clients want to try hunt tests, I will give them the tools needed, but also give them realistic expectations about the time and effort that are required when applying positive training to this goal.

All in all, we need to give owners with gun dogs and owners with family field-bred dogs more resources in positive training methods. It's 2013, help me bring the gun dog world into training that can be offered in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

*Inga From, CPDT-KSA, is the owner of Positive Gun Dogs of Minnesota and works in animal behavior and training with a special interest in shelter/rescue dogs. In 2008 she received the APDT's Premier Shelter Staff award. She offers a variety of dog and people training/behavior services. Inga is also an ex-game warden and thus very interested in gun dogs and hunting. She enjoys hunting with her Springer Spaniel and Labrador Retriever. Positive Gun Dogs of Minnesota will be hosting a seminar this April, and can also come to you, host your own seminar in your state and help spread the word of positive training in the gun dog world.*

*If you want to know more about Positive Gun Dog Training, you can visit Inga's site at [www.PositiveGunDogsMN.com](http://www.PositiveGunDogsMN.com), where you can also get information about gun dog terminology, resources, classes and seminars.*



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