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Special points of interest:

- Fernamber Talisman awarded Highest Scoring Dog for 2003 at Northern Obedience Dog Club
- Fernamber Off Lead is two years old!
- Teagan's eight puppies leave for their new homes

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Fernamber Off Lead

Welcome to our Autumn Issue

Teagan's puppies were born on 10 December and grew very quickly into adorable Golden Retriever babies.

We had an interesting Christmas Day when our eight puppies and four adult dogs went to my parents home for the day. My sister's six puppies (who were five days older than ours) and five adult dogs joined my mother's two Golden Retrievers and two visiting Goldens. Making a total of 27 Golden Retrievers in one house!

January and February sped by in a rush of cleaning up after the babies, preparing meals and washing up! (And maybe a bit of cuddling!)

These little guys have all left for their new homes now and we hope everyone is enjoying their new puppy.

Baci and Helen have already been back for a family visit.



Teagan's puppies born on 10 December 2003

We were very proud of Paddington, Fernamber Talisman, when he was awarded the Highest Scoring Dog of 2003 at Northern Dog Obedience Club's AGM. His trophy is proudly displayed at home.

Fernamber Off Lead is two years old! Our first issue was published on 3 March 2002 and had a circulation of 50 copies. The current issue had 115 recipients.

Fernamber Off Lead travels around the globe with copies going to the UK and Ireland as well as all the states in Australia.

We hope you enjoy reading it!

Farewell Nathan

Nathan passed away suddenly on 2 February 2004 and is sadly missed by Kerry and David and his Golden Retriever family, Joshua, Crystal, Chloe and Piper.

We will see you again when we meet at Rainbow Bridge.

Nathan

Goorambat Cut N Paste

1 August 2002—2 February 2004



Rocky and Quinn

In one of the first trials of its kind in Australia, a program at a correctional centre has inmates training companion dogs for people with disabilities. The program is organised by Assistance Dogs Australia (ADA). It is seen as a key step for inmates nearing the end of their sentences, in preparing them for life outside prison.

When Golden Retriever puppies Rocky and Quinn are "released" in June 2004 the inmates will have helped train them to switch on lights and open fridge doors for their new owners. The program also makes a dramatic difference within the correctional centre. The prison psychologist said the animals bring out the nurturing instincts in prisoners who have hardened from being shut away. "The unconditional love encourages them to

develop nurturing skills and teaches empathy," she said.

The officer in charge of the program said it gave inmates a chance to participate in the world outside prison. He had noticed a significant difference in the inmates' attitudes since the introduction of the dogs. "They see themselves now as being part of the community and many of the guys are anxious to put something back into the community."

ADA usually fosters its dogs into families for training, but they have been astonished by the rapid development of the prison pups, who have outstripped other dogs.

Rocky and Quinn get a break from jail when they spend weekends at a prison officer's home, where they mix with other dogs and play with children.



Quinn and Rocky are Assistance Dogs Australia trainees

Growling

Growling can be used in play, as a warning or threat, or as a defence signal. A dog might growl in mock ferocity when playing tug of war or carrying a favourite toy. He might also growl if patted where it hurts, when a child pulls his tail or ears, or when he wants his own way. All throaty vocalizations are not growls. Some dogs have an entire repertoire of sounds to show happiness, throaty growls among them. More than any other dog sound, however, growling should be heeded with special attention, for it is also the rhetoric of dominance and aggression. Bentley's almost sub-sonic rumble when Katy toddles

near his food dish or grabs his tail; Spot's grumble when told to sit or when corrected for knocking over the garbage can; Misty's mutters when she is put in her crate – all are warning signs that the dog is trying to play the system to get his own way.

It does not matter if the pet is fearful or bold when uttering the protests; the result – an out-of-control pet – is the same if they are ignored. Submissive pets that growl when approached need training to instil confidence; dominant pets that do the same need training to instil deference to authority. Both may need the attention of a professional trainer or behaviourist.

"Some dogs have an entire repertoire of sounds to show happiness, throaty growls among them."

The Picture Theatre

A man was running a little behind schedule and arrived late at a picture theatre. He hurried in to watch the movie which had already started.

As his eyes adjusted to the darkness, he was surprised to see a dog sitting beside its master in the row ahead, intently watching the movie. The dog even seemed to be enjoying the movie: wagging his tail in the happy bits, drooping his ears at the sad bits, and hiding his eyes with his paws at the scary bits.

After the movie, the man approached the dog's owner, "Gee, your dog really seemed to enjoy the movie. I'm amazed!"

"Yes, I'm amazed as well," came the reply. "He hated the book."



The Intellectual Dog

Types of Vaccines

The two most common types of vaccines are modified live (attenuated) and non-infectious, or killed, vaccines. There are also newer vaccines becoming available that include recombinant protein.

The infectious agent in modified live vaccine (MLV) has been modified so that it will produce an immune response but not cause disease as it replicates. The advantages of MLVs are that they provide rapid protection of a long duration; are less allergenic; produce cell-mediated and local immunity; overcome maternal antibody more quickly; and can protect in one dose.

Disadvantages of MLVs include the risk of contamination with other infectious agents, the possibility of producing disease in immunocompromised patients, the possibility of reversion to virulence and the

need to be handled more carefully to maintain effectiveness.

Killed vaccines have the advantages of being safer in immunocompromised patients, not reverting to virulence and being more stable in storage. The disadvantages are that killed products are more likely to cause allergic reactions because they contain more foreign protein, require the addition of non-specific immunostimulants, require that two doses be given initially, require more frequent revaccination, and don't stimulate much cell-mediated immunity or local immunity.

The newer types of MLVs, the recombinant vector vaccines take the genetic code for key immunogenic proteins and insert it into a non-pathogenic organism such as pox virus or herpes virus.



There are different types of vaccines for your dog

Roll Over

Teach your dog to 'roll over'. Ask your dog to lie down or lure him down with a treat. If he's not sitting completely straight, take notice of which way he swings his hips—most dogs find it easier to roll one way than the other.

Kneel down next to your dog, take your lure and 'magnetise' it to your dog's nose by letting him lick and nibble at the treat but not releasing it.

Gently guide his nose towards his hip. Take your time. You may wish to reward small steps such as simply putting his nose to his hip. Make sure your dog is relaxed

and doesn't feel forced in any way.

Depending on their natural shape, some dogs may respond better if the treat is guided over the shoulder area. Play around with what seems to work best for your dog.

Once your dog is on his back, simply toss the treat the last bit of the way onto the floor to complete the rollover.

Take your time and remember to work in small increments, just five minutes or so at a time. You'll be amazed how quickly your dog will work it out if you keep him enjoying the game and keen to try.

The Long Arm of the Law

A ranger was walking through the local park, when he noticed a man leaving behind his dog's droppings.

The ranger approached the guy and asked if he was going to clean up after his dog.

"I don't have a bag," the man protested. "Here," said the ranger "take this one."

It was immediately clear that this person had never cleaned up after their dog before, because he picked up the poo in his open hand and placed it in the bag!



Do the Right Thing!

An excellent book is
'Caring for Your Dog'
by Dr Bruce Fogle.

This book includes an
extensive medical reference
covering all canine diseases
and disorders.

available from
www.angusrobertson.com.au

The Newsletter from Fernamber Golden Retrievers

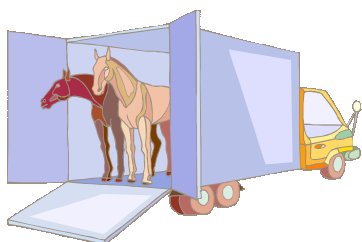
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That wasn't
so hard!



"The greatest pleasure of a dog is that you may make a fool of yourself with him, and not only will he not scold you, but he will make a fool of himself, too."

--Samuel Butler

Until next issue,

Cheryl and Clive,

and our Goldens, April, Teagan, Paddington & Ashley

Research Paper on Clicker Training

A paper published in the Journal of Applied Behaviour Analysis by Ferguson and Rosales-Ruiz describes the thesis research done by Ferguson. Her paper is titled "Loading the problem loader: the effects of target training and shaping on trailer loading behaviour of horses."

Loading a frightened and unwilling horse into a trailer can be quite a scene. To quote the authors, "The combination of a horse that fights loading and an owner who uses physical force can produce a very dangerous situation. Injuries to the trainer can include rope burns, lost fingers, broken bones, bruises and bleeding. Injuries to the animal can include lacerations to the head from banging into the trailer, scrapes and cuts on the legs, broken legs from falling, or even a broken back if the animal falls backwards while rearing."

Ferguson selected a group of five pedigreed quarter horse broodmares, from 5 to 18 years old, who were all "bad loaders" taking up to three hours to get into a trailer. Two people were involved, one to handle the horse and clicker and the other to take data, deliver reinforcers, and write observations. They also recorded every session on video, and compared the video to the paper records to establish reliability. The ultimate goal was to be able to walk each mare up to the trailer, throw the lead rope over her back, tell her to get in, and stand back while she loaded herself.

They started by demonstrating that before training none of the horses would go in the

trailer when cued. (The authors tersely comment that fighting the lead rope and rearing were ignored.) Working with one horse at a time they clicker conditioned them and trained them to go to a target (a red potholder on a string.) Then they used the target, and the cue "Touch," to teach each horse, in progressive increments, to get into the trailer (a narrow, dark, step-up trailer, the worst kind).

Working for many weeks, recording every click and every cue and response, they reached their goal with every mare. Most of them got into the trailer in about 20 sessions, but training to confirm and extend the behaviour went on for more than 70 sessions in at least one case. The authors wrote: "Target training and shaping were effective in training the five horses to load into a trailer without the use of punishment or negative reinforcement. The horses' loading generalized to other trailers and to other trainers, including the owner. Although no procedures were implemented to decrease the undesired behaviours that occurred during baseline, they disappeared soon after trailer training began."

Furthermore undesirable behaviours also decreased outside of the training situation. The mares who once fled to the far side of the field when they saw a person with a halter, now came up to the gate and put their heads in the halters voluntarily.

The authors end the paper by calling for more research on "these important side effects of training with positive reinforcement."