



# UPPER SNAKE RIVER VALLEY DOG TRAINING CLUB NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2020



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## September 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting

**Location: Tautphaus Park (where classes are held)**

**Time: 6:00PM** -be ready to narrow down our choices for the agility trailer wrap (ideas will be printed in a survey)

**Bring your own chair and food!**

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## Canine Good Citizen Testing

**5:15 PM Wednesday, Sept. 2<sup>nd</sup> at**

**Tautphaus Park**

**Please consider volunteering to meet your active membership status**

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## New Classes are starting Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>

-PLEASE consider teaching a class. *We are still short one instructor* and may have to cancel sessions if we don't have enough instructors.

-Contact Suzanne if you are willing to teach or assist.

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**\* If you have brags or any other ideas or information you'd like to see in the newsletter – please send them to me [dezz1025@yahoo.com](mailto:dezz1025@yahoo.com)**

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# Fun Facts and Comic Corner



WHEN THE MAN LEFT THE HOUSE,  
THE DOG WAS ALONE FOR  
**FIFTEEN MINUTES!**



Have you found a fun fact or a fun comic/meme you'd like me to share? Feel free to send it to me!

## auntie lisa's pumpkin doggie biscuits

combine 2c flour,  
1 egg, 1/2c pumpkin,  
1/3c peanutbutter.  
roll out to 1/2" thick,  
cut out biscuits, bake  
40 minutes at 350°.

I got pulled over and told  
my dog to act normal.





# HEALTH BENEFITS of Pumpkin For Dogs

1 CUP  
COOKED  
PUMPKIN



**VITAMIN A**  
14100 IU

**CALORIES**  
49kcal

**SUGARS**  
5.1g

**POTASSIUM**  
564mg

**FIBRE**  
2.7g

## PUMPKIN BENEFITS EYES

Vitamin A is essential for your eye health, and it's no different when it comes to your dog. Vitamin A promotes eye health and the development of night blindness and other eye degeneration.

## PUMPKINS BOOST IMMUNE HEALTH

Vitamin C is integral for immune health all-around. When combined with vitamin A (beta-carotene), E and other antioxidants in pumpkin, it can possibly help prevent certain cancers from developing. Antioxidants help destroy free radicals, or "oxidants" in your pet's system, like yours.

## PUMPKIN SEEDS PREVENT URINARY INCONTINENCE

Pumpkin seeds and flesh contain antioxidants and the seeds in particular contain a healthy dose of Omega 3 fatty acids. These fatty acids have anti-inflammatory properties, which can help dislodge kidney stones. In addition, pumpkin seed powder is known to prevent urinary incontinence, which is the reduced ability to hold in urine.

## PUMPKINS AID IN WEIGHT LOSS

Pumpkins have a high moisture and fibre content, which makes them a powerful tool for your pet's weight loss. Replacing a little of your dog's regular food with canned pumpkin (a few teaspoons for a small dog up to half a cup with a large dog) can help your dog lose some excess weight.

## PUMPKIN TASTES GREAT

Like many people, dogs relish the rich, creamy flavour of pumpkin. And anyone who has tried to feed a dog something healthy that does not taste as good will appreciate this benefit thoroughly. Most dogs willingly lap up even plain cooked pumpkin. But go ahead and add a pinch of cinnamon or honey for an extra tasty treat.

## PUMPKIN IS NUTRIENT-RICH

Pumpkin contains a high concentration of vitamin A (beta-carotene). It also contains a lot of potassium, which helps regulate blood pressure, improves muscle health, and assists in metabolism.

## PUMPKINS MOISTURIZE SKIN & COAT

A number of nutrients in pumpkin, including vitamin A and zinc, improve your pet's skin and coat. The high water content in pumpkin flesh also contributes to supple skin and a lustrous coat. In addition to making your pet's coat shine and look fantastic, the added moisture causes the skin to flake less and less hair to be shed.

## PUMPKIN CAN HELP NATURALLY CONTROL PARASITES

Parasites, such as tapeworms, can wreak havoc with your dog's digestive system and cause unpleasant symptoms including weight loss, nutrient deficiency, dry skin, and a shabby coat. Pumpkin has high amounts of an amino acid cucurbitacin, which is actually toxic to many common dog parasites and has been used to expel worms in ruminating animals.

## PUMPKIN HYDRATES

Dry dog food has a very low moisture content and dogs do not possess a very strong thirst drive. This means that getting extra moisture into your dog through drinking can be difficult. But the high moisture content of pumpkin adds more water to your dog's diet easily and naturally.

## PUMPKINS ENCOURAGE DIGESTIVE REGULARITY

A sign of your dog's good health is whether he is pooping normally. Hard stools or those that are difficult to pass put strain on your dog's intestines. Adding a little pumpkin to your dog's diet supplies the necessary fibre to enable your dog to pass stool easily and cure constipation.



# Clean Up Your Cues!

Be clear about what you want your dog to do.

By **Lisa Lyle Waggoner**

Published: July 16, 2015

It's important to know what your cues are for your dog. Yes, I bet you think you know, but in reality your dog may think your cues are very different than what you think they are.



As a professional trainer, I'm pretty good at adding cues that are clear to me and clear for the dog. However, I've recently had a bit more time to work with my own dog, Willow, a 3-year-old Australian Shepherd. It's been a blast teaching her a few new tricks, adding humorous cues to those behaviors and even changing some cues to a few tricks she's already learned. But I've seen that puzzled look on her face a few times, as if she's saying, "Hey, Mom, I just don't get it. Can you be more clear?" I guess it's time to clean up my cues.

## What IS a cue?



From the handler's perspective, a cue is the word or action we attach to a specific behavior the animal has learned so that we can elicit that behavior again. In the dog-friendly and humane training I use (and hope you use, too), the word "cue" is used instead of "command." Command implies "You do it or else!" In the world of positive training, if the dog doesn't respond to my cue, it's my job as the trainer to assess what just occurred and tweak my own actions to help the dog succeed. If the dog succeeds, the dog earns reinforcement, and reinforcement makes the behavior more likely to happen again.

In reality, a cue is anything your dog can perceive. It's also a chance to earn reinforcement. Our dogs see, hear, smell, touch, and taste, just as we do, so anything a dog is able to perceive by one of her senses can be turned into a cue. In the pet dog world, most people use verbal cues, with hand signals

coming in a close second. In canine sports and service dog work, handlers may use a number of other types of cues, including olfactory cues.

### **Know your ABC's?**

Keep in mind the ABC's: **Antecedent. Behavior. Consequence.**

It's important to understand that the cue (an antecedent) isn't what causes the behavior to happen. The consequence of the behavior is what makes the specific behavior more likely to increase or decrease. If you like that specific behavior (the sit, down, etc.) and want your dog to do it again, reinforce the heck out of it! Reinforcement drives behavior.

### **How to add a cue**

If you want to teach your dog a new behavior, you must first "show" the dog what to do and make sure the behavior is reliable before adding a cue.

For example, if I'm attempting to teach a dog to sit, I would help to elicit the behavior by first luring, capturing, or shaping the movement. Our dogs know how to sit, right? They just don't know how to sit when we say "sit."

To *lure* the dog into a sit, hold a piece of food in your hand, place it at the dog's nose and move it up and back over the dog's head. This causes the dog to look up, rock back a bit, and as she does so, her bottom goes down. When the dog's bottom hits the floor, you'd mark the desired behavior with the click of a clicker (or a verbal marker, such as the word "Yes!") and give the dog a yummy piece of food.

To *capture* a sit, merely wait patiently and observe the dog. When the dog happens to move into the sit position, click/treat.

To *shape* a sit, consider all the tiny parts of the entire sit position (looking up, rocking back, rear end begins to move closer to the floor), and reinforce each of those tiny parts toward the final behavior of sitting.

Once the dog is reliably (at least 80 to 90 percent of the time) performing the behavior, you can begin to incorporate whatever cue you wish by using your desired cue as the dog performs the behavior.

After the dog is successful a few times, use the cue *before* the dog performs the behavior. Example: Say “Sit!” (always in a happy tone of voice). Pause one second, and then lure the dog into the sit position. By pausing, you’re giving the dog an opportunity to associate the sound of your verbal cue, “Sit!,” with the behavior of sitting.

Pay close attention to your dog when you say the cue; if you see even the slightest movement that gives you an indication she’s about to sit, praise her (Good girl!) and lure her the rest of the way into the sit position, then click/treat. By encouraging even her slightest movements, you can help increase her response to the verbal cue. With each successive repetition, slowly fade out the lure, and voila!, your dog will respond to your verbal “Sit!” cue.

### **How to change or add an additional cue**

Dogs can learn multiple cues for a single behavior. I have three different cues for Willow’s sit: a verbal cue (an auditory cue I can use if my hands are busy); a hand signal (a visual cue I can use if I’m talking); and the sight of car keys (another visual cue I trained just for the fun of it). I must continue to use and reinforce each cue periodically if I want Willow’s response to these cues to be reliable.

If you want to change a cue, use the “new” cue, pause, then give the “known” cue, and click/treat the correct response. Repeat several times. Next, give the new cue, pause a little bit longer, give the known cue, then click/treat the desired behavior. This gives the dog time to associate the new cue with the old cue.

As you continue to repeat this exercise, before long, your dog will hear the new cue and move into the desired behavior before you have a chance to give the known cue. You’ll be excited so don’t forget to click and treat! Good job! You’ve just changed a cue.

Every dog learns at a different rate, just as we each do. I've seen dogs who can learn a new cue in as few as three or four clicks and others take longer. If you're doing a good job of minimizing your own body language, it will help your dog achieve success in a shorter amount of time.

### **Confusing our dogs**

So often in training, when a dog doesn't perform the desired behavior in response to the given cue, we blame the dog. I often hear, "He's blowing me off!" or "She's being stubborn!" In reality, the handler just didn't make it clear enough for the dog to fully understand what the person was trying to teach. Here are ways we confuse our dogs:

Expecting our dogs to auto-matically know our language. Dogs don't come with an English software package installed. We must patiently teach them our language, one cue at a time.

Not taking the time to define the cue's goal behavior. Have in mind the specific definition of what you expect. I suggest you create a cue dictionary. Write down every cue you currently use, then define the goal behavior for each cue. Do you want a straight sit with square hips or a sidesaddle sit? A speedy down or a slow down? Defining your cues and the goal behavior for each in writing will help you be clear in your own mind about what you expect, and that will make it more clear for your dog.

Check out the cue dictionary that my colleague, Sarah Foster of Cold Nose College Atlanta, put together for her dog, Jane (see page 7).

Adding cues too early. It's important to teach your dog the behavior and make sure she can perform it reliably before adding the cue.

Using two cues simultaneously. For example, a verbal cue and a body cue (hand signal): Dogs are keen observers. They pick up on our body language before they pick up on our words. If you use a verbal cue, but also a body movement with it (such as the word "sit" and then the hand signal for "sit"), I'd bet that if you said the word and didn't use the body movement, the dog probably wouldn't understand what you meant and might not give you the behavior you expect.

**POOR REINFORCEMENT.** Don't fail to reinforce the newly learned behavior enough for it to become fluent. Some dogs catch on very quickly; others more slowly, but they all can learn if we're patient and reinforce the desired behavior appropriately.

Choosing cues that look similar or sound similar. Choosing the verbal cues such as Down and Bow for two different behaviors can be confusing for your dog. Instead of Bow, I suggest Bravo or TaDa!

There are other reasons a dog doesn't respond to a cue: the dog didn't see or hear the cue; the dog didn't recognize the cue because it's too similar to another cue; the dog was distracted by the environment (another dog, person, squirrel); the dog felt unsafe.

So, repeat after me: "Don't blame the dog." Take a look at your training techniques and find a way to tweak the process so you can help your dog be successful. When your dog is successful, she earns reinforcement and that behavior you worked diligently to install and put on cue works perfectly. The result is clear communication with your favorite furry friend. Happy dog. Happy trainer!

## 5 Things to Know About A Dog's Threshold

Does your dog sometimes lose it" or shut down? Understanding his



"thresholds" will help you teach him to stay calm and happy."

By **Mardi Richmond, CPDT-KA**

**Published:** March 13, 2013 **Updated:** April 24, 2019

The term "threshold" is often tossed around by dog behavior experts when they talk about working through a canine behavior issue. When you work



with your dog on, for example, reactivity with other dogs or fear of children, the usual recommendation is to work with the dog “under threshold.”

The concept is most often used in relationship to canine aggression, fear, and reactivity. But understanding a behavior “threshold” is helpful for everyday training and learning situations, too. It can be a key element when socializing puppies or young dogs, instrumental in teaching excitable dogs to be calm, and essential for insecure dogs to find confidence.

What exactly is a threshold? Consider the threshold of a front door. When you cross a threshold, you move from one space to another. A behavior threshold is a similar concept; it’s when your dog crosses from one emotional state to another. If you spend time with a dog who is concerned about other dogs, you have probably witnessed the moment when he or she moves from seemingly okay into out-of-control behavior. That is going over threshold.

Here are five things that everyone can benefit from knowing about thresholds.

## 1. A dog’s threshold isn’t always marked by barking and lunging.

When talking about “going over threshold,” most people picture a dog that suddenly becomes reactive: barking, lunging, and snarling. But there are many other expressions of being over threshold. Some include:

- Shutting down or freezing.
- Being overexcited (for example jumping or mouthing).
- Being distracted to the point of no connection.
- Doing “zoomies” (zipping around crazily).

When you are with your dog, you may notice when your dog stops taking treats, stops playing, or suddenly is calmer than usual. These may be a signal that your dog is approaching a threshold, or has even already moved from a comfortable emotional state into an uncomfortable state.

## 2. Over-threshold is more than behaving badly.

When a dog is over threshold it generally means that the dog is behaving in a way that we don't like. More importantly, it means the dog is in a state of distress.

When a dog crosses an emotional threshold, certain physiological and psychological effects begin to take place. The dog may breathe more heavily and his heart rate may increase. A dog who is over threshold is *reacting* rather than thinking; he is in a fight, flight, freeze, or fool-around state. He may not be able to listen to you (or even hear you). In addition, when a dog is over threshold, you cannot *teach* him to behave differently. A dog will not be able to learn until he back under threshold.

## 3. A dog's threshold changes!

Unlike the threshold of your front door, an emotional or behavior threshold doesn't stay in the same place; it can change from minute to minute and from one situation to the next.

The setting for a dog's threshold at a particular moment depends on a variety of criteria. For example, take a dog I will call River. He is a little insecure in new places, does not particularly like other dogs, and he becomes very excited by movement. Alone, none of these are a problem for River. He may be nervous in new places, but generally, he just gets a little extra sniffy. He's not happy about other dogs, but will usually tolerate them. He gets excited when a bicycle goes by, but can still listen when called away.

But if all of these things happen at once – walking in a new place, several bikes speed by very close, and a young dog suddenly intrudes on his space – it's too much for River to handle. The combination may cause him to go over threshold and snarl at the young dog.

### **Some of the things that can affect your dog's threshold are:**

✓ **The number of triggers** (the more, the bigger the risk). As in the example above, a lot of small triggers at the same time pushed River over threshold. Note: A trigger is not always something your dog is nervous about or afraid of; a trigger can be anything that increases your dog's arousal or excitement. For example, rowdy play can cause some dogs to go over threshold!

- ✓ **Proximity** or how close a dog is to the trigger. In most cases, closer is more difficult. But with some dogs, something farther away can actually be more difficult. For example, something farther away may be less identifiable (and so more scary).
- ✓ **Frequency** (how often the trigger happens). If a dog faces the same trigger repeatedly, especially in a short period, he may react more strongly.
- ✓ **The intensity of the trigger.** For example, if the trigger is a sound, how loud it is or how long it lasts might affect the dog's reaction.
- ✓ **Being hungry, thirsty, tired, or in pain,** can all impact a dog's threshold.
- ✓ **Accumulated stress** can also affect a dog's threshold. For example, if your dog has a fun but stressful weekend at an agility trial, he may go over threshold more quickly if spooked by a loud sound on Monday morning. (It may take several days for his stress hormones to return to normal, so accumulated stress responses are not always easy to trace.)

## 4. You can help your dog stay under his threshold.

To help your dog stay under threshold, you can learn what types of things might be triggers for your dog. Anything that creates stress, high arousal or overexcitement is a possible trigger. Identify both positive stressors (like rowdy play, chasing toys or hunting) and negative stressors (like scary dogs, strangers, or loud noises).

In addition, learn your dog's body language, and what signals precede your dog's going over threshold. For some dogs, you may notice tension, some may become more excited, and some may try to move away or start sniffing the ground. Most dogs take treats more roughly when they are getting close to threshold.

Stay focused on your dog. Any time you are in the presence of your dog's triggers, pay attention so you will notice if your dog's behavior or energy level shifts or you see stress signals.

If you notice your dog's arousal increasing, take action; don't wait for him to go over threshold. If your dog is getting close to threshold, you can:

- ✓ Create distance between your dog and the trigger.
- ✓ Do focus exercises to bring your dog into a thinking state.
- ✓ If necessary, leave the situation altogether.

Training and behavior modification are key tools when it comes to helping your dog stay under threshold. Over time, training can change a dog's threshold levels around certain triggers. Plus, when you are around a trigger, actively training can help keep your dog focused and in a less reactive state.

Should you work your dog close to threshold? If you are working with your dog on a particular behavioral challenge, you may purposely expose your dog to certain triggers. Ideally, you will find that balance of exposing your dog enough that he or she builds confidence and makes progress, but not so much that it causes undue stress.

Very important note: **If you are working on fear or reactivity, going over threshold frequently will slow your dog's progress.** If you see little or no improvement in a problem area, consider that you may be working your dog too close to threshold, or over threshold.

## 5. If your dog goes over threshold, take action.

Let's face it: We cannot control everything that happens in our lives or our dog's lives. As much as we may try to help our dog stay under threshold, there may be times that he or she steps over and behaves badly. What can you do in that moment?

- ✓ Get your dog out of the situation immediately. This is not a time for training, learning, or fixing problems.
- ✓ Take note of all of the factors that led to your dog going over threshold.
- ✓ Make a plan for the next time you are in that situation, so that you can prevent it from happening again if at all possible.

Understanding the concept of thresholds can help in everyday learning situations for all of our dogs. Keeping a dog under threshold can promote an optimum learning state, which can make training happen faster and with less stress. For dogs with behavior challenges such as fear and reactivity, understanding the concept of thresholds and making an effort to keep the dog under threshold while

you work through challenges can make a huge difference in progress and success. Understanding thresholds gives you an advantage when it comes to training and to helping your puppy or dog be calm and confident.

*Mardi Richmond, MA, CPDT-KA, is a writer and trainer living in Santa Cruz, California with her partner and a wonderful heeler-mix named Chance.*

## **USRVDTC BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Meeting Date 8/13/2020

The regular monthly board meeting of the Upper Snake River Valley Dog Training Club was called to order by President, Nicki Bowden , at 6:27p.m., on Thursday, August 13<sup>th</sup> 2020, at Tautphaus Park, in Idaho Falls ID.

Previous Board Minutes Read/Dispensed: Last board meeting posted in the newsletter

Motion by: Suzanne Belger

Seconded by: Lucien Fredericks

Board Members Present:

Suzanne Belger

Nicki Bowden

Lacey Moon

Lucien Frederick

Report of President: None

Report of Vice President: None

Report of Secretary: None

Report of Treasurer: Report held for regular meeting

Report of Committees: None

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: None

Motion for Adjournment: Suzanne Belger

Seconded by: Lucien Frederick

Time Adjourned: 6:28pm

# USRVDTC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The regular monthly meeting of the Upper Snake River Valley Dog Training Club was called to order by President, Nicki Bowden , at 7:11 p.m., on Thursday, July 18th, 2020, at Tautphaus Park, in Idaho Falls ID.

Members present (for Board meeting and regular meeting)

Lacey Moon	Aubrey Parry	Nicki Bowden	Suzanne Belger
Rosha Adams	Diana Robinson	Lois Olson	Steve Olson
Duane Loomis	Cheryl Loomis	Desirae Chase	Alicia Thompson
Marilynne Manguba	Lucien Frederick	Linda Newby	Shel Williams
Carl Frederick	Sun Norrell	Don Williams	LaDawn Moad

Introduction of Guests/Visitors: None

Minutes of Previous Regular Meeting Read/Dispensed: Printed in Newsletter

Motion by: Suzanne to accept

Seconded by: Lois Olsen

Reason:

Report from the Board Meeting: Motion to suspend since everyone was here by Suzanne Belger.

Report of the President: None

Report of the Vice President: None.

Report of the Secretary: Agility Trial

Report of the Treasurer: Suzanne Belger read the monthly and year-to-date financial reports. Copy included.

### Report of Committees:

Obedience – Lucien stated there were 28 more entries on Friday than last year, 53 more entries on Saturday, and 47 more Sunday. Overall there were more obedience entries than rally entries. He also stated the judges were present and explained the change in the male judge. The changes due to COVID-19 for the trial were discussed. Stewards will use gloves. Bottled water was to be given out by Lucien only. Desi asked about wearing masks- people don't have to wear a mask in the ring, but outside the ring and around other people masks need to be worn. Shel asked about events and maps. Lucien stated that it will be run regularly. Lucien was looking into the procedure for awarding ribbons and cards. We don't want everyone back in the ring.

Scent – Nicki- The dates are set for 12/12-13. We have judge willing to come. She'll finish up getting ready for it.

Unfinished Business: Steve – The trailer wrapping will be under \$3000. What do we want on it? Send ideas to Desi and she'll put them in the newsletter. We vote next meeting.

Nicki- nominating committee. Someone from the board and 3 others put in nominations for next year. If the board is willing to stay then they don't need nominations. Nicki, LaDawn, Desi, Shel(alternate) as nomination committee

### New Business:

2 more obedience teachers are needed for the next session. We will have to cancel classes if we don't get teachers. Classes will be held at 4H building

Diana – Sept 17<sup>th</sup> is there a tracking premium yet? No premium/no secretary yet(Marilynne). She'll put a call in tomorrow and check. Anyone who wants to be on the committee let Marilynne know. Cheryl will be secretary if her dog can still enter. Aubrey on committee and Nicki

Membership Applications Read/Approved: None

Motion for Adjournment: Steve Olsen

Seconded by: Lucien Frederick

Time Adjourned: 6:53

Location of Next Club Meeting: July Meeting no picnic in Tautphaus park. July 16<sup>th</sup>  
7pm