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The Barker

A Therapy Dog Publication of St. John Ambulance NS/PEI Council

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How Smart is Your Dog?

Do you ever wonder why some dogs are so intelligent that they can herd sheep, rescue people from avalanches, or sniff out drugs for police, but some can't even seem to master "sit" or "stay"?

While there are many ways to define intelligence, your dog's problem solving abilities are perhaps one of the best ways to determine how mentally adept they really are. As with intelligence tests developed for humans, the IQ tests for dogs suffer from limitations. As you go through these tests, remember the results are being evaluated by humans, not by other dogs.

Intelligence in dogs is also measured differently by different people. If I asked 50 people to describe what an intelligent dog would be, I would most likely get 50 different answers. Maybe you think that a dog that brings you the newspaper in the morning is a really smart dog, or that a dog that sneaks socks out of your drawer and chews them up is too smart for their own good. Another thing to keep in mind: speed is not always a determining factor in intelligence – persistence is just as important in problem solving techniques. So just because they take a while to solve a problem doesn't mean that those brain cells aren't working! Another thing to remember is that sometime more intelligent dogs can be difficult to train because they tend to question authority and see just how much they can get away with.

Just like humans, there are different kinds of "doggy" intelligence. For dogs, there are two basic kinds: instinctive and adoptive intelligence. Instinctive intelligence comes with the breed and type of dog, so certain dog breeds have inherent differences in natural ability. For example, some dogs like Greyhounds and Afghan hounds are sight hounds and will fare better at sight-oriented tests. Other breeds, like bloodhounds and beagles use their noses to solve problems, and therefore will probably be better at scent-oriented tests.

But there is also a learning ability, and this can include environmental learning, social learning, language comprehension, and task learning. This is similar to humans – some human beings are better at math or logic questions, and others may fare better at creative solutions to problems.

These strengths aren't better than any other, they are simply different types of intelligence. The same theory works for different dogs, so while your dog may do well at one kind of test or another, it may not be due to intelligence as much as the dog's natural ability to achieve those results as well as their own way of looking and thinking through a problem.

Below are some tests you can do with your dog, as well as a scoring system to keep track of intelligence. Don't necessarily try to do all these tests in one day, as your dog may become overwhelmed. And also, be positive! If you turn these tests in to games, you and your dog can have a lot of fun.
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From the Editor

Welcome to 2007, and hopefully a beautiful spring! 2006 was an amazing year for the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program, and I am confident that 2007 will be even better. As of December 31st, 2006 there were 186 teams visiting 105 facilities, for a total of 4,044 visits and 10,494 hours. Amazing!

This year we will continue with our new volunteer recognition program and will also work to improve on it as time goes on. If anyone has any suggestions or feedback please let me know.

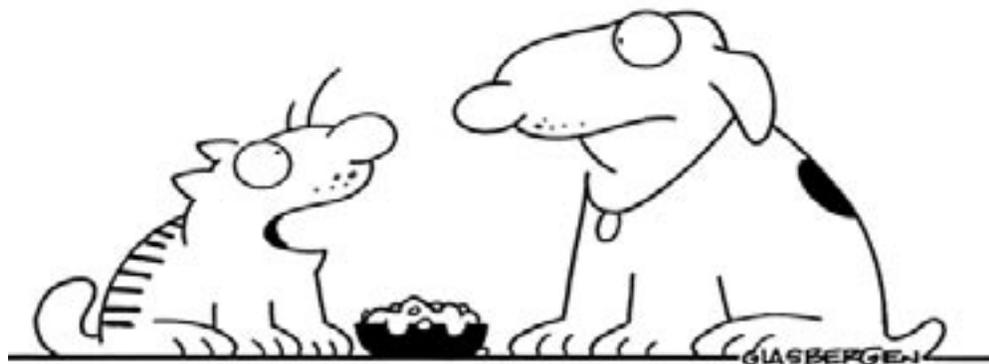
I will of course continue to promote the program around Nova Scotia and PEI this year, and if anyone has any ideas or would like to help me with this, it is greatly appreciated. I am finding that with each passing year more and more people are familiar with the program and with the wonderful work of the volunteers involved.

I am also celebrating my third year with St. John Ambulance at the end of March. I can't believe that I have been here for that long already, but I guess it is true that time flies when you are having fun. I have really enjoyed my time here so far, and that is thanks to the fact that this is an amazing program with wonderful volunteers.

So, with that said, I hope everyone enjoys the Spring 2007 edition of The Barker!

Dog Jokes...that make you wanna HOWL!

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www.glasbergen.com



"Eat, sleep, eat, sleep...I don't know how much longer I can keep up this insane pace!"

"Brothers and sisters, I bid you beware of giving your heart to a dog to tear"
- Rudyard Kipling

Thank You Purina!

A new proud sponsor of the Therapy Dog Program

We are pleased to announce that Nestle Purina PetCare Canada has graciously agreed to become a sponsor (for a five year term) of the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program in NS/PEI. The first installment of \$5,000 has already arrived and will be used for new uniforms (with the Purina logo on them), as well as promotion of the program and volunteer recognition. The future installments of \$1,500 per year will also be used for uniforms, program promotion, and volunteer recognition.



Your Pet, Our Passion.®

We would like to thank Janice Kivimaki, Volunteer Coordinator for Dartmouth, for her help in this endeavor.

We are also in the process of ordering the new Therapy Dog golf shirts with the Purina logo on them, so if anyone needs a new shirt, please let us know what size you need and I will make sure that one is ordered for you.

Welcome New Volunteers!



Mindy Murphy
& Alaska
- Halifax



Judi
Honsberger
& Max
-Dartmouth



Volunteer Spotlight:

Al Thompson & Holly



Al retired from a 34 year career in Education in 1991. He has been training and showing Labrador Retrievers for the last 5-8 years and spends his spare time Obedience and Field Training his dogs.

Camlab Chocolate Holiday Magic is an excellent Field Dog and has two Canadian Kennel Club Field Titles. She has a Working Class Title and a Junior Hunter Title. She is called Holly because she came home to Al and his wife Claudia on Christmas Eve.

Al has some experience with visiting Hospitals and felt Holly would be an excellent candidate for the Therapy Dog Program. She proved to be a great visitor.

Al and Holly visit the Scotia Nursing Home in Lower Sackville and the residents wait for Holly's regular weekly visits. Holly has now completed over 30 visits and enjoys being a productive member of the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program.



Dog Rules...

The dog is not allowed in the house.

Okay, the dog is allowed in the house, but only in certain rooms.

The dog is allowed in all rooms, but has to stay off the furniture.

The dog can get on the old furniture only.

Fine, the dog is allowed on all the furniture, but is not allowed to sleep with the humans on the bed.

Okay, the dog is allowed on the bed, but only by invitation.

The dog can sleep on the bed whenever he wants, but not under the covers.

The dog can sleep under the covers by invitation only

The dog can sleep under the covers every night.

Humans must ask permission to sleep under the covers with the dog.

-From "My Dog is the World's Best Dog" by Suzy Becker.

How Smart is Your Dog?

Continued...

Towel Test

Take a large towel or blanket and gently place it over your dog's head. If he frees himself in less than 15 seconds, give him 3 points. If it takes 15-30 seconds, 2 points. Longer than 30 seconds earns 1 point.

Bucket Test

Place a dog treat or a favorite toy under one of three buckets placed next to each other. Let the dog know which bucket the treat is under, then turn the dog away for a few seconds. Then, let her find the treat. If she immediately goes to the correct bucket give her 3 points. If she takes two attempts, score 2 points. If your dog looks under the other two buckets first, score 1 point.

Favorite Spot

With your dog out of the room, rearrange the furniture. When he re-enters the room, if he goes directly to his favorite spot give him 3 points. If it takes him 30 seconds to investigate before he finds his spot, give him 2 points. If he decides on a new area completely, score 1 point.

Chair Puzzle

Place a treat under a table or chair low enough so your dog can only fit her paw and cannot fit her head. If your dog figures how to reach the treat within one minute, score 3 points. If she uses her paws and nose, score 2 points. If she gives up, score 1 point.

Go For A Walk!

On a day or time you normally don't walk your dog, quietly pick up your keys and his leash while he's watching you. If he gets excited immediately, score 3 points. If you have to walk to the door before he knows it's time to go out, score 2 points. If he sits and looks confused give him 1 point.

Barrier Test

Construct a barrier from cardboard that is 5 feet wide and taller than your dog when she's on two legs, so she can't see over it. Attach two boxes to either side as support structures. In the center of the cardboard, cut a 3 inch wide rectangular aperture – it should run from about 4 inches from the top to about 4 inches from the bottom. This way, the dog can see through the barrier but can't physically get through. Toss a toy or treat to the other side of the barrier, or have someone stand on the other side. If your dog walks around the barrier within 3 seconds, give her 3 points. If she goes around the barrier between 30 seconds and one minute, give 2 points. If she gets her head stuck trying to go through the barrier, give her 1 point.

Scoring and Results

16 points or higher – Brilliant!
13 to 16 points – Well above average

9 to 12 points – Average

5 to 8 points - Below average

1 to 4 points – Not the brightest kibble in the bag, but we still love 'em!

Tips for your Therapy Dog Visits

The St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Manual (a set of rules/guidelines each volunteer coordinator receives) provides some useful tips concerning visits. This is information that all volunteers would receive during their pre-evaluation session, however they are included in this issue of The Barker as a reminder/refreshers. If you have any questions about any of the information, please let Tiffany know.

As a St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog volunteer you get to meet all kinds of interesting people during your visits – each of them an individual person with feelings and potential. Following are some general tips to use while you visit:

- Avoid talking down to people. Treat every person you visit as you would like to be treated – with respect.
- Be considerate and listen – you may become aware of a person's interests and talents which could be used to further encourage them.
- Avoid judging people or their families.
- Remember that as a volunteer, you are not there to play the role of social worker, nurse, pastor, medical doctor or lawyer. Your role is to be friendly, courteous and sensitive to the needs of the person you are visiting – be yourself.
- Try to be dependable, but never promise more than you know you can deliver.
- Many times you will be in a medical or nursing home environment, which has paid professional services. Be aware that some patients or residents have "DNR" (Do Not Resuscitate) orders. If you notice someone in need of medical assistance, contact a staff member. Even if you have first aid qualifications, DO NOT assist a patient or resident.
- When you first meet someone, comment on something tangible, such as something new in the room or what the person is wearing.
- Watch and listen attentively – the person you are visiting will often provide subtle cues to help you develop a friendship with them.
- Touch can be a means of communication. Guiding the person you are visiting to pet your dog, feel its fur or scratch its ear provides a non-threatening opportunity for touching.
- Remember that information about the person and their family is confidential. However, you should never promise that you will not tell anyone something they tell you – use your discretion to determine if information needs to be passed on to the facility supervisor or your coordinator.
- Some people may become so absorbed in your visit that you may find it difficult to leave. Explain honestly that someone else is waiting for a visit from you and your dog, or that your dog needs to go outside to relieve itself.
- Allow for changes from one visit to another in a patient's or resident's frame of mind or acceptance of you or your dog.
- Remember that no two visits will be the same.
- Remember your dog's safety – check the room (especially the floor) for potential hazards to your dog (i.e. medications within reach, spills, broken glass).

Paws-itive Reviews

In an October 2006 meeting of the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Advisory Committee, it was suggested that we implement some **follow up visits** for the volunteers in the program. The basic idea of these visits is for the volunteer coordinators to touch base with volunteers that have been visiting for quite some time in the program, and to follow along on a visit with them to see how things are going. In February 2007 the Advisory Committee met again to discuss this and we have come up with a format for the visits, as well as a plan to implement them. We are hoping that we can get a start on this later in the year. These visits will be known as "Paws-itive Reviews".

Why do we feel the need to have these follow up visits? Many of you may be familiar with the Volunteer Medical Responders (formerly the Brigade) which is another free community service program offered by St. John Ambulance. The VMR groups go through a similar application process as Therapy Dog volunteers; however they are re-certified every 2-3 years. Up until now there has been nothing like this with the Therapy Dog program, and we feel that there should be.

By following along with a volunteer team during one of their visits we can learn if they are still happy with the program, if the facility they visit are pleased with it, and that the volunteers themselves are still familiar with the guidelines of the program, as well as any new guidelines that have been adopted since the beginning of the program. These visits are not meant to "catch" volunteers not following rules, etc. but to simply help ensure the quality of our program for everyone involved.

These follow up visits will occur on a **bi-annual basis**, and will be done during each volunteers regular scheduled visits so as to not interrupt either the volunteer or facilities schedule. Your volunteer coordinator will also contact you to arrange when they can accompany you on a visit.

***If anyone has any questions or concerns about this,
please let Tiffany know.***

Poetry Corner

Frances

It seems like yesterday
When we'd talk of tomorrow
A promise I'll keep
Even now that you're gone
I feel so lost
Life doesn't seem fair
My tears don't stop
And I just wish you were here
You taught me so much
And made me feel loved
You were just like a grandmother
And that's what counts
Prince loved you
You were his best bud
He was always excited
To come and visit you
He'd run and jump
Then pull me through your door
No matter who was sitting
That bed was only his and yours
He'd let you pet him
And play with his feet
He didn't even let me
Play with those feet
You are so special to him
I just wish he'd understand
You're gone some where better
Even though it hurts
I know one thing now
When he crosses the bridge
He'll have his best bud around
So tomorrow I'll hurt
And the day after that
I'll cry and mourn and never forget

All the happiness you brought us
The joy you gave
Your stories and memories
Will never ever fade
And when I have my own children
I promise to tell
The story of a special lady
Who meant so very much to me
So my tears are only natural
And even though my heart pains
I'll never forget you
Or what you've given to me and
my dog
You are a special person
Even though you're gone
Salt of the earth
Now rest in Gods Heavens
I'll see you some day
And when I do
I'm sure you'll be talking
To my boy Prince
So keep him and Jester safe
When they join you some day
You can give them all
The treats you want
And never have a limit again
For I know I'll never forget
A wonderful women like you
You're memories will last
In my heart forever
That is my promise to you.

-Written by Kaitlin Fraser

St. John Ambulance Now Offers a Pet First Aid Course!

The St. John Ambulance Pet First Aid course is designed to give pet lovers the skills required to provide first aid to an ill or injured pet. Pet First Aid provides you with the knowledge, judgment, confidence and skills needed to respond safely and effectively in any situation. The course is not meant to be a substitute for veterinary care, but does teach skills that will help you keep your pet stabilized on the way to the vet, or prevent an emergency from happening in the first place.

The program covers a wide variety of topics including: injury prevention, artificial respiration, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, airway obstruction, choking, heimlich maneuver, bleeding and wounds, shock, dehydration, poisoning, toxins, fights and bites, delivering puppies/kittens, and many more important topics.

Students receive the St. John Ambulance Pet First Aid Guide Book as well as a 15% discount on Pet First Aid Kits. All St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog volunteers will receive a 10% discount on the cost of the course as well.

The course is 8 hours long and costs \$55 per person. The course is usually held on evenings or weekends.

The course is available in metro on April 2nd & 3rd (evenings), June 2nd (Saturday), September 10th & 11th (evenings), and November 25th (Sunday) It is available throughout Nova Scotia and PEI if there is a group of at least 8-10 people. There are currently waiting lists for people interested in the course that live in areas outside of metro. **If you are interested in attending the Pet First Aid course, please call the training department at 463-5646 or 1-800-565-5056.**

"To the world you are nothing. To a rescue dog, you are the world."
-Author Unknown

The Gourmet Dog

.... Recipes For Your Best Friend.

NATURAL DOG BISCUITS FOR FIDO

| | |
|---------|-------------------------|
| 1/4 cup | Hot water |
| 8 | Chicken bouillion cubes |
| 1 pk | Active dry yeast |
| 1 t | Sugar |
| 1.5 cup | Tomato juice |
| 2 cup | All-purpose flour |
| 2 cup | Wheat germ |
| 1.5 cup | Whole wheat flour |

Preheat oven 300.

1. Pour water into large bowl. Add bouillion cubes and crush with fork.

2. Stir in yeast and let stand 5 minutes. Stir in remaining ingredients until well blended.
3. Sprinkle a little flour on cutting board. Take 1/3 dough and form ball.
4. Using rolling pan flatten to about 1/4 inch. If too sticky, add more flour.
5. Cut dough into shapes with knife or cookie cutters.
6. Use spatula to put on cookie sheet. Repeat with rest of dough.
7. Bake biscuits 1 hour in 300 degree oven. Let biscuits dry in turned off oven for about 4 hours. Let cool before giving to dogs.

WANTED: *Someone to Love*

Jesse is a gorgeous 1.5 year old Red Bone Coonhound/Lab mix who loves other animals and everyone she meets, especially children. Jesse listens very well to commands but would benefit from some obedience training, especially for her leash manners. She does tend to get excited if she knows she is going outside or when playing with children, but calms down quickly and easily when told to. She has a very gentle demeanor and eyes filled with wisdom to share. Jesse is a wonderful, sweet little girl that will make a great companion and friend, as well as a Therapy Dog!

If you are interested in Jesse please contact Lab Rescue at:
t.viscount@ns.sympatico.ca



**PLEASE CONTACT
TIFFANY MULLEN, PROGRAM ASSISTANT BY:
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TOLL-FREE: 1.800.565.5056 EXT 2302
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