

September-October
2004



GDCNC Barker

The Newsletter of Great Dane Club of Northern California

www.greatdanecub.org

Health Survey & Anesthesia Protocol Seminar: Conclusions, Comments & Resources

Thanks much to Lucretia Marcus, the GDCNC Education Chair for organizing a very valuable Saturday of Great Dane health education and very special appreciation to our esteemed guest speakers, Mary Anne Zanetos, Scientific Advisor to the GDCA, and Sue Cates, RVT, author of the recently approved surgery protocol.

The GDCA Health Survey was commissioned to determine the identify health and welfare issues of greatest concern to our breed. Mary Anne summarized the key findings:

- dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM) is a major health concern
- both mortality and incidence data support x-linked inheritance of DCM
- a significant number of owners have adopted alternative veterinary and dietary practices
- developmental bone diseases continue to afflict approximately 15% of Great Dane puppies
- allergy and skin problems are significant issues
- temperament problems are unacceptably high and warrant intervention programs
- high fertility rates and litter sizes indicate good vigor of Great Danes as a breed
- artificial breedings result in lower rates of conception and litter size
- despite good conception rate, litters resulting from frozen semen are significantly smaller

And, perhaps most alarmingly:

- Great Danes have a high post-surgical death rate – especially bitches – which warrants further study and intervention

In an effort to address the post-surgical mortality problem, the GDCA Health and Welfare Committee have approved surgery guidelines, written by Sue Cates, RVT. Following Mary Anne's presentation, Sue discussed the newly-approved recommendations and shared her insight and experience in a very informative and enlightening discussion. The bottom line is that Great Danes are dying following routine surgical procedures like spays and neuters. And most, if not all, of these deaths could likely have been prevented had a number of pre-surgery measures been taken. Surgery and anesthesia guidelines are outlined at <http://www.gdca.org/health/surgery.htm>.

Here's what seminar attendees had to say about Mary Anne's and Sue's presentations:

- Kathryn Netser: *"Both Conley and I loved the seminar and felt it was very informative in regards to the Health survey results and the latest anesthesia protocol. I would suggest having these seminars bi-annually."*
- Ann English: *"The seminar was fantastic! Hopefully, we can have more seminars in the coming months."*
- And from Lucretia Marcus: *"The 9/18 seminar was a success with the members of our club. Everyone there felt it was informative and well worth the money. We're planning on having more in the future and need your suggestions! Please contact any board member or me (bellemarc@sbcglobal.net). Thanks to all who helped make this seminar work smoothly."*

For those of you that were unable to attend the seminar, Mary Anne has graciously offered to share copies of her presentation. If you would like one (it's a PowerPoint presentation available by email only), email kate@qantel.com to request it. Additionally, results of the GDCA health survey in their entirety can be viewed at <http://www.gdca.org/surveyfinal.pdf>. And don't forget, too, to review the surgery and anesthesia guidelines at <http://www.gdca.org/health/surgery.htm>.

President's Messages

Hello fellow members! I hope this finds you well and enjoying the companionship of your Great Danes. Although I was in Montana, I have heard from those who participated in the Health Seminar on September 18th that they valued the information shared and that they had a good time. Lucretia Marcus did an excellent job in pulling our September seminar together on short notice with help from Ann English...thank you ladies!

We would like to sponsor more seminars but only if more of you make the effort to attend. We are attempting to make these seminars free, or at a reduced cost, to provide educational opportunities for our members. We are proposing to have future seminars in various areas of our club's territory (Sacramento, Santa Rosa, Stockton, San Jose, etc) if that will help to increase attendance or to hold shorter seminars in conjunction with a show cluster. We would welcome your input ideas. Please let the board members know if you have a topic you would like to see covered in a seminar and where you would like to see it held. We, as a club, want to do more for our membership but we really need your input!

Please make plans to join us on December 12th at the Pleasanton Hotel for our annual Holiday Brunch and Awards Presentation. Ann English is once again in charge of pulling it all together. We always seem to have a good time together and we hope you will join us for the fabulous food and an excellent time. Look for details and reservation information in the next *Barker*. Our club website – www.greatdaneclub.org – will also be updated as details are available.

Regards,
Everett

FINANCIAL REPORT

Account balance information
is available to
GDCNC members
on request

Committees for Our 2005 Specialties...

are forming now and I want to thank those of you who have volunteered.

The following positions have been filled:

- Assistant Show Chair—Kate Jackson
- Raffle—Lorraine Matherly and Gail Hunt
- Meals—Ann English
- Auction—Jane Chopson
- Trophies—Lucretia Marcus and Paul Picciau
- Hospitality—Pete Fredotovich
- Catalog Advertising—Pamela Preston
- Challenge Trophies—Elizabeth Artle and Jim Curnutt
- Decorations—Ceil Wardner and Kathryn Netser
- Grounds—Chuck English
- Judge's Liaison—Mabel Labiak
- Match—Kate Jackson, Tami Welch
- Obedience—Sue Dubie-Holbrook
- Ring Steward—Bill Labiak
- Setup Barbeque—Dale Bassano
- Trailer—Dana Wardner and Conley Netser

The following positions need people:

- Canopy setup/takedown
- Judge's transportation (2)
- Lodging
- Ring Stewards (1 conformation, 2 obedience)
- Sanitation
- Table setup/takedown
- Vendors
- Welcome bags
- Parades
- Ribbons

Please contact me if you feel you can take on one of the above positions – or if you'd like to help out on one of the other committees.

Thank you!
Everett Van Dyken
2005 Show Chair



Membership Update

GDCNC Welcomes New Members

Dale Bassano
John & Lisa Ellison
Peter Fredotovich
Andrew Port

First Publishing:

Karen Charles

Sponsored by Kathleen Davis and Everett Van Dyken

Davishire Announces Harl Litters

August was a blessed month at Davishire Danes!

Our "Furst" babies arrived to "Tyranny" in Vacaville, while 1 week later... Tyranny's sister "Amore" brought her "Furst" bundles into the world just as efficiently, for Shari (Oasis Danes), in southern CA!

All tolled, 5 harlequins, 7 mantles and 3 mantle merles – of which, luck gave us 7 beautiful show marked babes!!!

Call Him

Int'l Champ Fletch

Bari Costello showed her lovely fawn boy Fletcher (Int. CH. Hauer-Goldstar Arrowmaker) to his international championship in September. He's pointed out and just looking to pick up his majors for his AKC Championship. Fletch was bred by Michelle Wright and Treasure Hauer, is owned and adored by Bari and Tom Costello, and is always owner handled by Bari. Way to go, Bari and Fletch!!!

Blanton's Michael is HOT!!!

Kim Blanton and her uncropped fawn boy Blanton's Friendly Persuasion (Ch Bridanes Randy Dandy Von Raseac x Blanton's Lit'l Bit Country) took back-to-back wins at the Sir Francis Drake KC shows in San Rafael last month under William Bergum and Jon Cole. A couple weeks later at the Donner Trail KC show, Judge Robert Vandiver awarded Michael WD and BOW for another point. And Michael was a hit in the Mid-West, too!!! He picked up more points from Judges Joseph Tomey and Joan Frailey in Springfield, IL, just a week ago. Friday, October 15th, he was Winners Dog, and on Saturday, he was WD and BOW. Michael was bred by and is owned by Dannie and Kim Blanton and is handled by Kim. Congrats Team Blanton!

Champion Titan

After an 8 month vacation and acquiring CHIC status, Amador's Titan V Sharcon returned to the ring with a bang! Within 2 months, Titan singled out and attained one major before taking ANOTHER vacation for 11 weeks. Where does he get the time to do this? He reappeared in the ring to get RWD at the GDCWW Specialty, followed the next day with a 4 pt. major to gain his Championship status. Titan is now retired to a full time Ch. couch potato. In addition, in July, Titan's 16 month old son (Mac) who resides in Canada became Can. Ch. Tristar's Mack Daddy Strider and is on his way to achieving his American championship title. Yaaaaahooooo to both father and son! Titan was masterfully handled by Sharon McCrary and expertly bred by Michele Andreetta. Titan is adored and spoiled by Connie Andronico.

New Echo Danes Champion Tommy

Tommy is now CHAMPION Echo's Justice of the Peace! Tommy picked up the 4 singles he needed to finish this year! Timmi and Tommy went off to Colorado last month and picked up his final single there. WOO-HOO!!! It's a nice feeling to finally have him done. Tommy was bred by Timmi and Emilie Williams and is owned and handled by Timmi Williams.

B&K Vassar Needs Just One More

B and K Vassar picked up another major at the Black Mountain KC of Nevada show a few weeks ago – thank you Judge Christina Hubbell! Vassar now needs just a single to finish! Vassar is always breeder/owner handled by Barbara Kreszyn. Way to go, Girls!

Kenyon Dogs Excel in Several Venues

Kitty Kenyon and her blue and black kids worked hard this summer! Devin, Kitty's black dog, was awarded his Carting Intermediate Title at Dixon on August 1st under Judge Betty Fischer. Carting Intermediate is where the dog is off lead but the handler is not on the cart. Devin also picked up his 4th point toward his AKC Championship at Santa Cruz on August 15th. Kitty also put temperament titles (TT) on Devin and on her black bitch, Katie on September 11th. All of Kitty's dogs that are old enough now have temperament titles. Devin and Anij (Kitty's blue bitch) got their International Championship in Antioch on September 18th and 19th. Remarks Kitty, "That was very interesting and nice to get a written critique."

KC Danes Impress Del Valle Judges

The October 17th and 18th Del Valle shows in Pleasanton were great ones for K C Danes! On Sunday, under Joyce A. Vanek, Lacey (KC Dane's America's Sweetheart) took Winners Bitch and Best of Winners for another point. And her sister Dazzle (BISS CH KC Dane's An Affair to Remember V Oneida) was awarded Best of Breed. Other GDCNC members' dogs were recognized as well. Leahy's Patrick (bred, owned and handled by Colleen Leahy-Spears) was Winners Dog, while the Reserve honors went to the Moffet's Baxter (Delta Breeze Artistry 'n Rhythm) and to Violet (Delta Breeze Artistry 'n Revelation), owner-breeder handled by Barbara Moffett. On Monday, Dazzle did it again, accepting BOB honors from Judge Klaus Anselm.

**Got a brag to
share???**

Email

kate@qantel.com

Maxwell Shines

Max (the lovely harl puppy boy spoiled by Andy and Debbie Port) started with 10 consecutive class wins, a WD at Santa Cruz, a WD/BOS/BP and a RWD at Redwood Empire, and a RWD, BP and PG4 at Sir Francis Drake. He decided to go second in his class in Carson City to make sure his parent knew to take off their rose-colored glasses! More significantly, he can now pee with his leg up, WITHOUT TIPPING OVER!! Max is officially known as Payaso's Secret Star - Agent 86, was bred by Cindy Harwin and Walter Salles.

Olympus Kids' Success Continues

The Olympus kids are still having fun in the ring, here's what they've done in the 9-12 month class:

Olympus' The Midas Touch ("Midas") owned by Denise & Brittany Williams, Peter Fredotovich:

- WD - 3 pt MAJOR at the Richmond D.F. show under Ms. Sharon Hansen.
- RWD - San Rafael K.C. under John Cole (handled by Brittany)
- WD - Donner Trail KC under Kim Meredith-Cavanna

Olympus' Pillar Of The Heavens ("Atlas") owned by Sherry Wood & Denise Williams:

- WD - 3 pt MAJOR (Atlas' SECOND major!!!) at the Texas K.C. show under breeder/judge Don Carmody!!!
- RWD - Longview K.C. under Mr. Steven Gladstone handled by Sherry Wood. Way to go guys!! Awesome job!!!

Olympus' Sweet Victory ("Nike") owned by Denise & Brittany Williams:

- WB - Sir Francis Drake K.C. under Mr. William Bergum
- RWB - Richmond D.F. under Ms. Sharon Hansen
- RWB - Gold Country K.C. under Paula Nykiel
- RWB - Bonanza K.C. under Mr. R. M. Lemcke
- WB/BOW/BP/PG3 - Donner Trail KC under Kim Meredith-Cavanna

Valinor Boasts New Champion And...

It is now Champion Valinor's I'll Take You There! "Mercy" took back-to-back Best of Breeds for 4 points at the Redwood KC in Petaluma on September 11-12, 2004. She was owner-handled under judges Mr. W. Coombs and Ms. S. Weston. The next weekend, she was handled to two five-point majors in Montana by Georgia Hymmen under judges Ms. Helen Lee James and Mr. Robert Moore. It has been quite a meteoric ride for her breeders and owners: Everett Van Dyken and Paul Picciau.

Valinor's All That Jazz MVP is sure on a roll! He took Winner's Dog and Best of Opposite on September 12th at the Redwood Kennel Club show under Ms. Sharon Weston. Jazz then went on to win back-to-back Winner's Dog at the Carson City shows September 25-26th, 2004. Just a week later, he was Winners Dog and Best of Winners under Mr. Robert Fetter at the Donner Trail KC show. (Thanks to Ceil Warder for showing him to BOW, btw!) And on October 16th, Jazz was awarded a 5-point major (WD and BOS) by Charles L Olvis in Rapid City, SD where he was handled by Terri Distillin. Jazz was bred by Everett Van Dyken and Paul Picciau and is owned by Cherie Moses and co-owned and usually handled by Everett. Jazz and his people are very excited – just one more major to finish!!!

Delta Breeze Pack Has Multi-Titled August!!

Barbara Moffet and her crew had a busy August!

- Emma added a Therapy Dog title to her name and is now AM/Int'l CH Allegro's Delta Breeze Rhapsody, CGC, TDI
- Baxter was awarded his international title and is now Int'l CH Delta Breeze Artistry'N Rhythm, CGC
- Violet completed her CGC and earned a Therapy Dog title to become Int'l CH Delta Breeze Artistry'N Revelation, CGC, TDI

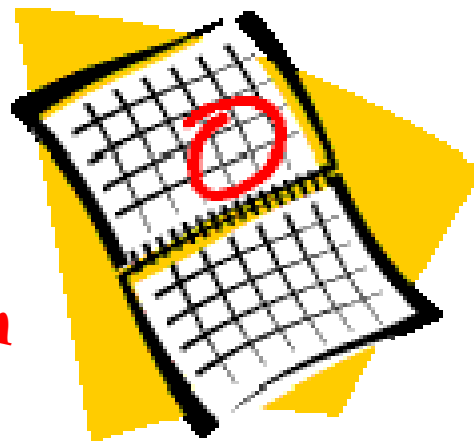
Emma and Violet help out in Barbara's classroom, and will soon begin visiting nursing homes and hospitals. Emma, Violet and Baxter are owned and loved by Barbara and Jim Moffett.

Champion #3 in 2004 for Great Danes of Lore

New Champion: CH Lore's The Works V. Ironwood. Co-bred by Lorraine Matherly and Pamela Gray. By CH Rojon's Dreamboy out of Lore's Hold Everything. Won his last single point under breeder judge, Mrs. Arlene Davis, owner-handled. Now retiring to his favorite sofa! Here is Lore's third champion this year. Up-and-comer Bernie (Lore's Hunk of Burning Love) was WD for his first point at 7 months of age in Eugene. Breeder/owner/wrangled (I mean handled – grin) by Lorraine.

Mark Your Calendars!!!

**The Annual GDCNC
Holiday & Awards Brunch
is December 12th!**



Kennel Blindness

By Debbie Brooks DVM (reprinted from November/December 2001 *Borderlines*)

I will be the first to admit that I am highly opinionated. But I do have reasons for my opinions and like to believe that I can back them up with facts. And I have an opinion on pretty much everything. So a few years ago, after a talk for one of the local breed clubs, one of the breeders asked me what I thought was the most serious disease in dogs. Without hesitating, I told her, "That's easy, kennel blindness." She raised her eyebrows, smiled, and walked away.

But in all my years in purebred dogs and as a veterinary surgeon, I have yet to see a more serious problem for our dogs. Face it, the dogs don't sit around at night critiquing their structure or performance and trying to decide who should be the sire of their next litter. And our dogs are not emotional about their faults. We are human and tend to be too emotionally involved with our dogs. A lot of people breed for the wrong reasons - they love their little darling and think the rest of the world will love darling's puppies. Or maybe after several years in dogs, they have finally finished a dog and feel that they just have to breed it now. But does being finished mean the dog is breeding quality??? And if you cannot see the faults in your little darling, how on earth can you breed a better dog???

Every dog has its faults, but that doesn't make it a bad dog. And it doesn't make the breeder or owner bad either. However one needs to be able to recognize the faults and how serious they may or may not be before they can improve the breed. And structure should not be the only thing that dictates our choice of breeding stock - what about temperament? Fortunately we all like different things and that is good, because life would be so boring if we all liked the same things. While beauty is in the eye of the beholder, someone still has to live with the dog. And in a lot of breed standards temperament is considered as a vital part of the breed. Are there not breeds in which the true working dog is very different from the show dog?

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Kennel Blindness

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Does being a champion mean that a dog/bitch is breeding quality? And if he/she is a gorgeous specimen of the breed, it is enough to be pretty? Shouldn't breeding quality also involve temperament and working ability - and are those two not intimately related? I have been told that in some breeds if you restricted breeding to finished dogs with OFA and CERF there would be nothing to breed. So, if the whole purpose of dog shows is to improve the breed and we cannot produce dogs that can finish and have good hips, elbows, and eyes are we truly breeding better dogs?

Having assisted many purebred rescue organizations over the years, it never ceases to amaze me how many dogs are turned into rescue because they have physical problems that the owner cannot or will not deal with anymore. Allergies have a heritable component and are tremendously debilitating for the dog and owner. I have seen dogs with bad hips and/or knees and/or shoulders and/or elbows over the years. Then there are behavior problems and dogs that aren't a good match for the owner they have been placed with. And where was the breeder/seller of the dog when the owner decided to give it up?

A few months ago I saw a Bulldog that had been relinquished to rescue. The owner had become frustrated with the myriad of problems that the dog had had its entire life and the breeders response that "that is normal for a Bulldog." The dog was severely dysplastic and had trouble getting up and around, it also had a luxating patella - but the owner had repeatedly been told that hip dysplasia was normal for the breed and did not cause any problems. Normal or acceptable because no one cares? The dog had terrible allergies and was hypothyroid. I saw him for refractory ear disease and a bilateral ear canal ablation because his disease had progressed so far that it could not be managed medically. He had an ingrown tail and packed feces around his perineum so he was always dirty. His soft palate was too long and his trachea was too narrow, so subsequently if he found himself in conditions much over 80 degrees he would collapse. He came from a local breeder who is reportedly very involved in the breed and shows a lot. His parents were both champions, but of course they too had hip dysplasia and the mother had to be on thyroid so she would come in heat. Bear in mind that this dog was only 18 months old! His mother was surgically inseminated because the male Bulldog had upper airway problems and would collapse if he tried to mount and breed a bitch. And of course, a C-section was required to bring her puppies into the world. The breeder had considerable money invested in getting the puppies on the ground - this train wreck of a dog did not come from some hit or miss backyard breeder. The purchase price of this puppy was \$1500 and he was not to be neutered in case the breeder wanted to use him for breeding in the future. Does the amount of money one spends to get puppies on the ground mean that a quality breeding has been done? Anyone who has bred conscientiously has had well planned litters that did not turn out nearly as nicely as anticipated. This dog was relinquished to rescue and several of his more pressing problems, the tail and ears and allergies, were addressed. He still has trouble breathing and getting up, and I wonder how he will find a new home with all his problems at such a young age. How ironic that the people I advise about not breeding little darling because she/he has heritable problems are the ones that ignore my advice and create a lot of business for me.

So I throw out these items for thought. I certainly don't have the all the answers, but unless one can take an honest, non-emotional look at their dogs, I question that they should be breeding. I can make some suggestions - like going to every specialty you can if you intend to breed, researching the health problems in your breed then in your pedigrees, and working your dogs to learn something more substantial about their temperaments and work ethic. How about finding a mentor - someone who has been in the breed for some time and is producing the kind of dogs that you want to produce? The vast majority of people I have encountered who are truly serious about their breed are more than willing to share their knowledge if you truly want it. You need to be sincere in your desire to learn and you need to grow a thick skin when they critique your dog. Our dogs are not us, they don't care if their topline is bad or their eye is too light. And they really don't care if they reproduce or not. Should we?



**The GDCNC Website is at
www.greatdanecub.org
Have ideas to make it better???
Let your Webmistress know!
Email kate@qantel.com.**

Preparing for Your First Draft Test

By Karyn Beyer (BMDCA Draft Judge; Draft Chair, Sierra West Bernese Mountain Dog Club; Member, BMDCA Draft Work Committee)

Your first draft test is a few weeks away, and you and your canine partner (whom I shall call Partner) have been working hard on your training and preparation. You and Partner can execute nice tight turns around the trees in your yard and Partner slides the cart through those narrows like nobody's business. You have both mastered the freight haul and can comfortably pull at least 35 pounds (just to be safe) at least two miles without panting (that goes for both of you).

But are you really ready? Have you mastered the finer points that judges evaluate? Many draft teams fail not on maneuvering the ring obstacles (narrows, movable object, load/unload) but on the seemingly minor details that make you and Partner a true working team — control, leashwork, control, clean stops, control, change of pace, control, backing up and control.

Judges watch for a true working team. Is Partner focused on you? Is he waiting for your next command? Is he working with you or is he just enjoying the day and the distractions, occasionally following you when you move away? Do you find yourself repeating commands two to three times before Partner responds? Are you yelling your commands hoping your loud voice will break his concentration as he sniffs the ground? A well-focused, well-prepared dog responds quickly and readily to your first command. His interest is in you and what you and he are doing. He knows he has a job to do and performs it quickly when asked.

LEASHWORK

Leashwork is a major problem for many draft teams. As soon as you get in the ring, your hands start to fret. You aren't conscious of it, but you are slowly gathering up the slack. Before your first turn, that nice loose lead has gotten so tight your hand is only inches above Partner's head. Or perhaps you aren't the nervous gathering type. Other common sights are the flailing hands, clapping, swinging, guiding the 747 overhead in for a safe landing...

The easy thing to say, and the hardest thing to do, is **RELAX!** We all know how those nerves hit. When you and Partner are out practicing, fold your left hand into your stomach, hold the leash at a comfortable loose length, and LEAVE IT THERE. The leash is not a steering wheel, a hand brake or attention getter. Partner should be responding to your voice and your body, not your leash. The role of the leash in a Novice Draft Dog test is defined in the BMDCA draft regulations: "All exercises except the recall, harnessing, hitching and group stays are performed on leash, however, the leash must be visibly slack and is not to be used to physically guide the dog during the exercises. Guiding, jerking and/or tight leash will result in a failing performance."

Picture this: You are approaching an obstacle that requires a right turn. You say "Partner, right! Come on, right!" Partner, on the other hand, wants to go straight, since there is a really cute puppy on the other side of the ring. You are going one way, he is going another. You are missing the turn and the leash is getting tight. What do you do? Do you: (a) move closer to Partner to keep the leash loose, keep yelling "Right!" at him and hope he turns; (b) hope the judge is also looking at the cute puppy and give a quick jerk on the leash, pulling Partner's head back towards you and into the turn; or (c) tell Partner to stop, evaluate your location, get his focus back, adjust accordingly (re-approach the turn, back up if necessary) and complete the exercise.

Most folks choose (a) and move into the dog to maintain the loose lead, even if it means getting off course. Unfortunately, this usually does not work, and the judges recognize it for what it is — poor control leading to poor leashwork. Handlers often compensate for the tight lead by moving closer to the dog, rather than getting the dog back on track. This can happen on turns, during the heel on the basic control, on the freight haul. The correct answer is (c). The situation is very common (the distractions differ) but it doesn't mean an automatic fail. But you can't execute (c) without those critical elements of control. In this case, the most important control command will be STOP!

STOP!

Stop is the most important command in your training. If you and Partner are working at a safe, controlled pace, the stop should come quickly and easily, and on the first command. It may take a few steps depending on the speed you are moving at, but Partner should respond to the command immediately. Being able to execute a clean Stop can save you in a number of situations. If you misjudge a turn, STOP and adjust. If you are heading into an obstacle, STOP, back up if necessary, and re-approach the obstacle correctly. If you momentarily lose your memory and have no idea where you should go next (yes, this does happen), STOP and ask a judge.



Stopping is easy to practice. No matter what you are doing, STOP. Doing turns? Stop in the middle. Practicing the freight haul? Stop every few feet. A stop is a stationary position. That means no creeping. Once Partner is stopped, he should stay stopped. If he moves while you open the gate, take the load, evaluate the situation, he will fail. When you tell Partner Stop, can you walk a few feet away without him moving? Can you circle the cart and/or stand behind him without him moving? Once you have stopped successfully, you may tell Partner "sit" or "down" or "stay" - whatever command will leave him in stationary position.

CHANGE OF PACE/SLOW

Perhaps the second most important command in training is SLOW, or the change of pace. Changing pace is a required exercise during the test, but it is also very important for successful execution of the obstacles and the freight haul. Many handlers overlook this command. When they get in the ring, they merely slow themselves down during the change of pace exercise, assuming the dog will adjust accordingly, or the judge will see the handler walking slow and somehow miss the dog maintaining his normal work speed.

Dogs not accustomed to doing a SLOW don't adjust to the handler, they merely move out to the end of the leash and work at their normal speed. Now, not only has the team failed the change of pace but the leash is probably stretched tight as well. A well trained change of pace can come in quite handy in many areas. The most common benefit is the narrows. Picture this: You approach the narrows, stop Partner and look at the distance on either side. Partner is approaching straight and even with the sides. You give him the command to move forward. He starts at his normal pace, veers slightly and the wheel hits the side. By the time you say STOP, he is halfway through. A safer approach is to tell Partner SLOW. He steps forward one step, two steps, three steps. You see him starting to veer off path. You say STOP! Back him up and start again, moving slowly. This time, he goes straight and clears the sides.

A successful SLOW can get you through most of the obstacles safely and clearly. If Partner can change his pace when you ask, it gives you those extra few seconds to evaluate the position, the distance to the obstacle, the angle of the turn. And if you see a problem, you tell Partner STOP and adjust accordingly. If Partner works only at one speed, by the time you realize the problem you will likely have failed to obstacle.

The SLOW is also critical on the freight haul. You and Partner have been working solo in your training, but during the test you will perform the freight haul in a group. This likely means teams in front of you, teams behind you and hills. Partner has no trouble at home and the two of you work at a nice brisk pace. Unfortunately, during your test freight haul, the team in front of you is a nice older handler, with a sweet well mannered bitch. They are in no hurry and their natural pace couldn't outrun a turtle. You can ask to pass, but a judge may say no. A judge will want to see if you can control Partner and work at a slower pace to accommodate the team in front of you. You tell Partner SLOW and he does just that, slowing down enough to maintain a safe distance between you and the team in front. You have now demonstrated suitable control to the judge, and at the next stop you and Partner are allowed to pass.

The SLOW command may be your only tool to combat gravity on the downhill. Partner has the cart and the weight behind him, and it is pushing him forward. He doesn't want to fight it, he wants to move out and get this over with. If you let him, you are not only showing a lack of control, but placing you and Partner in danger. Failing the test will be the least of your worries if the cart rolls with Partner still in harness. Take the hills slowly and be safe. The freight haul is not a timed exercise. Judges are looking for teamwork and control, not speed.

BACKING UP

Like SLOW, this is a required exercise in the draft test. And also like Slow, this command can save you and Partner from many potentially failing situations. In all the sample scenarios above, the dog is heading in the wrong direction. If this wrong direction is into a tight corner, there may not be sufficient room for Partner to turn around. Or, if you are in the narrows, turning may not be an option at all. But if Partner can back up on command, you can often maneuver yourselves right out of a problem and back into safety. What you ultimately demonstrate when you do this is Control. Yet many teams choose to play the odds and only move in one direction. You must train Partner to back up regardless; start incorporating into your maneuvering and obstacle work. It could make all the difference!

IN CONCLUSION

The common denominator to all aspects of a draft test is basic control. Many failing teams can maneuver the ring obstacles, but their performances are fraught with tight leashes, sloppy stops and a questionable change of pace. If they do get into trouble, few teams think of backing out of the problem. Blind luck and limited training will not prepare you and Partner for the draft test.

The little elements that tend to get overlooked and not emphasized in training are usually the very things that cause a team to fail. Even if you have never gone through the narrows or encountered the movable obstacle, if you can successfully execute a stop, a slow, and a backup without waiving your hands and leash like you are trying to guide a plane to landing, you and Partner should be able to handle any ring obstacle or freight haul situation.

And finally, the single most important thing to remember when training for the draft test, when you are in the draft test and after the draft test (regardless of whether you pass or fail) **HAVE FUN!!!**

Earn a Title in 2004???

Our annual Holiday Brunch and Awards Brunch is December 12th at the Pleasanton Hotel – we'll present plaques and plates to members who put a title on their Great Dane in 2004. Awards will be presented for conformation (including International titles), obedience, agility, other performance events, Best In Show and CGC certification. Members receive an 8 x 12 wooden plaque with their name(s) and/or kennel name. Engraved plates name the Great Dane and its achievement and attach to the plaque. Each plaque holds up to 12 individual plates.

November 15th is the deadline for award information so that it can be presented at our Holiday and Awards Brunch. If your Great Dane earns a title after November 15th, we will make every attempt to make your award available for presentation at the brunch.

The names of those who are already on the list of awards are as follows:

- 1) Delta Breeze Great Danes, Barbara Moffet
- 2) Echo Great Danes, Timmi Williams
- 3) Valinor Great Danes, Everett Van Dyken & Paul Picciau
- 4) Oneida Great Danes, Ed & Judi Grimaldi*
- 5) Danes of Lore, Lorraine Matherly
- 6) KC Danes, Kathryn & Conley Netser*
- 7) Davshire Great Danes, Kathleen Davis*
- 8) Connie Andronico*
- 9) Amador Great Danes, Michele Andreetta*

* asterisks indicate a need for more details

If one or more of your Great Danes has won a title or award in 2004 and you don't see your name on the above list – or if your name is listed but followed by an asterisk – please contact Everett ASAP by email (valinor@gotnet.net) or by phone (209-786-1530) with the following details so we can include you as an award recipient:

- 1) Full (AKC) name of your Great Dane
- 2) Award/Title received
- 3) Name of owner
- 4) Name of breeder
- 5) Do you already have the wooden plaque?
- 6) If you do not already have the plaque, what kennel name will you be using if not your individual name?



*We hope to see many of you
at the Holiday and Awards Brunch
to share good times and honor
our Great Danes' accomplishments!*



**Halloween
Puppies
Expected...**

Dane Affaire will be celebrating Halloween with a fawn litter!

2005 Futurity Nominated litter due 10/30/04.

Sire: BISS AKC/UKC/Intl Ch Lagarada's Aspen Gold

Dam: Affaire's For Your Eyes Only

Photos & pedigree at <http://home.surewest.net/daneaffr>

Email Laura at daneaffr@surewest.net.

2004 GDCNC Board and Officers

Everett Van Dyken, President	valinor@gotnet.net
Ceil Wardner, Vice President	cnddanes@aol.com
Paul Picciau, Corresponding Secretary	valinor@gotnet.net
Dana Wardner, Treasurer	cnddanes@aol.com
Timmi Williams, Recording Secretary	timmiw@sierratel.com
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Lucretia Marcus	bellemarc@sbcglobal.net
Conley Netser	knets@msn.com
Kathryn Netser	knets@msn.com



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday, November 13th:

Board/Budget Meeting

Sunday, December 12th:

Holiday & Awards Brunch
Pleasanton Hotel, Pleasanton



GDCNC BARKER
8446 Granite Cove Dr
Granite Bay, CA 95746-6222