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“SUGARBREAD AND WHIP”® (“ZUCKERBROT UND PEITSCHÉ”)

SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS

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BART BELLON SEMINAR



August 24-25, 2013
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Ludwigsburg, Germany

Well Informed Skilled People Move Ahead Quickly Without the Burdens on the Past

Bart and Michael arrived in Ludwigsburg on Friday evening. Saturday morning looked nice and the seminar was off to a nice start at 9 am sharp with 80 people in attendance. It was a terrific group of people and some very talented dogs and dog trainers. We see that the people in the sport are getting younger and younger. Many are able (within a year or two) to catch up or pass many of their older counterparts. This is because there is old school training, then there is modern training (positive only), and then there is postmodern: back to the middle of the road. The middle of the road has the benefits of each side without the disadvantages.

While Saturday until about mid-day the weather was nice, it began to rain in the afternoon on Saturday. There were three tents set up already for the public and a covered terrace adjacent to the clubhouse. The seminar continued. The only ones getting wet were the people working their dogs and Bart. On Saturday, there was a nice jam session with about 20 dogs on the field. In the evening, after dinner, there must have been at least 30 people at the club we left around 9 pm. When we arrived on location on Sunday, there were two more tents set up for the public and one for Bart. The rain was quite brutal at times and the weather was cold. All the participants stayed.

In the roles games, the group did very well and Jax, our young dog, did a quite convincing job when he was shaped to do two different behaviors on another field foreign to him. Bart believes that people are starting to understand that the days of endless monkey drills are over! Bart spoke of short sessions of training. There is no need to train for a half an hour at a time. If you train smart, you are efficient and you concentrate on what brings the most points. We must train our dogs to be curious, smart, active, and tough; we must be a team. (This makes the dogs easy to train and willing partners.) We must get heart and soul in every exercise. And, training must be fun. Otherwise, let's all just throw in the towel.

“Danke schön... Leck mich am arsche!”

“Don't dip in the choco pot and lick with the wrong finger!”

“Read your dog!”

“Hope!”

“Be careful: a dog bites, a horse kicks, and a cat scratches.”

“That will happen three times: not today, not tomorrow,... never.”

Of course, by the time we left, Michael had a fever and the van had a flat tire! We were completely saved by member of Heiko's club who came to our rescue. He owns a tire shop in Ludwigsburg and on Sunday evening, he took us to his shop and changed the tire for us. We were not even late for our appointment on Monday morning!

On Monday morning, Michael stayed in the hotel trying to sleep off a fever while Bart trained with a friend. We left Germany at around three and drove home to Belgium via France. The French highways are nice to drive: they have tolls, but the roads are clean and in good repair with beautiful scenery.

Next week: we will be healthy and with good tires when we return to Germany. The following week, we will be in France. For more information, please contact info@dogsport.be



My Journey to Gurukul By Santosh Rout

Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

In India we all know what a Gurukul is. In the ancient time it was a practice that children will leave the home and stay in a Gurukul to learn the art (secrets) of their future profession. Only after understanding the nuances thoroughly and attending the desired level of proficiency they were leaving the centre to enter into their profession. For that matter, you have to learn from the masters only and join your family occupation by default (no question of choice). In modern age you will find professionals (comparable to our ancient Gurus), who have proven them in their respective fields and are ready to impart desired knowledge, improve skill and reorient the attitude of the followers. The only difference is they come to a hotel room/ club / conference hall and conduct seminars. There is rarely any scope for visiting Gurukul so that you can learn in their original set up. A team of renowned professional dog trainers of Europe every year meet at one of the trainer's facility in Germany (you can call the same as Gurukul) to train jointly. Luckily, I had the privilege to attend this annual event at the Gurukul and learnt the art & science of Dog training from the masters.

I started my dog training activity in 1990. Just 5-6 months after my marriage, one of my relative gave me a lovely Labrador female puppy. It was a turning point in my life. She grew in our family as my eldest child. Seeing her energy and eagerness to play I took her to Mr. Gobardhan Pattnaik (senior most Obedience Judge of KCI). I was aware of his skills from my childhood (he was frequently coming with his dogs to my friend's house who happens to his nephew). Seeing my interest and Zingo's potential (Jennifer Zingo was her KCI registered name) he immediately agreed to guide me. Then it became my hobby (you can call it passion).

Later on in very quick succession I lost my both the dogs. It was really a huge setback for my family. We decided not to keep dog until we are ready to stay together. In between already 10 years have passed and I was not into active dog training. But, thanks to internet which helped me to watch and realize the progress that has happened over the last two decade in the field of dog training. The new-age trainers (the trainers are veterans but have changed their training style) have not abandoned the old methods but have infused new techniques and prospect to dog training. The approach is more scientific and logical. The dogs are now looking more alert, fast and flashy while working with the handlers in the trails.

After researching extensively I found one guy called Bart Bellon (he is of my age!!!) from Belgium who has actually revolutionized the dog training during the last decade. He was into dog training from very early age. He participated in the competitions and even created an unbeaten record score till date. He was 2 time Belgian ring champion. Later on, he decided not to participate in competition but became a professional trainer. Now, he is the most sought-after dog trainer and trains people across the world. His training philosophy is popularly known as Ne-Po-Po. Eleven years back he formed a five member Prostaff Team along with four other likeminded professional dog trainers. His other team members are Frank Rottleb, Jogi Zank, Michael Kaiser & Jens Wicher. They all believe and follow Bart's philosophy of dog training but have their individual training style. Throughout the year these trainers independently conduct seminars as per their commitments. However, the Prostaff Team members jointly conduct almost a weeklong seminar every year in Frank's training facilities in Hassleben, Germany.

This year 38 participants from countries like USA, Belgium, Russia, Denmark, Belgium, India, Germany, Switzerland, Cyprus, Lebanon, Turkey & UAE attended the programme. I was the first and sole participant from India who attended this prestigious programme. Majority of the participants were from Germany. There were two police officers (canine handlers) who attended the programme (paying from their own resources). There was one 61 year old lady from USA, who came with her dog for training. One participant was in his

wheelchair and a very strong dog. Baring a few, all other participants were with their dogs. Three participants participated without dogs (but they owned dogs). I was the only participant who did not own a dog. So everyone was curious. My explanation to them was that it is a conscious decision. My agenda is very clear. I have already done my own research and zeroed on Bart's Ne-Po-Po. First I want to understand Bart's philosophy and his approach to dog training. The same principle I am going to apply when I will acquire a puppy from the very first day. I am not in favour of getting a puppy first and then run frantically to multiple trainers to decide what method I should use for my training or wait for several months (not to waste precious time after getting the puppy) to learn it from Bart as and when opportunity comes. Most of the participants were of the opinion that Prostaff is the best team in Europe. Many of them have attended several seminars earlier. One of the lady participants told me that this is her 11th seminar. But each time she learns something new. This shows their quality of training. It was one wonderful opportunity for me to have friendships with so many dog sport enthusiast coming from various part of the world.

Bart's style of training is unique. He can communicate very well and effectively also. He started with a lecture on his training philosophy. The entire concept was narrated through 3 role plays. I was lucky enough that Bart invited me for the role plays and Bart and I did all the 3 plays (each time there was a role reversal i.e. he will be the dog and I am the handler and vice-versa). He talked about classical conditioning, operant conditioning, theory of hope, various types of reinforcements, dopamine and endorphin etc. his message was clear. One has to understand the concept and aware of dog's behavior. The principle should remain same only the methods can be improvised depending upon individual cases. He never advocates a particular method. One can always innovate & find a new way of doing the same trick. One should come to a stage where he should not look at the dog rather feel. There should be harmony between the handler & the dog. I was charmed by this man's clarity and understanding. That is the reason why he receives so much invitation and the busiest trainer (his seminar slots are mostly ready for one year in advance!!).

The participants were divided into 3 groups. Everyday training was starting from 9.30 am and going up to 7.00 pm. There were 3 sessions viz. obedience, protection and tracking. Each group will attend all the 3 sessions in rotation. As sun was setting around 10.00 pm, many people were practicing till 8.30 to 9.00 pm. two trainers were handling obedience and two were handling protection work. Frank was handling the tracking sessions. The trainer's family members were tirelessly working for providing food and beverages to the participants. Frank had made ample provisions for various training. A fantastic ground with all equipments for obedience training. A separate big ground was dedicatedly available for protection training with all facilities such as 6 competition blinds and bite-work accessories. For the training of the police dog, they created a crowd situation and did real life arrest. For the tracking training Frank had arranged for several fields so that dogs can work on different surfaces.

There were around 35 dogs at various level of training. The youngest one was 18 weeks whereas another dog was getting ready for IPO-III. This varied level of dogs helped the trainers to show the participants the convenient ways to enhance the performance of such dogs to the next level. Further, the trainers themselves were having 10 dogs (in addition to this Bart's wife Michael was having two lovely dogs). The performance of these dogs provided us to witness the real result of their training methods and the benchmark. It is nearly impossible to organize a programme like this with so many trained dogs in this part of the world. Neither we have such kind of Gurus nor Gurukul.

There is a saying "The taste of pudding is in eating". To what extent I have learned and imbibed the ground-breaking dog training method of Bart can only be verified when I will train a dog. Hope, I will get a puppy at the earliest. The Gurus have done their part. The onus is now on me.

I salute my Gurus and their Gurukul.