

Training keeps friendship alive between pet, owner

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When the habits of the dog, not the hair, make life hairy, the time has come for both human and hound to heel.

Also sit, stay and come.

Stockton specialists in dog department impart the commands that create proper practices — in people and pets — in dog obedience training.

These experts would rather prevent the problems that can kill the friendship between man and dog (also between owner and other people) than correct bad behavior, however.

So they urge owners to seek schooling before their pets have them rolling over and playing dead, instead of the other way around.

Trainers instill discipline in pups, child and canine, and teach old dogs new tricks, whether the old dogs have two legs or four.

They do so in classes or in private lessons; in day school, night school or boarding school; in public parks or air conditioned-centrally heated indoor arenas planned for the purpose.

A dog and owner can go through basic training and be discharged, or matriculate to higher education, completing courses designed to turn out not



When trainer Don Just says, "Pet your dog," 9-year-old Jacob Liddicoat responds with a hug instead. Within the embrace, his German shepherd, Jackie, wonders what's coming next.

simply polished pooches but cultivated competitors who win ribbons for their refinement.

The tuition can be \$5 for an eight-meeting class for puppies with children.

Or it can be \$450 for a six-week intensive course with board and room at a school for dogs.

In San Joaquin Dog Training Club classes for pups, trainer Mary Lou Just encourages owners "to get control of their dogs early." And at all levels of instruction by her and husband, Don, the object is to help "dog and owner become good friends," she adds. (Club classes are held in Lodi.)

The pros in pooch protocol do not pile on homework.

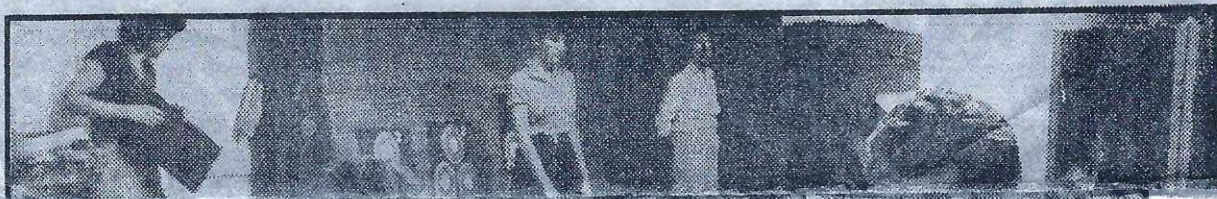
Ten or 15 minutes of work a day with the dog is enough, says Annemarie Silverton, former president of the

San Joaquin Dog Training Club, architect of its training program and owner of the Silverton School for Dogs. "Most dogs are easily trained," Silverton says.

Agreeing, club secretary Janet Borgens, owner of the Guaranteed Dog Training service, says she's never met a dog she couldn't train. "But I've met a few people who were hard to train," she concedes.

Even so, trainers do not brow-beat owners — or

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Dogs

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animals — adds Borgens, who teaches recreation department-sponsored obedience classes in Stockton and Manteca along with her own courses. People can correct problems or implant good conduct patterns without touching their pets, she emphasizes, by using "psychological correction." Borgens, who sought training when she realized her first dog had become "a horrible brat," uses toys, balls, "anything to get the dog's attitude up."

Tom Castles, owner of the Schlosshaus Kennels, also says "You do not have to beat your dog; you use positive methods" Castles, who is preparing instructions for pet owners on video cassette, says the aim of training is to make the behavior "so automatic it is like a reflex."

And Silverton contends, "If a dog is really well trained, it is like a computer." To achieve this, "Consistency is the key," she says, "doing the same thing the same way every single time. Dogs thrive by patterns so they know what to expect, what not to expect."

While Silverton educates people in commanding as well as pets in being commanded, she insists "A trained dog is one trained to respond to a command, not to who gives the command."

She urges dog owners to meet area trainers, sit in on their classes and visit their schools before deciding what course to take.

Wherever they go in Stockton, they'll hear the same commands — in a British accent from England-born Silverton.

But they won't hear "walkies," the word that crossed the Atlantic via televised programs on British dog trainer Barbara Woodhouse. Even the Stockton trainers who love to watch her, say the Woodhouse way with words is strictly her own.

But her emphasis on training as the way to a meaningful relationship between human and hound is just a yelp away from Stockton area pet owners.