



The Association of Pet Dog Trainers States *Marley & Me* Highlights the Positive Impact of Training

Professional dog trainers agree that upcoming movie is a wonderful opportunity to promote the benefits of positive, science-based dog training. Working with a professional trainer and learning about your dog's physical and mental needs can eliminate potential behavior problems in the home.

Greenville, SC (PRWeb) – December 19, 2008 –The Association of Pet Dog Trainers, the largest educational and professional association for dog trainers in the world, believes the movie *Marley & Me* is a great opportunity to promote reward based training for all dogs. The movie, based on the bestselling book by John Grogan, opens Christmas Day and depicts an exuberant Labrador Retriever whose behavior creates turmoil in his owners' lives.

Dogs with the size, energy level and behavior issues of Marley often end up in shelters because their owners do not know how to work with them. Labrador Retrievers are one of the top five breeds that are relinquished to shelters. This belies their image as a favorite family dog. Working with a trainer and understanding your dog's physical and mental needs can go a long way toward keeping dogs in their homes.

Some members of the APDT have provided tips for living with “unruly” dogs on the APDT's Web site, www.apdt.com. Some highlights include:

1. **Crate Training** – Teach puppies to love their crate. Crates prevent dogs from engaging in destructive behaviors around the house when owners are not at home or unable to supervise them with their complete attention.
2. **Reinforce for Calm, Quiet Behavior** – Trainer Tayrn Hodge recommends reinforcing your dog for calm, quiet behavior and to have them “sit or lie down to get everything – sit at doorways, sit or lie-down for meals, sit for petting, sit for getting his leash on, sit before tossing his ball.”
3. **Use Proper Equipment for Walks** - There are a large variety of new products on the market that can assist with making your walks with large or unruly dogs more pleasant. Some of the new products you can try are head halters and front clip harnesses which prevent pulling without choking your dog or causing discomfort.
4. **Understand Your Dog's Breed Tendencies** – Learn about the type of dog you're bringing into your home before you do so. Paul Owens, author and trainer jokes, “...in my 35 years of training, I've met maybe two Labs who aren't constantly self-employed as gardeners, home decorators and official bull-in-a-china shop court jesters.” You can find breed information through breed clubs, breed rescue web sites, and from trainers and shelter workers.

5. **Provide Appropriate Exercise and Outlets for Play** – Kellyann Conway, President of the APDT, says, “Exercising your dog is important but making time to *play* with your dog is vital to developing and maintaining a great relationship with him. Actively playing with your dog will keep him fit both physically and mentally.”
6. **Environmental Enrichment** –Trainer Teoti Anderson says, “Dogs need outlets for their energy. Some dogs would be just as happy munching on your sofa as chasing a tennis ball! It’s up to us to teach them what’s appropriate.” There are many toys today that are designed to stimulate your dog’s mind and keep them occupied for hours.
7. **Recognize Behavior Problems** –It isn’t always an obedience problem—unwanted behaviors are sometimes brought on as a result of fear or anxiety. These behavioral problems can only be solved through a behavior modification plan under the guidance of a professional that takes these issues into account. Visit the APDT’s Trainer Search at www.apdt.com to find a professional in your area.
8. **Try Fun Outlets for Your Dog’s Energy such as Dog Sports** –Many destructive behaviors stem from a lack of a “role” for the dog to perform. Finding things to engage your dog’s mind and physical energies can provide a positive outlet. Trainer Laurie Williams suggests looking at dog sports such as agility, Rally, Frisbee, and flyball. Laurie adds that teaching your dog a sport “...will definitely be much more productive than rearranging your landscaping!”
9. **Make Training a Part of Your Life** –Trainer and author Nicole Wilde recommends, "Incorporate training skills into your everyday life. For example, practice down-stays during television commercials and while you're eating dinner, and have your dog sit to greet visitors."
10. **Work with a Qualified Trainer** – A professional trainer can help you communicate effectively with your dog to create a harmonious relationship. Whether through a group class, or sessions in your home, working with a qualified trainer can make life with any dog go smoother. Visit the APDT’s Trainer Search at www.apdt.com to find a trainer in your area.