

'Dog psychologist' trains 'old dogs'

By LORIN LABARDEE

Shirley Austin is a "dog psychologist." She specializes in retraining the "juvenile delinquents of the dog world."

To describe her work, Miss Austin rephrases an old adage. "You can train an old dog new tricks. It just takes longer and is more expensive."

The grounds of her Canine Country Club in Avon Township are dotted with jumping fences, water pans and leashes.

There is constant activity at the kennel. On any given day Miss Austin may have as many as 40 problem dogs boarded there.

"Dogs are just like you and I. No two are alike and they all have different personalities," she said.

And, according to Miss Austin, dogs can go astray just like people. For \$15-\$600, depending on the problem, she will bring the dog back in line.

Most have problems because of people they have been with, she said. "Few things are hereditary with dogs, most behavior is conditioned."

THE LONGEST TIME Miss Austin has ever needed to retrain a dog was six months. The purebred German shepherd had bitten a newspaper boy.

The dog's problem, she said, was that its owners decided because he cost so much he must have been already trained when they got him as a puppy.

They bought the dog for \$300 and they assumed that it was a good dog and needed no training. The owners became displeased each time the dog did wrong, and it became neurotic and defensive."

When people approached, the dog would associate them with his displeased owners and would attack.

Miss Austin said it took six months to retrain the dog simply because it had acquired a well-developed defensive habit.

CRICKET, a ten-month-old Irish setter, is still at the kennel but he will not take nearly as long to retrain.

His problem was being left alone too much. He began chewing through telephone wires and dad's best pair of slippers.

"I wouldn't think of leaving a 10-month-old child unsupervised but people will leave a 10-month-old puppy unsupervised," Miss Austin said. Her remedy for Cricket was to train him to associate a cage with security. Now when she is unable to watch him, she locks him up without any problem.

Miss Austin, clad in tight blue jeans, a pale blue sweatshirt and white, lab technician's gown, said her reason for getting into dog psychology was because of dogs biting people.

"I WANTED TO know why dogs are doing this," she said, for instance, would a St. Bernard bite a child so badly that the wound required 160 stitches to close.

Miss Austin discovered that the St. Bernard's previous owners had allowed their children to wrestle and fight with the dog when it was a puppy. As an adult, the St. Bernard merely continued the fighting games.

Some dogs taken to the Canine Country Club can be retrained easily, others have recurring problems.

She points to a sleepy-eyed cocker spaniel totally oblivious to one of Miss Austin's helpers busily snipping, trimming and brushing his fur.

"When I first saw that dog, he viciously attacked me! He was well on his way to being put to sleep," she said.

Now, the tan and white cocker spaniel with big doe eyes is about ready to go back to its owners.

Outside, Charlie, Miss Austin's four-

year-old son, is tugging on a stick with Prince. Prince weighs about 80 pounds and is three-quarters wolf and one-quarter German shepherd.

PRINCE WAS brought to the kennel because his owners couldn't handle him. They bought him as a status symbol and he soon became uncontrollable.

Now Prince is a watchdog at the kennel. "If I gave the word, he would attack you," said Miss Austin in very clinical tones.

She takes Prince out of his pen, attaching a choke chain around his neck and looping the leash once around his neck just in case.

She commands Prince, "Watch." One, very slow, ginger half-step towards Prince causes him to curl back his black lips to reveal rows and rows of killer fangs. An evil growl rumbles from deep in his throat.

"He's just telling you, watch out, now. If I gave the command, 'full attack,' he would kill you," she says. You believe her.

In the five years that Miss Austin has handled and retrained "juvenile delinquent" dogs, she reports never having been bitten.

This, she said, is because she respects dogs and knows what their needs are.



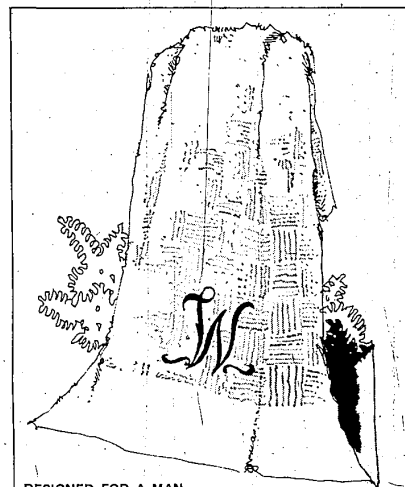
Shirley Austin practices "heel" technique with problem dog (Photographed by MIKE NIEDERQUELL)

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Jewish couples hit hardest

By JACKIE KLEIN

Tay-Sachs disease is a brutal killer of little children.

Until recently, not much was known about the fatal affliction. In the past three or four years, understanding about Tay-Sachs has vastly increased.

The disease is 100 times more common in Jewish children than in the non-Jewish population. One in 25-30 Jewish persons of central and eastern European descent are carriers of the recessive Tay-Sachs gene.

Synagogues in the Southfield area are disseminating facts about the disease among their membership. The Detroit Metropolitan Area Tay-Sachs Screening program is conducted under the auspices of Detroit's Sinai Hospital and the genetic counseling clinic of Henry Ford Hospital.

The program is supported by the Jewish Community Foundation of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit.

It is designed to prevent the genetic tragedy of Tay-Sachs.

THE INHERITED disorder affects young infants. Although they appear normal at birth, they already have advanced disease in their brains.

They develop normally until five or six months of age and usually learn to sit up and perhaps crawl. Gradually these children will lose the ability to sit and will be unable to hold up their heads.

Blindness sets in by 16 months and so does the beginning of convulsive seizures. At two and one-half, they are no longer able to swallow food, the limbs become stiff and they stop gaining weight. Tay-Sachs children die by the time they are four or five.

Medical research has isolated the cause of the disease as the absence of a vital enzyme. Today, there is little hope for children with Tay-Sachs. They require constant skilled care at

an estimated hospital cost of \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year.

"IF BOTH husband and wife carry the Tay-Sachs gene, there is a one in four chance that each pregnancy will result in a child doomed with the disease," said Dr. Lester Weiss, scientific director of the genetic counseling clinic at Henry Ford Hospital.

"If only the husband or wife is a carrier, statistically one-half of their children will be carriers. Carriers are perfectly normal physically and mentally. It takes two to produce a Tay-Sachs child. "One in 825-900 Jewish couples can have an affected child. In the non-Jewish population, only one individual in 300 is a carrier and one marriage in 90,000 is between two carriers."

A simple blood test can identify carriers, according to Dr. Weiss. The disease can be detected by special testing at birth or in the unborn fetus as early as the 14th week of pregnancy.

The procedure for testing the fetus is to insert a needle into the womb and removing a small quantity of the amniotic fluid. There is little risk to the embryo or the mother, says Dr. Weiss.

DR. WEISS advises couples of

child-bearing age to be tested to determine if either are carriers. Even couples with healthy children could be at risk.

If both parents are carriers, there is a 25 percent risk in any pregnancy of having a child with Tay-Sachs, he said.

Teams of skilled personnel will be available at scheduled times at synagogues and community centers to mass screen the population at risk. It is best to test a woman who is not pregnant, Dr. Weiss said.

"Women who are pregnant and wish to be screened may call the Tay-Sachs Screening Program at 876-3118," he said. "Other couples should be screened during community testings."

"If a couple learns they are both carriers, they can come to the genetic counseling clinic. They will be told what the alternatives are and then decide what option to choose."

"They may decide to have no more natural children and to adopt. A pregnancy in which the fetus with Tay-Sachs is identified can be therapeutically terminated."

"Only uninformed couples need ever suffer the anguish of learning that a beautiful, seemingly healthy child is doomed because of Tay-Sachs disease."

Eisenberg sentenced

By SUSAN L. SILK

OAKLAND COUNTY—A 28-year-old Southfield man found guilty of felonious assault on a federal officer has been sentenced to two-and-a-half to four years in prison by an Oakland Circuit Court judge.

Judge Richard D. Kuhn also ordered defendant Walter A. Eisenberg of 15700 Providence Drive to pay a \$1,000 fine.

Kuhn denied the motion of defense counsel that Eisenberg be allowed to remain free on bond pending appeal of the conviction, and the defendant was taken into custody immediately after sentencing Wednesday.

Eisenberg was originally charged with assault with intent to commit murder in the shooting April 13, 1973, of special agent Joseph A. Clapp of the U.S. Treasury Department's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF).

Clapp was shot as he, other ATF agents and undercover Southfield police officers attempted to execute search and arrest warrants at Eisenberg's apartment in the Diplomat Towers.

The defendant still faces federal court charges arising from the same incident and a \$150,000 civil suit

brought against him in Oakland Circuit Court by Officer Clapp.



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