

Etiquette for doggie



Contessa, the French Poodle, and Great Dane Cleo are introduced by obedience course instructor Peter Nicholson. Dogs and owners learn the finer points of handling

By NANCY ENRIGHT

Tara, Cleo, Tally, Pandora, Murdoch and fellow students have been meeting each Wednesday evening since the end of April for a continuing education course at Sheridan College's Brampton campus.

During the two-hour instruction, all these students do is sit, walk around in circles, lie down and stand up.

Which is quite a lot — considering Tara, Cleo and company are dogs who are learning the basics of dog obedience.

Peter Nicholson, an instructor of dog obedience and handling for 26 years in Canada and in parts of Europe, has been teaching the Sheridan course for three years now.

In the advanced dog obedience course, 10 sessions, once a week, proceed from the basic commands to the more demanding ones of 'heel', 'sit' and 'stay' off the leash. From there, the canines progress to hand signals, retrieving and jumping over obstacles.

Tara, Cleo, Tally and friends are in the basic obedience class, although by watching some of the dogs go through their paces with such ease and grace, you'd wonder why.

Tara, the adorable Sheltie owned by Debbie Butler of Norval, Malton resident John Brennan's Great Dane, Cleo, and Madeleine, Ouellette's Old English Sheepdog, Pandora, from Brampton, are just a few of Nicholson's star pupils.

It's an unusual sight every Wednesday evening in the back parking lot of the Brampton campus. About 25 owners walk, sit and stay their dogs in a circle, with Nicholson supervising and issuing commands from the circle's centre.

Sizes and shapes of the dogs vary from a snow-white miniature poodle to a huge, black Newfoundland. The class includes such varieties as a Hungarian Vizsla, Doberman Pinscher and German Shepherd.

"Forward!" yells Nicholson with the

resonance of an army sergeant-major. The circle starts to move on cue and the lot is filled with a chorus of "heels" — "heel, Star; heel Tally; heel Pandora; heel Tally."

"At the beginning of the course, I teach the owners how to properly handle the choker and leash, which is very important in getting a dog to obey," Nicholson explains.

"Any dog can go through the basic movements if the handler knows what he's doing."

Care, grooming and equipment are also included in the 10-session basic obedience course, as well as the one-word commands of heel, sit, down, up, come and stay.

"Dogs only respond to one-word commands," Nicholson says. "It is through the communication of these words from the owner to the dog that he will learn to obey."

Nicholson has complete confidence that any dog can be trained to obey commands, provided the owner is properly trained in the procedures himself.

One of Nicholson's own two German Shepherds displayed remarkable obedience and talents when she appeared in the movie, "A Sunday In The Country," which starred Ernest Borgnine and Michael J. Pollard.

As the class circle progresses — some dogs heeling nicely, others more interested in the

dogs around them — Nicholson, without warning, bellows "Halt."

The owners then proceed to sit their dogs, using either or all of the verbal, leash tugging and rear-end patting techniques.

"Forward," commands Nicholson, then suddenly "About Turn." The owners turn on their heels, urging their pets to follow suit, remaining always on the owners' left.

"Stay your dog," cries the instructor and the parking lot fills with the sounds of "sit" and "stay," the owners walking around their dogs, while the dogs are required to stay in position, not following their natural urge to follow the owner.

"Downing your dog" means coaxing him to lie down on all fours. "Up" is a reverse of the "down" command, while "come" is, in effect, a recall.

Occasionally, Nicholson will leave his post in the centre of the circle to help out a frustrated owner whose dog refuses to obey a command.

"I don't know how he does it," says Mrs. J. Sebire, of Brampton, owner of the Doberman, Star. "He seems to have a quality to his voice that the dogs instinctively obey."

Nine times out of ten, Nicholson will merely yell his distinctive "sit" from the centre of the circle to a dog standing stubbornly by a perplex-

ed owner. The dog usually obeys Nicholson as commanded.

Some of the owners enrolled their young purebred dogs in the class in anticipation of future shows or breeding.

The majority, however, want to be able to handle and control their dogs on their own.

"They'd like their dogs to be able to walk properly with them without jumping around," says Mrs. Sebire.

"You've just got to have some control over your dog — that's why we brought our frisky Doberman here."

"I don't think people should own a dog if they're going to let it roam all over the neighbourhood, disrupting garbage and generally being a nuisance," Mrs. Sebire comments.

Nicholson admits it's possible to learn how to handle a dog by reading books on the subject, but he feels getting out and actually doing it is more productive.

"There are many different methods of teaching dog obedience. I try and combine various types in my classes," he says.

"One thing I've found through my years instructing dogs and their owners is that if you want a dog to be obedient, you have to treat them as individuals."

"Just like people, dogs have different personalities so you have to communicate with them on an individual basis."

The Times Mississauga
 People and Events
 Business
 Real Estate
 Classified

Blender baby food for a healthy baby

By SUZANNE MORRISON
 DIARY OF A HUNGRY BABY:

My name is Cameron and boy do I like to eat. When I was born last summer I arrived with a bounce and zip that made my Mom and Dad flip. The first thing that crossed their minds was how they were going to feed their 7 pound 11 ounce bundle of joy. My Mom and Dad refused to feed me commercially-prepared baby food so I knew right away I was loved a lot.

Now, even though I'm just nine months old, I've savored the flavor of fresh turkey, the richness of round steak, the softness of a mellow squash and the tartness of a fresh strawberry.

None of those starchy commercial baby foods with their unneeded additives and empty calories for me. When I sit down to eat I'm like King Henry VIII getting ready to devour another feast.

I know from experience that baby foods prepared at home have a taste difference and goodness that can't be matched by their store-bought counterparts.

Their bright, natural colors and real tastes and textures make eating an adventure.

With homemade baby food a baby's meals can be built around its family's menus. For example, when turkey is cooked for Thanksgiving it's only slightly more work to take off several slices and pop them in the blender and freeze them in ice cube trays.

With an inexpensive blender, the method of preparing baby food at home is simple.

Meat, such as a piece of round steak, can be ground up by the butcher at your local supermarket and then steamed. Once cooked, it can be blended in seconds and poured into ice cube trays.

The following is a suggested guideline for the blender preparation of meat or fish for young babies under nine months old.

1. Be sure the meat or fish is well cooked.
2. Do not add salt in cooking until the baby's portion has been removed.
3. Remove fat and gristle from meat; remove skin and bones from fish.
4. Place enough liquid in the blender to cover the blades. (This may be liquid in which meat or fish is cooked, liquid left from cooking vegetables, or water).
5. Cut meat or fish into small pieces, dice, and add to liquid.
6. Blend until desired consistency is attained: Puree

for young babies, chopper for older babies.

7. When baby is over nine months old, you may begin adding small amounts of salt or other seasonings. Freeze prepared food in ice cube trays and store cubes in plastic bags in refrigerator freezer.

The cubes take several hours to thaw and with a hungry baby it's a necessity to have food ready quickly. A good idea is to take enough cubes for the next meal out of the freezer once one meal is finished and thaw at room temperature. Usually, they will be just about ready for warming up in a container when your baby is ready for his next meal.

Vegetables can be cooked in a steamer which guarantees essential vitamins and minerals will be preserved. Then blend cooked vegetables with leftover juice and freeze.

Although the rate at which you want to introduce meats, vegetables and fruits into your baby's diet is determined by you and your doctor, the Natural Baby Food Cookbook offers a guideline of meat and fish to avoid giving to babies because of too much salt, added nitrates and/or nitrites.

1. Bologna, bacon, chipped beef, corned beef, frankfurters, salami, smoked ham, smoked shoulder, other processed meats. Note the ingredients on canned meats.

2. Corned hake, dried salt pollock, kippers, salt cod, smoked herring and other processed fish or smoked or salted fish. Also avoid swordfish because of high mercury content and any other mercury-contaminated fish or fowl.

Well known food editor Anne Wanstall has said that the bogymen in homemade baby food is salt.

"Infants require such a minimal amount of the seasoning for natural body functions, that it's really better to leave it out altogether, leaving the natural salts in the foods to provide their daily quota."

"By sheer palate ritual, mothers often prefer a great deal of added salt and have been known to kill off their infants with an overdose."

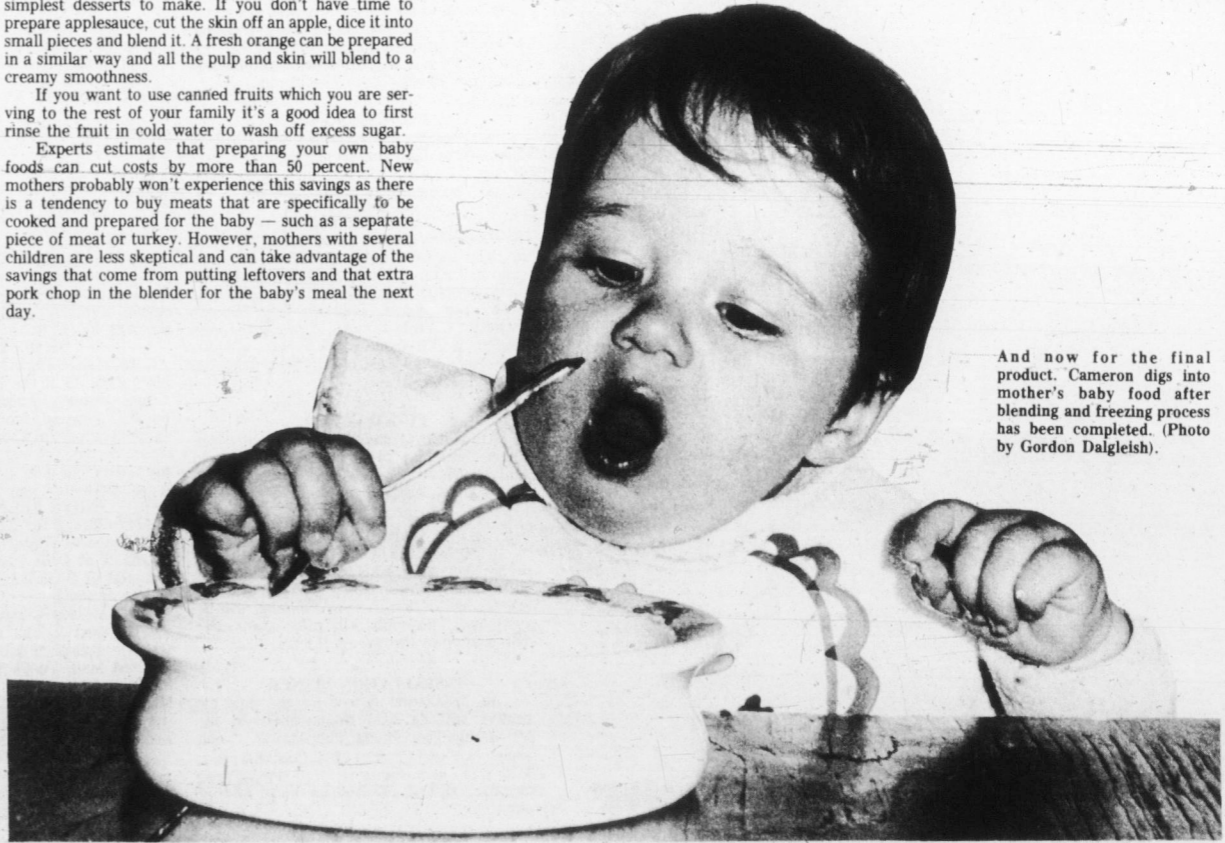
"This kind of danger showed itself tragically in the United States some years ago, when 30 infants were narrowly saved from death, after their mothers followed a baby food recipe containing a misprint about the amount of salt to add."

Sufficient salt (sodium) occurs naturally in milk, in many vegetables, and in meats, fish, and cheeses that are appropriate for infants, so your baby will get enough without adding more.

Fruits, both fresh and frozen, are as easy to prepare as meats and vegetables. Applesauce is one of the simplest desserts to make. If you don't have time to prepare applesauce, cut the skin off an apple, dice it into small pieces and blend it. A fresh orange can be prepared in a similar way and all the pulp and skin will blend to a creamy smoothness.

If you want to use canned fruits which you are serving to the rest of your family it's a good idea to first rinse the fruit in cold water to wash off excess sugar.

Experts estimate that preparing your own baby foods can cut costs by more than 50 percent. New mothers probably won't experience this savings as there is a tendency to buy meats that are specifically to be cooked and prepared for the baby — such as a separate piece of meat or turkey. However, mothers with several children are less skeptical and can take advantage of the savings that come from putting leftovers and that extra pork chop in the blender for the baby's meal the next day.



And now for the final product. Cameron digs into mother's baby food after blending and freezing process has been completed. (Photo by Gordon Daigleish).