

**Wildrose Kennel
Training Newsletter
Mike Stewart
June, 2001**

Mr. Vic Barlow, an associate of Wildrose Kennels, is from Cheshire, England, and a trainer of Labradors. He is a noted writer of sporting articles and a frequent contributor to The Retriever Journal. Vic recently co-presented at a Wildrose seminar and has written our Training Newsletter for this month.

**The Disney Factor
Vic Barlow**

The Ducks Unlimited mascot retriever, Drake, enjoyed having the company of a fellow Brit at The Great Outdoors Festival. We were taking a relaxing stroll between numerous demonstrations when a rather large gentleman with a long, unkempt, ginger beard stood directly in our path. Drake and I expected trouble of the "Y'all pokin' fun at me boy," variety.

To our complete amazement the giant bent down, patted Drake on the head and said, "He's just a little person in a dog costume." Which I am afraid is how our society now views all animals/birds and which we shall refer to as "The Disney Factor."

"The Disney Factor" decrees that all species are really human beings with EXACTLY the same value system as us. Thankfully, this is not the case. Labradors won't steal your woman and Chesapeake's don't shop at Macey's, but the concept persists. Should you be tempted to treat your dog in this manner, don't be surprised if he is unruly and stubborn. Although your beloved hunting companion may need food, water, work and shelter there is one thing he craves beyond everything else....Leadership.

When you are the dominant leader of his pack, he has total security. He knows that YOU know the rules. Deprive him of this and he either becomes his own leader or he develops neurotic and inappropriate behavior. Pack leader never fusses over other members. Upon greeting, they fuss around him/her. Therefore, do not rush into the house to say,

"hi" to your dog. Stand as tall as you can and ignore him for 10 minutes while he runs around you. Show him that you are in control of the food supply by eating before him and momentarily taking his dinner away from him during feeding. Always walk through gates and doors ahead of him and growl at him to show disapproval or shake him by his scruff. Be consistent at all times, don't change the rules and you will gain his utmost respect. Treat him like a "little person in a dog costume" and he'll be the one asking, "Y'all pokin' fun at me, boy?"

