



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Canine Master on Pet Life Radio - Episode #2 Interview with Dr. Roger Mugford of the Company of Animals

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Chris Onthank:

I'm Chris Onthank and welcome to the Canine Master show here on Pet Life Radio. Today I have the great pleasure of having a good friend of mine and a special colleague, Dr. Roger Mugford, from the UK, in Devonshire, England. Roger is, I don't know if you've heard about him, but he's pretty darn world renowned. He's a great canine behaviorist. He's also a trainer. He's also a veterinarian and he also develops pet products, that I use personally, and many of you use.

In 1979, Roger founded the Animal Behavioral Center in Surrey, England. It's a referral service for veterinarians and their clients with pet problems. In that same year he founded the Company of Animals. The Company of Animals is where he invented a whole range of pet products that revolutionized the way that people train their dogs. It's great products. The other thing that Roger just received was, he was awarded the very prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the World Pet Association just last week. We were all there to watch Roger receive the award. I would say it's probably the most prestigious award in the pet industry. Congratulations on that.

I met Roger about seven years ago, when Roger and the Company of Animals distributed the Dog Gone Smart product line in England. They were our distributor there and we had an amazing connection just at that point. We both found out that we were very similar in many ways. Some people think that I'm sort of the Roger Mugford in the U.S. We both have a farm. We both work with animals. We both are canine behaviorists and work with dogs. We both work on aggression cases. We both help people with their dogs and we manufacture pet products that help people with their dog.

I mean, how much is that? It's pretty wild how it all works out. It's great. The one thing I do not have that Roger has is that he's trained the Corgis for Queen Elizabeth which I don't have that in my repertoire. Although, I do work with a bunch of celebrities. I have never had that honor. Roger, I am so excited to have you here on the show, and welcome.

Roger Mugford: Lucky old me to be here. Chris, after all these similarities, I think we should get married.

Chris Onthank: Maybe, maybe we should.

Roger Mugford: Later today.

Chris Onthank: I just want to know who's going to wear the dress.

Roger Mugford: No, but he's quite right. We come from the same place which is people matter and pets make people happy. People need pets. Obviously some people have problems with their pets and we're here to solve them. It's a big privilege to be allowed into people's lives, like you do, like I do, and to be told their innermost secrets.

Chris Onthank: Yeah, it becomes very intimate. I mean the things we find out when we go into people's homes.

Roger Mugford: Scary.

Chris Onthank: You have to understand that actually the whole sort of relationships between the people in the family. That can really-

Roger Mugford: You guys haven't slept together for three years because of the dog? Oh, you must be crazy. Oh no, don't pass by any judgments. I wouldn't say that, and which side of the bed, because all these little timetabling things affect the husband over the dog. It's more dogs that we see, very few cats. Cat owners are very happy with their pets. Even if they scratch furniture and crap on all the wrong places. Cat owners love their animals so much they'll just put up with it. Dog owners want their animal to conform, and to behave and to be like the dogs that they see on the movies. Everyone wants to have a Lassie dog and it's got to be perfect just like the kids. Dog owners are a very different category from cat owners.

Chris Onthank: It is. The thing is, I've even run into people. I just had recently a client who said, "I just want my dog to lie down next to me and stay there when I come home." I said, "Well, there's a great taxidermist down the street. Why don't we give them a call?"

Roger Mugford: So many people really only think their dog is happy when it is lying there and being still and motionless. Why don't you put it on drugs? As you say, have a taxidermy and a dead dog, but the truth is, dogs need to be active for 12 to 15 hours a day. They need about as much sleep as a human and so don't expect a dog to be sleeping all the time. That is not a happy dog if it is.

Chris Onthank: No, not at all. I mean that's why we have the doggy daycare centers popping off all around the United States and around the world now. We're having to actually exercise the dogs for the dog owners while they go off to work. Yeah of course.

Roger Mugford: By the way, you know who started this whole movement? No, it wasn't Chris, it was Joe Sporn.

Chris Onthank: Joe Sporn. Exactly. He had the first one.

Roger Mugford: And he's another professional in the pet industry that we both love. He's a great guy and he's also an inventor.

Chris Onthank: Unfortunately his center just closed down, but he started it all. I think I was right there behind him, but he was the first one.

Roger Mugford: Yeah. UK always a bit slow to catch on, is catching on with dog daycare centers. A lot of them tend to be outdoors on small farms, where animals have got 20, 30 acres to run. That is of course is ideal. But Manhattan, it's a bit tricky, isn't it, on space.

Chris Onthank: Yeah, I know. I remember when I was up at your farm, at the behavioral center in the Company of Animals, also corporate headquarters. You and I went to I guess it was sort of a bully breed, but I know you're not allowed to have bully breeds, but it was something. You had let the dog out and you said, "Chris, go and take a look at this new dog." He proceeded to open up the run and he jumped past you and we spent the ... catch this dog as he was tormenting your sheep, and going after. We got in the car. It was a very muddy spring. We're sprawling the mud all over the car and it was just one of the funniest times I've ever had with anyone, let alone being it with you.

Roger Mugford: He's called Humphrey. I've still got that dog.

He's a bit of a court case. He was in court before the judge because he undressed little girls on the way to school. He got out of his owner's yard. His owner was in a wheelchair. He couldn't control this fantastic dog, a bull mastiff crossed Staffordshire bull terrier, so it looks like a pit bull. Anyway, you'll be pleased to know he's a reformed character. The best thing that helped me cure Humphrey, he shot both of his cruciate ligaments, so-

Chris Onthank: He doesn't run very fast anymore.

Roger Mugford: He can't run away as fast.

Chris Onthank: He's not able to undress girls anymore. Right?

Roger Mugford: Those too. He's been mostly trained and but \$10,000 later in vet bills for his cruciate ligament. That's one of the downsides about Staffys. By the way, I love the bull breeds.

Chris Onthank: I love them too. I think they got the biggest bum wrap going.

Roger Mugford: They do.

Chris Onthank: It's one of the all American great dogs. I say here in America, but one of the all time great dogs.

Roger Mugford: They all started in UK.

Chris Onthank: Yeah, yes they did.

Roger Mugford: They're just such loyal little animals and their faces are so expressive. Of course we could say that about all dogs. All dogs are fantastic.

Chris Onthank: Oh, they're great. One of the things that Roger does, and I think that it's really kind of amazing, is that he creates products to help people manage their dogs, and work with their dogs and train their dogs. I mean, a lot of the products that I use at in my behavioral center, Roger has invented.

Roger Mugford: Well I think the dog training should be very accessible and it should be, if you like, idiot proof. If you look at some of the old timers' books, Koehler, and this Monks of Skete, and all that, they sound so darn complicated, and dog training isn't complicated. Dog's pulling on the lead. I invented the Halti. Why did I do a Halti? Because I work with horses, I work with cattle and you don't fight with an animal that [.

Chris Onthank: Talk a little bit about what the Halti is. I've been using the Halti for years. I mean, you were the first one to come up with this head halter or almost like a horse halter, right?

Roger Mugford: It was. That day I had a bad back because I'm tall like you, and, oh my god, my next patient's an Irish Wolfhound. It's a dog weighing a hundred kilos, 200 pounds. What are we going to do with this great dog? It's going to break my back and my doctor is going to be mad at me. I just pulled out a halter and slightly modified it to fit this dog. Wow. It really was a life changing moment. First time anyone had put a head collar on a dog.

Roger Mugford: Although there are ancient pictures of dogs one in Belgium with head collars on.

Chris Onthank: That's interesting.

Roger Mugford: Nothing in this world is new really. All I did was transfer the technology from one species to another. If you think about it, the world of horses is full of some really interesting innovations, because those darn things, those critters, they bite, they kick, they run. You have to be very good at understanding body language and body control if you're a horseman. It's really these same skills that we want to introduce into all the dogs.

Chris Onthank: Yeah. It's interesting. The Halti looks like a horse halter. When you use it, basically it works this way. Where the head goes, the body's going to follow. It's great for people that have those pulling dogs that are yanking them down the street. I mean that's at all our puppy classes here, at Dog Gone Smart, we use them, we encourage people to put them on. It's a great product.

Roger Mugford: I would never say all dogs have to wear head collars, or all dogs have to wear Haltis even, because really all you want is a soft point of physical connection between the owner and the dog. If it's a fat collar and the dog doesn't pull on it, that's just fine. Please don't use a spiky collar or please don't use even a garrot choke chain, but harnesses are a sensible way to handle your dog.

And there are zillions of great harness designs. In an ideal world, dogs will be free. They're free on my farm, they're free on yours, but there's something called road traffic. That's means about a hundred years, dogs have had to be on a lead and it is a quite unnatural situation for dogs. They never evolved to be tied up as much as they have been in 21 century.

Chris Onthank: Yeah. Even more now than when we were kids. I mean, when I was a kid, I used to let my dog out and he'd run around and he'd have a great, great time. I now find with all these leash laws that we have.

Roger Mugford: Listen, you need to know Chris that it's actually 120 years old. I'm a bit younger, but he can remember the first motor car coming along.

Chris Onthank: Listen, one of the things I want to ask you though. He has a number of different products. The first is the Halti, there's the Pet Corrector, there's the Baskerville muzzle. You now have that new Anxiety Wrap, which is the oldest one in that category that I know of. You also have the Green Feed, they're slowing down, but slow feeder. All of these products are really kind of groundbreaking in many of their ways.

Roger Mugford: They're functional.

Chris Onthank: Yeah. I wanted to say that the head Halti, and I have found over the years, I've also seen that you've developed it so I'm going to go back to that and it's actually had some modifications recently that I understand. But the Halti, when I put it on a dogs, many dogs do really well with it. Then there are those dogs that you stick it on and they fight it. They froth at the mouth, they start jumping up and down. People are like, oh my gosh, my dog.

Roger Mugford: It's cruel.

Chris Onthank: Oh, it's terrible. I got to be honest. I mean I see these people get really, like, I'm not putting this on my dog. It looks horrible. It looks like a muzzle. I think that's the other thing that we've heard, is that it looks like a muzzle. I don't know, Roger. I mean, how do you answer those questions?

Roger Mugford: There really are individual differences. Some dogs, we'll call more reactive dogs, take very badly to that sort of restraint. So do some people.

But some people, the slightest little imperfection in their clothing and they scratch and itch and it's really bad. Other people like me, thick skinned and put up with it. Dogs are so similar in that respect - marked individual differences so there's no one product for every dog. Treat them as an individual. For those dogs that genuinely struggle and genuinely looking miserable, I would take the Halti off, throw it away, or take it back to the store, because it's not for every dog. The biggest factor that seems to be affecting dogs' reactions to any head collar or Halti, is whether or not the side straps touch the lips, the flews as they're called.

Chris Onthank: Those are those drool areas.

Roger Mugford: The drooly areas. They've got a dog like and Irish setter or a typical spaniel. Those flews go back a long way. They're outward facing, which is if you'd like a design fault in insensible dogs like wolves, they're nice, and neat and tight. But they're very easily inflamed in certain breeds. We call them lippy breeds. Those are not so well designed for head collars. The second latest design of Halti, which I call the Opti Fit, and this sits a lot further back and doesn't touch these lips. Actually, so does the competitive product, the Gentle Leader, not touch lips. That's why in some situations the Gentle Leader has got better acceptability, because the Gentle Leader puts a lot of pressure on the top of the nose.

Chris Onthank: That's another brand. The Gentle Leader is your competitive brand.

Roger Mugford: Yep, yep, yep.

Chris Onthank: But also a good product.

Roger Mugford: A good product and in it did away from fighting with their dog and trying to pit their strength against the strength of the dog - which dogs will usually win in the end. Gets off this delivering painful pressure on the soft tissues of the dog's throat, because that's what concerns me.

Chris Onthank: I will tell you, one of the things that I have found and I have some of my other trainers do, is that when we have a dog that fights the Gentle Leader initially, many times I do this with a muzzle as well and with your Baskerville muzzle, is that I do some counter conditioning. Basically what I do is, when I put the muzzle on or the Halti on, I am going to feed them some hotdogs. The great thing about the Halti and also your Baskerville muzzle is it allows us to actually counter condition that feeling. Take that trigger that usually would freak them out, and pair it with a treat. All of a sudden putting that Halti on becomes a great feeling and it becomes good.

I find that it's sort of like, the bar opens and the bar closes, I like to say. When I put it on, the bar's open and the treats come, and when I take it off the bar closes. Pretty soon that that dog really starts to accept the Halti and I don't have the issues. If you initially find that when you put the Halti on that the dog starts really not liking and trying to paw it off, try doing some counter conditioning. Try to take some slices of hotdogs or a nice tasty treat and when it's on, make sure that you give him a nice treat. You know what? He's going to pretty much like putting it on anyway. Then feeding him as we go becomes, he starts to really like the experience. Have you found that too?

Roger Mugford: Yeah, exactly that. It is about 10% of dogs that really won't accept a Halti. I would look for an alternative solution and there are many alternative solutions to a head collar. Of course then the fact of going for walks is enjoyable for most dogs, so that's the biggest reward of all. Just as rattling a conventional collar and lead, and say, "Hey Roo, wake up and let's go for a walk." So it is with head collars. Pretty soon that positive association is formed. I would say that, a little bit of investment in the home on soft carpets of the dog wearing a Halti not connected to a lead, and as you say, feeding treats, and playing games and making it really a rewarding experience is a good investment.

Chris Onthank: Yeah, and I find it really works.

I'm here with Dr. Roger Mugford, from the Company of Animals, and one of the best canine behaviorists I know besides myself. The other thing I wanted to talk to you about was, you have a great product that

I've actually written about in my Canine Master blog. It's called the Pet Corrector. I've actually sold them on my shop Master Pets website. They are a great product because the sound, and I believe it's the sound, actually, it's compressed sound ... Roger, can you give a little...

Roger Mugford: Just as I invented that Halti because I was ticked off with people yanking dogs on choke chains and spike collars and all that. There's no point just criticizing what people do. You've got to come up with a positive alternative, therefore a head collar. In the same world of dogs that we live in, too many of my clients, some listeners maybe, are shouting at their dog. They're kicking dogs, they're throwing rocks at dogs.

Chris Onthank: I know, the worst.

Roger Mugford: Please keep your voice down. Your dogs have better hearing than you and you don't need to raise your voice.

Chris Onthank: Also I find that when you scream at your dogs, it actually escalates the issues that are going on, many times.

Roger Mugford: There's no point just putting gags on people and saying, "Be nice to your dog," and, "Well, how do you stop the dog from doing the wrong thing?" Excuse me, Dr. Mugford. I said, "Well, okay, what have I been using to protect myself when I'm in some serious difficult situations with dogs?" I use a CO2 fire extinguisher.

Chris Onthank: We use it downstairs, so if we have a major issue, CO2 breaks up a fight in an instance.

Roger Mugford: Exactly, but it's a bit hard to carry a 30 kilo, a foot high piece of solid steel in your handbag. It just doesn't look very good.

Chris Onthank: No. Walking, carry it in the dog park.

Roger Mugford: I've been criticized of dog trainers in saying, "Well it's a punishment, it's a positive punishment".

And I will just demonstrate. So listeners, if you've got a sensitive dog in the room, turn away. That is the sound, and that sound as brief as that, a half a second, is sufficient to alert a dog. My god, what was that? For some dogs it is very aversive. I would say that typically the border collies, and the known sensitive breeds. But for most dogs it's, hey, just an alerting signal. What was that? Of course the sound is biologically built into dogs. I say built into people too, and horses and many other species that I work with. They all think that that's the sound of danger. Cats go shh, snakes obviously, geese, all the animals that want to

protect themselves, their last resort is to make a big old hiss. That is the sound that mammals seem to be biologically programmed to respond to. It's a lot easier than shouting at a dog. This little 30 gram compressed air is a remarkably powerful conditioning instrument that shouldn't be used more than three, four, 10 times in the dog's life, maximum.

You only need to buy one, should be enough, because if you have to keep on using it, then it's not working, or the context in which you're using it, is inappropriate. Just conditionally to see that little red cylinder means stop and they're off to just the visual signal of holding the cylinder should be enough to stop the dog in its tracks. Then to build in some positive reward.

Chris Onthank: An alternate behavior.

Roger Mugford: To sit and be stroked, or to receive a treat or whatever it is. Anything's better than the dog jumping up, stealing food, chasing the cat, barking incessantly, jumping to the front seat of a car when he should be in the back seat of the car, and so on and so on. These are the situations in which briefly and occasionally you will need to use a form of positive punishment.

Chris Onthank: Yeah. I will tell you, one of the things that I find when I'm using positive punishment is the timing of when that positive punishment occurs. One of the things that I find is use a marker that means, this is coming. I think you and I have talked about this in years past. Whether you use a word that you normally wouldn't use, that's one thing that's important. I will use, "wacko" or "enough", it's the way you say it.

Roger Mugford: Ahhh, ahhh.

Chris Onthank: Or Ahh, ahh, but people tend to do that ahh ahh a lot. Then the dog will say, "Oh gosh, this is coming." One of the things I find to get perfect timing, and the best time to correct a dog is when they're thinking about it, and the next time is when they're in the midst of the act. There's studies to know that one to two seconds after a dog does a behavior and we correct them, they don't know why. We got to catch them when they're thinking about it in the act.

If across the room my dog is about to jump up on the kitchen counter and I now pick up the Pet Corrector, and by the time I grab this Pet Corrector, he's already down eating the sandwich. It's too late really. The act of grabbing the food off the counter is gone, but if I can pair a marker word that means, this is about to come, I get perfect timing. That's how I have used the Pet Corrector in the past and it works very, very effectively.

Roger Mugford: Of course a really good point you make. The simple rushing breath through your teeth, shh, is just as effective by association. There's a certain dog trainer on the West Coast.

Chris Onthank: What's his name? Gosh, I forget.

Roger Mugford: Anyway...

Chris Onthank: Is it Napoleon or something? Maybe it's Napoleon something.

Roger Mugford: My memory fails me.

Chris Onthank: Yeah, okay.

Roger Mugford: Anyway, he has been in his programs doing this, "ch ch". Damn it, I've been doing that 30 years ago. Anyway, nothing in this world is new and well done Cesar Milan for discovering my discovery of ch, is a great sound to interrupt. When the dog walks off his pavement or sidewalk into any dangerous situation, you just, "ch ch". You don't need to say, "Dog, come back over here." No, "ch ch", is enough.

Chris Onthank: Yeah, it's amazing. All right, so I do know that I recently, I have seen some ... There's was one guy, if you were to Google Pet Corrector, that comes up and he says, "The only best use for the Pet Corrector is to clean the lens on your camera." Have you seen this video at all?

Roger Mugford: No, I haven't, but I'm sure it's a very good lens cleaner.

Chris Onthank: A very good lens cleaner.

Roger Mugford: Of course, there are other devices which produce compressed air or compressed gas that could be used for the same purpose. But if it's about the pet correcting, and the reason why it's more expensive than the devices used to clean your computer board is that it's non-flammable. It's an inert gas which can be compressed and is in a liquid form. The use of hydrocarbons, propane, butane would be the typical mix. Boy do they burn beautifully. If you're a smoker or you're anywhere near a naked flame, and you use that same device, then you're going to have a big explosion.

Chris Onthank: You're going to have a big explosion.

Roger Mugford: And a very burned dog. There is in fact an American product that is just like this and I set fire to, I emphasize this, a stuffed Labrador toy. I set fire to it in dark. It's a great video and I really ought to put it online.

Chris Onthank: I want to talk about, and actually I got criticized on my blog by

somebody who wrote in and said, "You're not supposed to spray this near their face."

Roger Mugford: I agree with that. All products, even food is subject to abuse. Food is the greatest enemy of healthy living in America. Everything can be abused. We go out of our way to say no closer than a meter, four feet.

Chris Onthank: Four feet is about that distance.

Roger Mugford: Sound travels - the speed of sound so you don't need to be on top of the dog.

Chris Onthank: Now do we do it in their direction? That's one of the questions I had for you. If I grab it, do I point it towards the dog and then spray it or do I spray it in another direction? What would you recommend?

Roger Mugford: I really don't think it matters. I think towards the dog is fine and there is a way, you can't see this, there's the way I'm using it, I just hit it with the side of my hand. Like that, really a short one.

Chris Onthank: It's a short one. Not a long one.

Roger Mugford: Lots of people would be doing this and that's too long. Way too long. Of course you got a whole lot more sprays out of the can. A tiny little can should produce 200 of these sprays. Is it right to punish dogs? I mean that opens up a whole philosophical discussion.

Chris Onthank: Oh, here we go.

Roger Mugford: Should dogs be in a world which is just of good news and nice experiences?

Chris Onthank: This is big stuff here.

Roger Mugford: Wouldn't we like people to live in a world like that? I'm sorry. I keep on getting stopped for doing things wrong on the road and I'm driving and I go through a red light.

Chris Onthank: Don't get a ticket.

Roger Mugford: There's a cop on my tail right away and I know I'm going to be hauled up before court. It's the fear of being found out and being punished that regulates human behavior. I have all sorts of fantasies about doing bad things. I don't, because I know that I'd be punished for them. Dogs live in the same cognitive world, in the cognitive envelope that humans do.

Chris Onthank: This is what we call operant conditioning. Truly this is how dogs learn. I mean, we have in the training industry amongst many different trainers, we have the all positive. Everything has to be positive, what you were just talking about. Then we have yank and crackers, and the electrocutions, that are out there putting the shock collars on their dogs and yanking and cranking them with a prong collar, and choking them off. There's really two extremes to the whole thing.

Roger Mugford: They exist in every country. The positive reward is, we only use positive reinforcement, if you like the how animal learning and animal conditioning works and the difference between instrumental and classical conditioning and deny that behavior should have consequences. I believe that you should pay the price. You should gain the gain and pay the price for bad things. My training, which is in my latest book, is called Payoffs and Penalties. Of course we want lots of payoffs and a positive reinforcement, it's great. You're going to get a paycheck, you're going to give you a pay raise for being a great person, or you're going to be fed on time, if you're a good dog or being taken for a walk. Of course long delayed penalties, punishments are not effective in human behavior or in dogs either. In 10 years time, I'm going to reduce your salary if you don't improve. Sorry, that's not a very effective penalty or incentive.

The penalties have to be immediate, have to be appropriate. I'm trying to get people out of using those products you mentioned, the electric shock collars, and the spiky collars, and the kicks and the shouts, and use something that's a lot more subtle and a lot more immediate and it doesn't leave lasting harm. With respect, I don't think the Pet Corrector does. We've sold 3.5, 4 million of these suckers and we've had virtually no complaints. The only complaint we've had is some somebody in Arizona who left the aerosol on the front of their car in direct sunlight, and it exploded, and exploded their windscreen too.

Chris Onthank: So that's not so bad. Just don't put them in front of hot flames or hot things.

Roger Mugford: No. It is a very benign thing. If your dog or cat or other animal react badly to it, is really spooked, then don't use it again. Throw it away.

Chris Onthank: Yeah. That's what I would say. Let's talk about corrections for a second. This is such a hot issue. Amongst dog trainers, I had a dog trainer that was working for me several years ago. She was called out several times for the dog to stop jumping up and stop getting onto the kitchen counters. She is all positive motivational training and she uses no aversives at all. I finally declined, I fired her and I called up.

Roger Mugford: I had a trainer like that. I fired him too because I found him training a dog not to chase sheep by doing recoil training on a long line. Excuse

me. I want to make it so exciting that this dog comes back to me that he'll leave the sheep over there, because in England we have sheep in our back gardens but actually the town and country all mixed up, and so dogs chasing sheep were a big issue. He really thought that he could provide value for money by doing recoil training on a long line that was going to transfer to the real world of dogs chasing sheep or squirrels, or all the other things dogs chase. It's nuts.

Chris Onthank: Yeah, it's crazy. I mean the thing is, if a dog is jumping up and getting a reward, how is positive motivational training ... What would you feed them a better treat over here? It just doesn't work. I mean, dogs do learn through correction. I think that we must teach new behaviors in a very positive, motivational way.

Roger Mugford: Sit.

Chris Onthank: Sit. I use a clicker or a conditioned reinforcer or a marker and I do use food to teach. But once the dog is doing any bad behaviors or things that are life threatening for the dog, or even if I'm getting the dog to stay or lie down for a period of time so he can go to the club with me, he can go to the deli and go on a down stay. I am going to have to use if that dog breaks out of that position, I'm going to have to use some sort of mild aversive.

Roger Mugford: The change of voice might be that aversive, that ahh ahh.

Chris Onthank: It might be that. If the dog sees you as more of a leader and you are leading that dog, and that dog wants to follow your lead, a little guttural correction. Many times it'll just be, hey, I get it. I don't want to make you angry and I want us all to get along.

Roger Mugford: Excuse me, did I hear you use the word leader?

Chris Onthank: I know, that's something that I do. I know. You and I are going to disagree on this one, but that's okay.

Roger Mugford: I think we will agree actually. Because yeah, the other myth that's being promoted by certain training fraternities is, do you know that dogs don't have social hierarchies. The idea of the alpha dog, apparently it's just an invention that may apply to wolves, although David MacMead and Kristen Nutt but that apparently dogs were somehow changed in their evolution of history.

Chris Onthank: And they're all equals.

Roger Mugford: They're really cool and they all want to please us and they're all really nice animals.

Chris Onthank: They live in a democratic society and one man, one vote and everybody is this equal and we all..

Roger Mugford: And they're not violent.

Chris Onthank: Nope, Nope.

Roger Mugford: And we lose big teeth. They pack them away.

Chris Onthank: It is quite silly. There is this train of thought amongst dog trainers that there is no hierarchy in dog training and that dogs do live in families. You see this, now it's the pack, oh now we're going to call it politically correct. It's now the family.

Roger Mugford: Family.

Chris Onthank: Yes. It's now the family of dogs. They all know each other and they're all siblings. Well that may be true, but I have done enough studying in India and seeing the street dogs of India and watched them so many times to see how they naturally are. They certainly do have hierarchies.

Roger Mugford: You don't have to go to India. About 28 years ago I was at the University of Pennsylvania. Do you remember Alan Beck?

Chris Onthank: Oh yeah.

Roger Mugford: Famous guy, I think now retired, but a good academic. He did a study of free roaming dogs in the city of Baltimore, which is one of my favorite cities, now it's really changed a lot. In those days it was a trash city. It was plastic bags everywhere with food in it, and of course the great American throwaway food culture means that it's rich pickings for American dogs. Those dogs, street dogs were living really well. They looked great. So much for the dog food industry, you know?

You can live well on American garbage. Very clearly social hierarchy. You see the packs that would avoid like just like gangs in the street, violence in South of Chicago, avoid the patch of a competing gang. The tribal animals, their family social organization is so like that of human beings and they have common interests. They get together and there's division of labor within packs that in some go hunting and they come together at certain times of the day to play and to sleep.

Another study recently published from Italy, where there were big garbage heaps outside Rome. Again, no doubt about it, there were social hierarchies. There were some dogs that have premier access, like on a plane, premier access to the best resources first and then the others come in and follow and maybe have to fight for their position.

Chris Onthank: Whether that's food, whether that's affection, whether that's elevation spots, it's all those things.

Roger Mugford: Interestingly not sex. Quite often the subdominant animals are quite successful in terms of breeding and passing on their genes to the next generation.

Chris Onthank: Unlike the wolves, which is more that leader wolf, or the alpha wolf has the breeding rights.

Roger Mugford: He tries to kill off or drive off subordinates who could represent a threat to his privileged position as the sexual king of the pack. Of course evolution has substantially changed the domestic dog or natural selection by humans. I work with cattle, I work with horses, they all exhibit social hierarchy. If you come by a trainer who says, "I don't believe in the top dog theory," just find another trainer.

Chris Onthank: Find another trainer. I agree. I mean, listen, we're going to jump from this subject in a second because I want to ask you another question, but one last thing I want to end on. Dogs do best. Most dogs do best when they have a leader, a calm, a benevolent leader and dogs love to follow. I will see this over and over and over again. They love to be led. So do we, don't we? I mean don't most of us like to be led? We don't all want to be CEOs and leaders. A lot of us like to follow. It makes us live longer, it's less stressful and it gives us a better quality of life.

Chris Onthank: All right, well thank you, Roger. That was great. I love those. I could sit here and talk to you forever on that. I want to ask you one funny, interesting question. I'd love for you to give me some good stories on this. Because give us the dirt and I know it's your Queen. I'd love to know how it has been to train the Queen of England's dogs.

Roger Mugford: I was approached and this veterinarian contacts me and says, "I want you to see client XYZ."

Chris Onthank: Then I'll tell you who it is.

Roger Mugford: Then normally I'll set up the appointment and I didn't know who it was. The address is Windsor. Oh yeah. Right. Windsor with the castle. Oh right. I go in there and I'm met by the Queen, Her Majesty herself. There were these nine dogs which had been involved in a fight, if you like, a gang bang bust up. Her mother was then alive, the Queen Elizabeth, Queen Mother. She'd been badly bitten separating one of her dogs in a fight with 10 dogs.

Chris Onthank: These are Corgis I assume.

Roger Mugford: Corgis and Dorgis, dachshund crosses corgis. We're talking 20 years ago. What immediately impressed me was that the Queen could control a pack of nine dogs very effectively. You stay there. Hello, this is Dr. Mugford. Yeah, right. Later on she fed them. Nine bowls were brought in by a butler or crack bowls, lovely China that had been used for banquets previously I had imagined, but every one different. Every one cares a lot about diet, so do I, so do you, and they sat in this semicircle and they each were fed in turns. This woman is a great dog person. She's also a great horse person.

Chris Onthank: Well, she's a great leader, I guess, isn't she?

Roger Mugford: She's a great leader. She's been leading longer than anybody. Even President Mugabe.

Chris Onthank: Oh my gosh.

Roger Mugford: I think the only leader with approaching, he's a long way off the Queen in terms of being a ruler. Of course she isn't really a ruler. We've got a great democracy. She's accountable to parliament and so it's highly irregular, but she's a great leader and we love her to bits and the world does. Animals and all her family, love animals. Prince Charles loves Jack Russells. Prince William, her great-grandson has a great little pointer dog, so it runs right through. Then of course it runs through British culture, a love of animals. We've sort of lent that culture to the Americans, I hope.

I'm a psychologist. I got into this business because I love people and people. They need recreation and they need somebody to get their heads away from dealing just with other people and pets. Dogs especially do that so well.

Chris Onthank: Yeah. Well I tell you, the one question I have is, did you teach them how to bow or how to curtsy?

Roger Mugford: A little.

Chris Onthank: See if I could get away with murder?

Roger Mugford: It was the Queen's corgis that got me thinking about how to break up a dog fight. I've just done it again because-

Chris Onthank: That Pet Corrector does it.

Roger Mugford: It does. I won't break up a really serious, like a pair of pit bulls fighting, you're going to need something bigger than that, but for so many situations it is a life saving and finger saving.

Chris Onthank: It's correct.

Roger Mugford: Thank you, Chris.

Chris Onthank: All right. Hey, cheers. You know what? I really enjoyed having you on the show and I thank you for being here today. I hope to get you on again.

Roger Mugford: I'm always available.

Chris Onthank: I love it. All right. Thank you very much and let's talk about the next show. The next show we will be bringing up about separation anxiety, when they're driving me crazy. When they leave, they tear up my house. What are the things that we do and is counterconditioning you leaving? Meaning, pick up my keys, put them back down, put my jacket on. Is that effective? We'll find out.

All right, that's it for today. So be sure to visit CanineMaster.com. That's C-A-N-I-N-E Master.com, and give me all your questions. I really want to see what you guys want to know and I'll get back to you as best I can. I may even have you call in for the show. You can also send me your videos and photos so I can get to see what's going on with your dog. See you next time on Canine Master Radio, where I will continue to help you master the relationship with your dog.