



## Pointers On Pets



### Celebrity Dogs Do More Than Sit Up And Beg For Stardom

(NAPSA)—If you have ever thought your pooch “ought to be in pictures,” you may want to consider some pointers from celebrity dog trainer Mathilde DeCagney.

DeCagney has helped many dogs achieve stardom. Her most notable students include Moose, playful star of the TV show, *Frasier*; dogs Enzo in *My Dog Skip* and Bob, the superdog star of *See Spot Run*.

While celebrity dogs can do some amazing tricks on camera, these dogs work very hard with specialized animal trainers to prepare for their roles. While learning how to jump over fences and catch the bad guys would be difficult for the average dog, basic tricks are not beyond their reach. To help, DeCagney offers the following tips:

1. Teaching a dog tricks should not be made to feel like work for the dog or the owner. Make sure you and the dog are having fun.

2. Teach each trick the exact same way each time. Consistency and repetition are key to learning.

3. Always use an upbeat, happy tone of voice when teaching tricks.

4. When a dog starts making progress, reward him with a snack as a treat. Vary the rewards, interchanging toys with snacks in order to not make the dog dependent upon getting snacks each time.

5. Tricks should be practiced three times a day over the course of a few weeks; puppies—10 minutes at a time; older dogs—20 minutes at a time.

6. The best age to start teaching a dog tricks is 7-9 months old, but no dog is too old to start learning tricks.

7. Do not expect a dog to pick up complicated tricks at the beginning of teaching. Start with basics such as sit, roll over and wave. Once they master the basics, move on to more difficult tricks such as



**Angus T. Jones (left) and David Arquette (right) take their cues from Bob, the superdog in *See Spot Run*.**

sit up, beg and fetch.

8. Use various resources such as books, videos and Internet sites for tips on teaching tricks.

9. Know your dog's personality before you start. A playful, more energetic dog may be more willing to practice than one that likes to lie around.

10. Do not push a dog to learn. If your dog is not responding to learning tricks, he is probably not enjoying it.

You can see examples of DeCagney's celebrity dog training skills in the “howlingly” funny *See Spot Run*, with an all-star cast including David Arquette and Michael Clark Duncan. The DVD is packed with extras including a music video to “bark” along to and director “bites” that will charm audiences young and old. *See Spot Run* is available on VHS and DVD as of August 2001.

In this movie, offbeat mailman Gordon Smith (Arquette) has never met a dog he can't handle, but when he offers to baby-sit the son of his beautiful neighbor, his dog skills are put to the test.

The well-trained Bob drives this dog-loving mailman up a tree, dodges the mob and wins the hearts of the good guys.