

Dear Dog Lover,

Our monthly story at the end of this email: “The Trainer Becoming the Student!”

This newsletter is coming out a little earlier than usual, to let you know about the

postponed Anchorage Pet Expo!

The Pet Expo originally scheduled for Saturday, June 14, will now be held in September instead.

Since we had some links giving us great trouble in the past, we took all hyperlinks that would direct you to a web page out of this newsletter! We're sorry for any inconvenience this might cause you. Please don't hesitate to just contact us directly with any questions you may have!

Enjoy the sun,
Claudia

Our July Newsletter:

PART I: News

- 1) Anchorage Pet Expo has been postponed!!! New date: Sept 27
- 2) Outdoors field: the mud is fenced off

PART II: Events

- 3) Mark your calendar for August and September events

PART III: Classes + Workshops

- 4) Flyball back on the schedule!
- 5) Nose Work class in July will be for beginners
- 6) Nose Work practice 'field trips' in July

PART IV: Open Play Time and Daycare

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- 8) The Trainer Becoming the Student!

PART I: News

 **Anchorage Pet Expo has been postponed!**

The Pet Expo at the Dena'ina Center has been postponed to **Saturday, September 27th**. They realized that we have already too many other good events going on during the summer and now this indoor event will be held in the fall.

I need to check the calendar to see if I can skip our **agility classes** for that day without getting too close to Christmas later... There'll be an **agility trial October 25/26** for which I rather wanted to skip classes. And there's the **weekend of Thanksgiving**, when some people might be out of town? **Voice your opinion, agility students!!!** Tell us which day(s) would be important for you not to have your agility class scheduled for so that you can attend another event or be gone.

Outdoors field: the mud is fenced off

OK, the mud wasn't dried off completely yet and some dogs still found the mud puddles to play in at the back of the field. Frank found enough stakes to fence off the area with our orange snow fencing - that should keep the dogs out of the worst area and it's getting dryer each day. Now they can romp around the rest of the field and keep their owners happy! See you at Open Play Time!

Also, our daycare girls are looking into maybe taking the daycare dogs out on the fenced field for some time during the day. We'll have hook-up stations like inside to transition them safely to the outside 1-2 dogs at a time, and only after all dogs are outside and the supervisor can now stay outside with them, they'll be taken off the hook-ups. Plus, we first ask every owner's permission and find out if any dog is a known fence climber or jumper. We will also add the extra x-pen at the entry for double door security during pick-up times. Safety first and foremost!

As with Open Play Times, the dogs usually have no reason to try to get out of there - they enjoy playing in the field!

PART II: Events

Mark your calendar for August and September events

Sunday, August 24th: Doggy Day at the Palmer State Fair with demos from The Better Companion!

Saturday, September 6th: Annual Responsible Dog Ownership-Day at The Better Companion

Sunday, September 7th: Canine Good Citizen®-test at The Better Companion

Saturday, September 27th: Anchorage Pet Expo at the Dena'ina Center

PART III: Classes + Workshops

Flyball back on the schedule!

We finally found dates for a **Flyball Beginner** class and **Flyball Practice!** Flyball will be held outside on our fenced, groomed field and postponed to the next week if weather isn't cooperating.

We plan for 4 weeks but could end up finishing later if we have to postpone a week.

Start date: Wednesday, August 13

Times: Flyball Beginner: 5-6pm

Flyball Practice: 6:15-7:15pm

Last year several of the beginners stayed (and paid) for the practice afterwards each week and the dogs LOVED it! We take only 6 dogs maximum for the class to allow enough individual time for everybody.

Nose Work class in July will be for beginners

A **Nose Work Beginners Class** will be offered on **Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm, starting July 9**. We have a couple openings for this class. Want your dog to be a pet detective using his/her nose? Share this fun new dog sport with your dog! Your perspective about how your dog experiences the world will change with this class! You'll understand your dog much better when you walk with them and see them sniffing and catching a new scent. You'll start checking the wind direction and looking for the source of that scent yourself! Your observation skills in reading the dog's body language will improve and you'll start seeing very subtle changes in your dog's behavior much earlier, which can help you in all other aspects of having a dog.

Nose Work practice field trips in July

We will continue practicing Nose Work **away from home AND the facility**. We'll choose an area **away from the main traffic** stream for each time. It'll be a fun activity for students and dogs alike! Maybe we'll meet at your home next time?

We'll use the **sports punch card** for these field trips or you can pay as you go if you don't have a punch card.

We can take up to 10 dogs per evening and run either one hour for 5 dogs or up to two hours if we fill all 10 spots.

Location: TBA.

Day/Time: two times in July on Tuesday nights at 6pm, on July 8th and 22nd.

PART IV: Open Play Time and Doggy Daycare

Next Scheduled Closures

OPT every Friday evening
 Next scheduled closure: **July 4 (Independence Day)**

The field is now open for the summer! Unless it rains or blows us away (then we can still go inside).

DDC every Tuesday and Thursday
 next scheduled closure: **Thanksgiving?** 😊

PART V: Class Schedule

Listed are start dates. The classes will run one hour, once a week for 6 weeks unless otherwise specified. A **“maybe” for a class means YOU can tell us** if you want this class to happen. Enough student interest could put it on the schedule! 😊

Click [here](#) to view the online calendar by month. To see who’s instructing the class you’re interested in, go to our online [calendar](#) and click on any week of that class to see the details.

Click [here](#) to register for a class.

Already registered? Click [here](#) to pay for a class.

Or contact us by email or phone: info@bettercompanion.com, (907) 357-2521.

| <u>CLASS</u> | <u>July</u> | <u>Aug</u> | <u>Sep</u> | <u>later</u> |
|--------------------------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| <u>Behavior Classes</u> | | | | |
| Puppy 1 | Wed 7/9 | Mon 8/11 | Thu 9/11 | Oct 2014 |
| Foundation Class | Wed 7/9 | Tue 8/12 | Thu 9/11 | Oct 2014 |
| Puppy 2 | Thu 7/10 | | | Oct 2014 |
| Elementary School | | | Wed 9/10 | Nov 2014 |
| High School | Thu 7/10 | | | Jan 2015 |
| CGC-test (one day) | | | Sun 9/7 | 2015 |
| C.L.A.S.S. - BA | | Mon 8/11 | | 2015 |
| C.L.A.S.S. Evaluation | | | | Fall 2014? |
| Tricks 'N Clicks | | | | 2015 |

| <u>Sports Classes</u> | <u>July 2014</u> | <u>Aug 2014</u> | <u>Sep 2014</u> | <u>later</u> |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Rally College | | | | Nov 2014? |
| Rally Practice | | maybe | | TBA |
| Freestyle | | | | TBA - late fall? |
| Nose Work Beginner | Wed 7/9 | | | Nov 2014? |
| Nose Work Odor | | | Wed 9/10 | 2015 |
| Nose Work Practice | Tue 7/8 + Tue 7/22 | TBA | Wed 9/10 | Cont'd |
| Treibball Beginner | | Tue 8/12 | | TBA - fall? |
| Treibball Intermediate | | | | TBA - fall? |
| Treibball Practice | | Tue 8/12 | | Cont'd |
| Flyball Beginner | | Wed 8/13 | | Summer 2015 |
| Flyball Practice | | Wed 8/13 | | Summer 2015 |
| Agility Puppy/Beg | Sat 7/12 | | Sat 9/13 | Nov 2014 |
| Agility Skills | Sat 7/12 | | Sat 9/13 | Nov 2014 |
| Agility Sequencing | Sat 7/12 | | Sat 9/13 | Nov 2014 |
| Agility Trialing | Sat 7/12 | | Sat 9/13 | Nov 2014 |
| Weight Pulling | | | | Fall 2014 |

You can check our web page www.bettercompanion.com for more info on classes, Doggy Day Care, Open Play Times, our facility and schedule, read testimonies from other students, print out the registration form (or fill one out online) and more.

Or contact us by email or phone: info@bettercompanion.com, (907) 357-2521.

PART VI: Monthly Story: “The Trainer Becoming The Student”

Training is a never-ending learning curve no matter how much experience you have. I learn something new at every dog trainer conference and dog workshop I go to, and right now I'm in a steep learning curve with horses, too! I already had some experience with horses from my early years, but I realize it was mostly how to properly clean a hoof, brush and saddle a horse and then riding a school horse that belonged to someone else.

Now, besides brushing up on my riding skills, I am also learning about feeding, checking weight, properly fitting a saddle, leading the horse, trailering, lunging and other ground work. And all of a sudden this is not anymore about just 'keep your heels down', 'straight back', upright position, hands this way and legs that way. As with having a dog - having a horse is so much more than feeding and riding (walking) it. Everything you do with or for your animal is a part of the overall experience of sharing your life with it.

This is about leadership and companionship, just like with the dogs! I'm learning how to apply simple rules, how to reinforce them and how to be consistent, but also how to "read" my horse; how to sympathize with a horse that's in distress and help them work through it safely.

Controlling space: For example; don't allow the horse's head too close to you, or to bump into you. Gently move the horse one arm's length away from you and make sure it stays there. Rather move your whole body TOWARDS the horse to show that this is YOUR space. Just like the dogs and jumping up on you!

Steering: Keep the reins rather soft in your hands and allow some back and forth movement of your hands to follow the head movement as the horse is walking. Give short tugs on one side to turn the horse's head (you horse people, forgive me if I got anything wrong or say it wrong! I'm still learning!), then release as soon as the horse does it. No big steering with the reins. The legs and body help with the turn. Just like with the dogs, no big steering with the leash, no heavy hands or jerking.

Leading: The rope is only there to keep the horse from taking off, but the horse learns to walk with you on a loose lead. It can learn commands like 'walk' to start walking, 'whoa' to slow down and 'hoe' to stop. 'Over' could mean walk sideways away from me. Plus the body motion of leaning forward or backward or sideways will support these verbal cues. Does this all sound familiar from dog training? I was surprised how much carries right over to training different animals!

Stress: Help the horse to calm down instead of fighting it or shouting at it for any wrongdoing. I learned some relaxation techniques at a recent workshop with an instructor from Iceland (since we have Icelandic horses), and when my horse Katla was nervous about being separated from her buddy (100 feet only, but she thought it was horrible), she wanted to rather trot than walk. We did some groundwork with her first, but when riding her she was still tense and wanting to trot. The instructor told me not to fight her into a walking pace but rather let her 'run it out' (within reason) and allow her to calm

down through me being calm sitting on her. I had to sit out her fast trot for about 20 minutes, but then I could feel her softening and all of a sudden I could easily slow her down and then stop her. She calmed down by herself, and better than if I would have fought her and commanded her to slow down. It felt terrific! Sometimes training just takes patience.

A team: Having my own horse now is totally different from riding a school horse. We are developing a bond, Katla looks forward to each new adventure with me, and every minute together, here at home or on our outings, brings us closer together. I am now coming to understand better what ground rules I need to set and how consistency is at least as important with a horse as it is with a dog! Horses can learn cues as quickly as dogs, and could also learn to get what they want, like pulling out the reins to graze, or pushing their head into us, or pulling their hoof away... But as we get more confident in handling them, we also get more consistent. No necessity for getting loud or harsh, just good communication and consistency will do.

I still find (and get shown) new ways to apply my dog knowledge to my horse training and it's been a fun learning curve! I hope I'm worthy of having this horse - Katla had already been well trained before she came to me - I want to help her have another 10 or more adventurous years while she's helping me become a better horse owner and trainer.

Enjoy your dogs (and horses),
Claudia

Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KSA
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