

Dear Dog Lover,

Our monthly story at the end of this email: [Leadership - Dominance or Parenthood?](#)

If you receive this email in full html, you can just [click on the events underlined and in light blue](#) to get to the correct page on our web site!

**Getting the indoors blues? Or running in circles?** Join us for fun activities with your dog! Coming to The Better Companion for one hour is like taking a **mini-vacation** from all the stress life brings to us.

**Warning: Trappers are setting snares!** I just received a call that a dog has hit a snare in the middle of the trail, a 2-mile loop off the Rabbit Slough trailhead area. This is the Palmer Hay Flats area, and snares can be set anywhere there, no signage required. The dog is well, because the owner was close and quick to act. Please be aware, keep your dogs close by and/or on leash!

** Weight Pulling Workshop - rescheduled!**

**Sundays; Dec 2 and 9, 12-2pm.** We again offer our annual Weight Pulling Workshop. It's a two-day workshops, held on two consecutive Sundays, two hours each. Teach your dog to **pull in harness**, from the kid's sled to the firewood to competing in local Weight Pulling events. For any dog over 1 year, **Beagle to Saint Bernard!** This workshop is also very helpful before teaching your dog to pull a musher's sled.

**Mushing Workshop coming up 2013!**

<http://www.bettercompanion.com/dogsports.html>.

** C.L.A.S.S. - B.A. course:**

Wednesday nights at 7:45pm; starts Dec 5<sup>th</sup>. This is a fun class; playing games while teaching our dogs manners for home and in public. We practice using only one command (instead of Sit! Sit! Sit!), loose leash walking, go to mat, and play already games for the higher levels (M.A. and Ph.D.). For all levels after P2 and FC. On our web page: [C.L.A.S.S. description](#)

** Skijor and Mushing Workshops 2013:**

We have now the dates set for our winter workshops 2013! Enjoy the great outdoors having your dog(s) safely connected with you - either through the skijor belt or the ganglines and sled! Only 1-2 pet dogs (depending on their size and strength) can pull you on a lightweight sled over our winter trails. We help you teaching your dogs to pull a sled or you on skis. Dates are **Jan 20 and 27 for the Mushing Workshop** and **Feb 17 for the Skijor Workshop**. Contact us for more information. Our **Weight Pull Workshop is a great starter to teach the dog to pull**, before we then work with them to pull AHEAD of you. In the last years, dogs that had attended the Weight Pull Workshop learned much faster and better to pull a skijorer or musher than the other dogs.

We have added classes for 2013, so please read through the next section carefully!

➤ Sign up now!

🐾 Weight Pulling Workshop - rescheduled! Sundays; Dec 2 and 9, 12-2pm

🐾 C.L.A.S.S. - B.A. course: Wednesdays 7:45pm; Starts Dec 5.

🐾 Agility classes for all levels: Saturdays all day; starts Jan 12.

🐾 Nose Work Beginners: Mondays, 6:30pm; starts Jan 14.

Due to the high demand, we added a Beginner class in January 2013. Join this fun activity for inside and outdoors! Easily copied at home to tire your dog the other 6 days of the week.

🐾 Nose Work - Intro to Odor: Mondays, 7:45pm; starts Jan 14.

For all Nose Work Beginner graduates, this is the class to get away from searching only for food! We'll let them search indoors, outdoors and along the lower outside of vehicles (weather permitting).

🐾 Rally College: Thursdays, 5pm; starts Jan 17.

For all Elementary School graduates. Guide your dog through different obedience obstacles while practicing the heel for longer sections. This will increase your dog's attention span and work on self control exercises, set up in form of a fun course.

🐾 Check our class listings below in a new easy overview format!

➤ Open Play Time/ Doggy Day Care:

- **DDC** will be closed on **Nov 22** (Thanksgiving)
- **OPT** will be closed on **Nov 23** (day after Thanksgiving)
- The next closure after that will be our **Christmas break (Dec 21 - Jan 6)**

The calendar can look very confusing at first. Please don't hesitate to call or email us with any questions about upcoming classes, workshops or practices.

Stay warm and dry,  
Claudia

## Upcoming Classes and Practices:

Listed are start dates. The classes will run 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.

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](mailto:info@bettercompanion.com), (907) 357-2521.

<u>CLASS</u>	<u>Dec 2012</u>	<u>Jan 2013</u>	<u>Feb 2013</u>	<u>later</u>
<b><u>Behavior Classes</u></b>				
Puppy 1	Tue 12/4	Sun 1/13	Wed 2/13	
Foundation Class	Tue 12/4	Sun 1/13	Wed 2/13	
Puppy 2		Thu 1/17		March, May
Elementary School		Thu 1/17		March, May
High School				March, July
CGC-test (one day)				Sep 8, 2013 (one day)
C.L.A.S.S. - BA	Wed 12/5		maybe	April 2013
CLASS Evaluation				June 5, 2013 (one day)
Rally College		Thu 1/17		Jan 2013
Rally Practice	maybe			
Tricks 'N Clicks				May or Sep 2013
<b><u>Sports Classes</u></b>	<u>Dec 2012</u>	<u>Jan 2013</u>	<u>Feb 2013</u>	<u>later</u>
Nose Work Beginner		Mon 1/14		Mar or May 2013
Nose Work Odor		Mon 1/14		Mar or May 2013
Nose Work Practice		Mon 1/14		March 2013
Treibball Beginner			Tue 2/12	Jun 2013

Treibball Intermediate	Wed 12/5			Apr 2013
Treibball Practice	Wed 12/5		Tue 2/12	Apr 2013
Flyball Beginner				Summer 2013
Flyball Practice				Summer 2013
Agility Puppy/Beg	Sat 1/12			Mar 16, 2013
Agility Skills	Sat 1/12			Mar 16, 2013
Agility Sequencing	Sat 1/12			Mar 16, 2013
Agility Trialing	Sat 1/12			Mar 16, 2013

You can check our web page [www.bettercompanion.com](http://www.bettercompanion.com) for info on classes, daycare, Open Play Times, facility, and schedule, read testimonies from other students, print out the registration form and more.

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## **MONTHLY STORY: LEADERSHIP - DOMINANCE OR PARENTHOOD?**

Since we started last month talking about myths and what other dog trainers and owners will maybe tell you, here's another heavily discussed topic: How do we prove to our dogs that we are their leaders? Unfortunately; most dog owners and also many dog trainers and instructors still believe that we have to show them our leadership through dominance. Dominance means putting your foot down and telling your dog "You HAVE TO comply". Sounds right, if the dog wants to live with us, she better do what we say.

And frankly, I have put my foot down here and there and told my dog what I think about her behavior. Did it help? Somewhat. It made her more submissive, a little fearful, and therefore more cautious to rather not set me off again Am I proud of that? NO!!! Every time I did it, it was more because of my own frustration, and I felt better only very briefly after that “venting”. Then I already felt sorry for my dog, realizing that this rather confuses her and diminishes her trust in me as a leader. It did NOT improve my leadership.

Looking at the zoos and wild animal parks, they have long understood that dominance doesn't get them anywhere in trying to trim an elephant's nails, to draw blood from a rhino or to work on a tooth of a killer whale with a drill You don't tell them “They have too!”. Nevertheless they all learned to put the foot up for nail trimming through an opening in the iron bars, to lay down on the side to reach the jugular vein or to hold still with the mouth wide open while the drill is inside the mouth, even though it might hurt a little.

They have learned a wisdom I only discovered as a nice phrase on a pamphlet for a German dog training school called Click 'n' Trick, owned by Anja Jakob. She became a dear friend during my visit there this October. I'll try to translate that properly:

*“If your dog is only allowed to, when he's supposed to,  
but never can, when he wants to,  
then he also won't want to, when he has to.*

*If you instead challenge your dog, when he's up for it,  
then he'll also want to, when he should,  
and he can also do it, when he has to.*

*If your dog should and can do,  
he needs to be allowed to want to. “*

The last piece might be too literally translated...

*“If your dog **SHOULD** perform,  
you need to let him **WANT** to!”*

Maybe that hits it better...

We all should strive towards that type of leadership, which is better called “parenting”, no matter if you see your dogs as “kids” or not. That means getting away from the “dominating” the dog through alpha-rolls, harsh corrections, scruffing, and also telling them “NO” all the time.

Be honest; has it helped to keep your dog from jumping? Unless you get your dog submissive enough not to jump up anymore out of fear of what could happen if, it probably doesn't work. It's by far better to AVOID the jumping up in the first place by

managing the dog (leash, holding by the collar, etc.) and training the dog to WANT to perform a different behavior instead - the Sit. Understood; some dogs will need additional self-control exercises because they just can't help themselves... Stay consistent with your approach, and it'll diminish the jumping BETTER than any correction and dominance. Plus, your dog will LOVE you for that!

Throughout the lifetime of your dog you will always meet people who'll try to help you with hints and tips on how to improve your dog's behavior (unless you already have that wonderful, mellow walking-next-to-you-all-the-time dog - they do exist!). Please, don't just take it for granted that everybody else might know more than you! The longer they are in the "dog-business", the more likely they still believe in the traditional method of "dominance". Build your own opinion, and analyze every tip carefully before you decide to use or to discard it.

Think of your dog as a rhino, with sharp teeth instead of a big horn, and practice with your dog to be held down in an alpha-roll - but work on it gently and in a positive way, to make that position comfortable for your dog, not uncomfortable! Our dogs should let us handle them as much as the rhino lets the zookeepers hold it for the veterinarian to draw blood, but because of trust, not submission.

Always be a good advocate for your dog, which means helping your dog to learn what they need to know to get through this world with confidence, trust and WANTING to do what we want them to do. All dog sports (and our behavior classes) are in the end helping this goal of you and your dog becoming a wonderful team, understanding each other better and allowing your dog to WANT, so that she can do what YOU WANT, when she SHOULD.

Training never ends! Enjoy every day with your dog(s)!  
Claudia

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