

Dear Dog Lover,

**Our monthly story at the end of this email: “Playing with your dog – fun and educational!”**

We're now ready to take sign-ups for the following events:

- Volunteers for the Doggy Day at the Alaska State Fair on Aug 30
- Booths and Volunteers for our Responsible Dog Ownership Day on Sep 12
- Dog/handler teams for the Pet Partner® seminar Sep 25-27

Also mark these upcoming events:

- Cook Inlet Kennel Club dog shows, Aug 7-9 at the State Fairgrounds (visit our booth!)
- BEAR hearing test for dogs, Aug 9 in Wasilla (Tester comes from out-of-state – a rare opportunity here in AK!)
- Willow Dog Musers' Symposium, Sep 19 at the Willow Community center (visit our booth!)

**Find more information about all these events in this newsletter!**

We're very sorry if you haven't received our July newsletter. Hopefully the August issue will reach you all. We have problems getting the mail through all those spam blocking measures, and will change the route of sending them out. Please be patient, and if you know of someone who usually receives the newsletter, make sure to ask them if they got it, and feel free to forward it yourself to anybody you know. If you'd like a copy of the July newsletter, please send us an email and we'll send it out individually to you.

We have made some changes, which you'll find in **RED** below. Please, even if you're already signed up, check the schedule below to see if your class is affected.

Enjoy this beautiful summer, hey, we needed some rain!  
Claudia

**Below you'll find:**

- 1) Information on upcoming events
- 2) **REVISED:** Dates and times of upcoming classes
- 3) **REVISED:** How to sign up for the classes
- 4) **REVISED:** Information on the Open Play Times
- 5) This month's story: Playing with your dog – fun and educational

**1) INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS:**

### **Doggy Day at the Alaska State Fair on Aug 30:**

The Better Companion will give a ½ hr demonstration at 4 and 6pm. We're **looking for clients to help us!**

We'd like to show three categories: puppies at play, dogs at a class setting, and dogs with clicker tricks.

You can come with your dog and help if:

- ✓ You have a playful puppy and have been at class or Open Play Times already,
- ✓ You're enrolled or a graduate of Elementary School (or higher), or
- ✓ You're a Tricks 'N Clicks graduate and can show some clicker tricks your dog learned at class or at home

You'll get a free admission ticket for that day and we'll have parking tickets for some of you. You need to be able to come to our two rehearsals on Aug 19 and 26 (Wednesdays). Tentatively at 6pm. Contact me if you're interested!

### **Responsible Dog Ownership Day on Sep 12:**

Would you like to have a booth at our event? No fee, we'd just like to know ahead of time to plan you in. Indoors booths available after about 12pm, outdoors booths all-day. Indoors closed to the public during Dog First Aid seminar.

**10am: Canine Good Citizen® test:** 10am sign-up, then general briefing of all tested, testing starts after that in the order of sign-up. Fee is \$10 per tested dog. Would you like to see what a Canine Good Citizen® test is about? Then **come and volunteer!** No pre-requisite required, we'll teach you on the job. Let us know if you can help, so that we can schedule you in. Then show up at 9:30am, ½ hr before the sign-up starts.

1pm: Sharing Alaska's Trails – about traps in AK. Free DVD presentation.

1:30pm: Agility demonstration (outside, about 2 hrs)

2pm: Jack Russell Terriers at their best – Nationals in Course a-Lure and Racing. Free DVD presentation, 1hr

**3pm: Dog First Aid seminar** – **pre-registration required**, fee is \$40, including a book with DVD. You'll receive a card stating that you attended the Red Cross Dog First Aid Class.

10-5pm: Swap meet – bring what you have, find what you missed! Dog gear and dog owner's gear.

12-5pm: Meet the Breed – have a purebred dog/ want a dog? Bring your dog and we'll present your breed to the crowd, talking about their temperament as well. Not purebred, but well-behaved? Bring him/her on and let us guess what breeds yours combines! 😊

We'll add more items as they're getting planned!

### **Pet Partner® seminar Sep 25-27:**

This seminar prepares and tests handlers and their dogs to visit nursing homes, hospitals, libraries or schools.

Time-line: Fri, 9/25: 6:30-8:30 without dogs

Sat, 9/26: 10am-5pm (first half w/out dogs. Dogs can either be in the car or sit with handlers calmly)

Sun, 9/27: testing, starting at 10am. Appointments will be made on Saturday for the dog/handler-teams.

Fee: \$115, includes a book (\$30 value) and lunch on Saturday.

Sign-up has started, seminar is limited to 12 teams.

### **Also mark these upcoming events:**

Cook Inlet Kennel Club dog shows, Aug 7-9 at the State Fairgrounds (visit our booth!)

BEAR hearing test for dogs, Aug 9, in Wasilla. Contact Suzanne at [silvera@mtaonline.net](mailto:silvera@mtaonline.net). Only \$40.

Willow Dog Musers' Symposium, Sep 19 at the Willow Community Center (visit our booth!)

## **2) DATES AND TIMES OF UPCOMING CLASSES:**

### **Behavior classes starting Aug 3<sup>rd</sup>:**

Instructor: Rose/Claudia

All classes will run for seven weeks, with a break on Sep 7<sup>th</sup> (Labor Day) and end Sep 21<sup>st</sup>.

Monday 6:15-7:15pm: [Puppy 1 – Preschool](#) (first week: 6-8:30pm without the dogs)

Monday 7:30-8:30pm: [Foundation Class](#) (first week: 6-8:30pm without the dogs)

**FULL**

### **High School class starting Aug 6<sup>th</sup>:**

Instructor: Claudia

This class will run for four weeks, and end Aug 27<sup>th</sup>.

Thursday 5-6pm: [High School – CGC](#) (all weeks with the dog)

This is the preparation class for the CGC-test on Sep 12. **FULL**, we'll only accept dogs that are ready to test Sep 12.

### **Behavior classes starting Sep 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup>:**

Instructor: Claudia

All classes will run for seven weeks and end Oct 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup>.

Sorry, I had to cancel the Rally class/practice and added a Foundation Class.

**NEW TIME:** Wednesday 5-6pm: [Puppy 1 – Preschool](#) (first week: 6-8:30pm without the dogs)

**NEW:** Wednesdays 6:15-7:15: [Foundation Class](#) (first week: 6-8:30pm without the dogs)

Wednesday 7:30-8:30: [Foundation Class](#) (first week: 6-8:30pm without the dogs)

Tell me if you'd like to come to the earlier class!

Thursday 5-6pm: [Puppy 2 - Kindergarten](#)

Thursday 6:15-7:15: [Elementary School](#)

Thursdays 7:30-8:30: [Tricks 'N Clicks](#)

### **Weight pull seminar starting Oct 3<sup>rd</sup>:**

Instructor: Kat

NEW FORMAT: This seminar will run on two Saturdays, and end Oct 10<sup>th</sup>.

About 1.5 hrs each Saturday, fee is \$60, or pre-registration \$55

[Saturdays tentatively 1pm: Weight Pulling](#) (both Saturdays with the dog)

### **Behavior classes starting Oct 5<sup>th</sup>:**

Instructor: Rose/Claudia

All classes will run for seven weeks, and end Nov 16<sup>th</sup>.

Monday 6:15-7:15pm: [Puppy 1 – Preschool](#) (first week: 6-8:30pm without the dogs)

Monday 7:30-8:30pm: [Foundation Class](#) (first week: 6-8:30pm without the dogs)

### **Agility classes starting Oct 17<sup>th</sup>:**

Instructors: Claudia/Kat

These classes will run for six weeks, and end Nov 21<sup>st</sup>.

### **Tentative times – will change if we need to add or cancel a class:**

Saturday 11-12:15am (including set-up): [Agility Puppy/Beginners](#)

Saturday 12:15-1:30pm (including set-up): [Agility Puppy/Beginners](#)

Lunch break: 1:30-2:15pm

Saturday 2:15-4pm (including set-up): [Agility Intermediate](#) (we can open a second class if necessary)

Saturday 3:30-5:30pm (including set-up): [Agility Advanced](#)

Saturday 5-7pm (including set-up + take-down): [Agility Advanced Trial](#)

### **Also coming up 2009:**

Last classes of the year:

P1, P2, FC, ES, Rally: Starts Oct 28/29

Agility: Starts Nov 28 (2 weeks break over Christmas, finishing end of January)

We'll again plan for a skijor and mushing seminar for Jan/Feb sometime.

### **3) HOW TO SIGN UP FOR THE CLASSES:**

It's easy!!! On our webpage [www.bettercompanion.com](http://www.bettercompanion.com), use the menu bar on the left. You'll find a button "Classes", with the subtitle "Registration", which brings you directly to the **one registration form for ALL classes**. After clicking "enroll" at the end, you'll get to the pricing and payment page, which explains all payment options, policies, and allows you to pay online, too. You can also check out the pricing page first, to learn about prices, payment and cancellation policies. **Take advantage of our pre-registration fee by signing up latest 14 days before the start of your class.**

Puppy 1 Preschool clients, please remember you can also purchase the **Puppy School Packet**, including P1 and P2 class. You only have to commit to the seven weeks of P1 class, and will receive a voucher for P2, valid for 1 full year! For P2 voucher holders, the voucher will be your payment. After you fill out the registration form for P2, you can email me the number of the voucher, mail the voucher to us or drop it off at the facility.

**Reserve your spot!** Please note **our registration policy: Only the payment will hold your spot.** Spots are reserved in the order we receive payment for them. **Always sign up for the class you want to join**, even if it could be full. Only the payment will keep you on the waiting list, in case somebody else drops out before the class starts. **Your payment is never lost**, even if the class is already full. Your payment will 1) save you a spot at the class, or 2) save you a spot on the waiting list, or 3) can be carried over to a later class, or 4) can be fully reimbursed if I couldn't get you in the class you chose, or 5) can cause me to open an overflow class ☺. Just as a note: I sometimes get up to three dogs per class moved in from a waiting list before the class even starts. **We now can take credit card payments over the phone and at the facility.**

### **4) SOCIAL HOUR - OPEN PLAY TIMES:**

Come with your dog for one hour of dog play and dog owner social time. Each dog must be supervised by an adult handler, one dog per handler only. First-timers: bring your vaccination papers, we want to see them!

Fee: \$7 at the door, punch card \$35 for 6 visits. Vaccinated dogs only (5-way/DHPPi, dogs over 6 mo: Rabies, Bordetella). We also recommend having the dog dewormed or a fecal sample checked.

Our Open Play Times have become a safe playground for dogs of any size due to the **newer size restrictions** for each group. Only timid and absolutely non-reactive dogs can be slightly heavier than the group limit. The group from 7-8pm is indoors limited to 8 dogs, and reservations can be made in advance. Just call us and we explain the details.

Every Tuesday AND Friday:

5-6pm: toy and small dogs up to 25#

6-7pm: puppies and medium adult dogs 30-50# (giant breed puppies can be heavier)

7-8pm: Large adults over 60# (indoors: 8 dogs max; outdoors: 10 dogs max)

**Cancelled until further notice:** 8-9pm: Large adults over 60# (indoors: 8 dogs max; outdoors: 10 dogs max)

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

Or contact us by email or phone (see below).

## **5) PLAYING WITH YOUR DOG – FUN AND EDUCATIONAL**

Play will not only exercise your dog (and you), play is an important tool for your dog to learn. The pups learn to hunt by chasing each other, and they also learn to use a soft mouth with each other, because nobody will want to play with a sibling who's too rough and bites too hard all the time. **Your exuberant dog can learn self-control through play**, and you can even make obedience training "playful".

Very knowledgeable people often tell dog owners NOT to play 'tug-of-war' with their dogs. (Tug-of-war means having you and your dog pull against each other on the same toy, e.g. a rope.) Yes, that game can get out of hand, and the dog could start growling or get aggressive over the toy. Just play retrieving games only! But how can you get your puppy interested in a toy, that doesn't know yet how to retrieve? **Playing 'tug-of-war' can be very helpful** in getting the dog interested in toys, so that they won't take our sleeves to pull on. 'Tug-of-war' also connects you physically with your dog, which can sometimes be like having the dog on a leash. 'Tug-of-war' is often used to **strengthen the bond** to your dog without calming them down, so that your dog is ready to RUN for you, either in the obedience ring, on an agility course, at a weight pull competition or anything else where you need your dog's full power and motivation.

Some dogs will need stricter rules than others, and if they get too aroused over the game, it's time to stop. That's the most important part of **your being a leader: YOU start and YOU stop the game**. Is your dog bringing you the ball and throwing it in your lap? Will he get persistent about it? Will he drop the ball in your way so that you HAVE to deal with it? Is your dog coming up to you and nudging at you to play with her? That's NOT always the time to start play.

Any game you play with your dog, including 'tug-of-war', can strengthen your leadership, improve the dog's self-control, and **teach your dog valuable obedience** like 'Come' or even 'Sit' and 'Down'.

In their booklet **“Play Together, Stay Together”** Karen B. London and Patricia B. McConnell point out: “Sometimes the best learning happens when it doesn’t feel like a ‘lesson’.”

Here’re more interesting quotes from the booklet (which is available at the training facility or at Patricia’s web page):

Quote about the booklet:

“... Part of what makes play fun is that it can be exciting, but excitement can lead to a lack of emotional control, which, in turn can lead to aggression.

And that’s the last thing you want in the middle of a play session with a best friend. Because we want play to be a positive factor in your relationship with your dog, this booklet contains sections that teach you how to play constructive games with your dog as well as sections that help you stay out of trouble.”

Quote about the “CHASE GAME”:

“One Way Only. ... always run away from your dog. ...

Know When To Stop. You also want to be sure that the chase game doesn’t turn into the “nip-my-owner-on-the-leg” game. ... you always want to stop before your dog catches up to you. ...we strongly recommend that only adults and children over the age of twelve or fourteen be allowed to play this game. ...

Other games listed:

Play Ball; The Tug Game; The Crazy Owner Game; The Find It Game; Hide And Seek; Jump through a Hoop; teaching I Need a Hanky, Sniffing on Cue, Which Hand Has It?

Obedience implemented in games:

Teaching Sit and Down with Tricks; Coming When Called; Polite Dogs on Neighborhood Walks; Polite Greeting at the Door; Teaching Take It/Drop It; ...

Quote about “How Not to Play with Your Dog”:

... play is exciting ... However, excitement is a kind of emotional arousal, and as exhilarating as it is, a little too much arousal can lead to trouble. ... Dogs who play by biting at hands and arms are all too likely to bite too hard when the play gets overly arousing. ... Playground fights aren’t restricted to elementary schools – it’s not uncommon for dogs at a dog park to escalate from excitement to irritation, and from irritation to aggression. Smart owners supervise dog-dog play and know to interrupt it when necessary. ...

And now, go and enjoy playing with your dog!

Claudia

---

You received this email because you were interested in or already enrolled in any of the services of The Better Companion. Your email address is kept confidential and not given to third parties.

If you know somebody who might be interested in any services of The Better Companion, don't hesitate to forward this email to them. If a client signs up for a class and mentions your name (the registration form asks 'whom may I thank for your referral?'), **you'll receive a \$5 coupon** for your next class. These **referral coupons** can be accumulated - up to getting a whole class for free! We hope that you enjoy receiving monthly class information from The Better Companion. If you prefer not to receive future emails, please send a little note to unsubscribe. **We have been auditing our client list and you may have previously unsubscribed. If this is the case, please accept our sincere apologies for the inconvenience. You will not receive future emails if you unsubscribe again.**

---

Your BetCo Team at  
**The Better Companion - Regine Dog Training Facility**

Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KA  
Frank Sihler, Iditarod Finisher  
Cindi Dupuis (office)

(907) 357-2521

[betco@mtaonline.net](mailto:betco@mtaonline.net)

[www.bettercompanion.com](http://www.bettercompanion.com)

1400 E Regine Ave, Wasilla, AK 99654