

Dear Dog Lover,

Our monthly story at the end of this email: **Linda and “Gus” - more than just manners!**

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!

 **BOOK SIGNING! “January Journey” at Open Play Time; Friday March 1st !**

Barbara Stremikis, author of the 2011 Iditarod-themed adventure/romance book “**January Journey**”, will be in town for this years’ Iditarod. She has agreed to come to The Better Companion and do a book signing during our Open Play Time period on Friday, March 1st - the very day before the 2013 Iditarod starts! Barbara’s book is a fun, romantic tale encompassing the Iditarod race, runaway huskies, frozen rivers and ice bridges - storms and mushing and the excitement of being a rookie in Alaska’s Last Great Race!

Barbara is a friend of Claudia & Frank Sihler (Frank is an Iditarod finisher himself and is mentioned, along with a couple of his sled dogs, in the book). She and her husband sponsored Frank for several years of his mushing career. Get in the mood for the Iditarod by reading this fun book! Come on the 1st, meet Barbara and pick up a signed copy of her book!

 **Nose Work practices before the ORT on March 16!**

Are you signed up for the NACSW’s Odor Recognition Test on March 16th with your dog? We can practice any and all of the three odors a couple more times before the test. Practice dates are **Feb 25th at 5:15pm** and **Mar 11th at 5pm**. Contact us to reserve a spot for your dog(s)!

 **Treibball Workshop April 8 - sign up now!**

We have a seminar with Nancy Tanner from Bozeman, Montana coming up **Monday, April 8th**. You can take a working spot with your dog (should have taken at least one Treibball Class already) or observe without bringing a dog (audit) and learn all about this great new dog sport. Find more info [HERE](#) or contact us to sign up. I listed the prices below under Upcoming Events as well.

➤ **Classes - sign up now!**

 **Elementary School: Thursdays, 6:15pm; starts Mar 7th.**

 **Foundation Class March: We’ll most likely open up an overflow class on Thursdays, 5-6pm; starting Mar 7th.**

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

➤ **Open Play Time/ Doggy Day Care:**

- **DDC every Tuesday and Thursday**

- **OPT** every Friday evening
March 1st: **book signing** with Barbara Stremikis
 next scheduled closure: **May 24th (Memorial Day weekend)**

➤ **Upcoming Events:**

Mark your calendar for the following events in 2013:

- 🐕 **March 16: Odor Recognition Test (ORT)** for “Nose Work - Intro to Odor” graduates at the Cook Inlet Kennel Club building in Palmer. **Host: Cheri Hagen - contact: stonerdg@alaska.net for info and sign-up.**
- 🐕 **April 6/7: Freestyle/ Dog dance** workshop by Nancy Tanner in Anchorage at Alyeska Canine Trainers.
Contact: Karen Hill at akk9agility@aol.com.
- 🐕 **April 8: Treibball Workshop** by Nancy Tanner here at The Better Companion. We can take 8 working dog spots and additional auditing people. We now have the [prices](#) listed on the web page:
 Working Spot pre-registration: \$125, regular fee: \$135;
 Auditing Spot pre-registration: \$70, regular fee: \$75
- 🐕 **May 3/4/5: Nose Work trials** level 1 and 2 in Chugiak. **Contact: Liz at AK Dog Sports at akdogsports@aol.com.**

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

Stay warm,
 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, (907) 357-2521.

| <u>CLASS</u> | <u>Mar 2013</u> | <u>Apr 2013</u> | <u>May 2013</u> | <u>later</u> |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Behavior Classes</u> | | | | |
| Puppy 1 | Sun 3/10 | Tue 4/9 | Sun 5/12 | |
| Foundation Class | Sun+Thu 3/10+3/7 | Tue 4/9 | Sun 5/12 | |

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|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Puppy 2 | Sun 3/10 | Tue 4/9 | Thu 5/9 | July 2013 |
| Elementary School | Thu 3/7 | | Thu 5/9 | July 2013 |
| High School | Thu 3/7 | | | July 2013 |
| CGC-test (one day) | | | | Sep 8 or 15, (one day) |
| C.L.A.S.S. - BA | | Wed 4/10 | | Aug 2013 |
| CLASS Evaluation | | | Wed 5/22 (one day) | Sep 2013 |
| Rally College | | | | Sep 2013 |
| Rally Practice | | | | Maybe Aug 2013 |
| Tricks 'N Clicks | | | Thu 5/9 | Nov 2013 |
| <u>Sports Classes</u> | <u>Mar 2013</u> | <u>Apr 2013</u> | <u>May 2013</u> | <u>later</u> |
| Nose Work Beginner | | | | May 2013 |
| Nose Work Odor | Mon 3/11 | | | July 2013 |
| Nose Work Practice | Mon 3/11 | | | May 2013 |
| Treibball Beginner | | | | Aug 2013 |
| Treibball Intermediate | | Wed 4/10 | | Oct 2013 |
| Treibball Practice | | Wed 4/10 | | June 2013? |
| Flyball Beginner | | | | July 1, 2013 |
| Flyball Practice | | | | July 2013? |
| Agility Puppy/Beg | Sat 3/9 | | | July 2013 |
| Agility Skills | Sat 3/9 | | | July 2013 |
| Agility Sequencing | Sat 3/9 | | | July 2013 |
| Agility Trialing | Sat 3/9 | | | July 2013 |

You can check our web page 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.

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

MONTHLY STORY: LINDA AND “GUS” - MORE THAN JUST MANNERS

Gus is an adolescent Black Lab/Husky mix, probably some sprint husky in him, the way he's built. He's very long legged and lean, and walks like he's on springs all the time. Born in November of 2011, he took our Foundation Class, Leash Walking Workshop and Elementary Class during 2012 together with mom Linda. Husband Ray came and helped whenever he could.

Gus learns quickly, because he's a very active dog, but that also means that his attention span is sometimes short and self-control is not his favorite exercise. His mom has a medical condition that makes it difficult for her to balance, walk over uneven ground or tackle a pulling dog. Sometimes she falls, and it's difficult for her to get up. And here's what she wrote to me this month with permission to publish in my newsletter:

“Hi Claudia, I must share this about Gus. He can make me an 'unhappy mom' but then he turns around and amazes me! I think I have spent a few minutes, twice, at the most, 3 times, teaching him to stand or sit and 'steady' while I put my weight on him. This is because of my occasional falls.

So last night, or rather, 2 AM this morning, we were just finishing up cleaning on the carpet where the cat left multiple 'treasures'. I was in pain and weak and exhausted. I deliberately laid down on the floor, to stretch and rest my back. But, getting up was another story. I was quite weak, with exhaustion and low blood sugar. Gus was beside me. On impulse, I told him to 'sit'. He did. I said "hold-steady". And I got a hold of his collar and used 'him' to sit up and then to stand up. He took most of my weight. HE NEVER BUDGED! not until I was up and told him "ok" and praised him (and doggie treats). I deliberately did it again today.....he did exactly the same thing! Gus is a very special dog!! He is only 14 months old. Linda”

What a great story! Imagine what he can do for Linda as he matures... They sure have a specific bond and Gus knows when it is important to leave his adolescent springs behind and just be there for mom.

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

Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KSA
(Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge and Skills Assessed)
APDT C.L.A.S.S. Evaluator
AKC CGC® and STAR® Evaluator

Your BetCo Team at
The Better Companion - Regine Dog Training Facility
Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KSA
Frank Sihler, Iditarod Finisher
Deb Frost (office)
Robin Jacoby (office)