

Dear Dog Lover,

**Our monthly story at the end of this email:** “Teaching Tricks - Not Just for Fun”

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!

Enjoy the crisp days of autumn,  
Claudia

## **Our November Newsletter:**

### **PART I: News**

1) Please welcome Kim, our newest instructor

### **PART II: Events - Nov**

None on the schedule this month.

### **PART III: Classes + Workshops**

- 2) Oct 31: Tricks ‘N Clicks class - teach your dogs some fun and useful tricks
- 3) Nov 3: **Weight Pulling class! Once a year only!** Ends Nov 10.

### **PART IV: Open Play Time and Daycare**

- 4) **Next scheduled closure for Thanksgiving**  
No DDC: Thursday, Nov 28  
No OPT: Friday, Nov 29

### **PART V: Class Schedule**

### **PART VI: Monthly Story**

5) Teaching Tricks - Not Just for Fun

## **PART I: News**

 **Welcome Kim!**

Kim Low is a Certified Professional Dog Trainer who just moved up to Alaska this year. Kim was born and raised in Kansas, and earned a Bachelor of Science in biology from the University of Saint Mary. Kim is an Army wife and mom and also has 2 beautiful boy-dogs; Thomas and Linus. In her free time she enjoys to run, cycle, knit and read, and she already discovered that she really LOOOOVES living in Alaska! Kim has a lot of experience with group classes and individual dog owners, having taught at Pet Smart and through giving private lessons. Kim recently attended an intensive course to also become a CBATI, a Certified Behavior Adjustment Training Instructor, helping insecure

and/or reactive dogs cope with their environment better. I have had Kim assisting me at my classes and I now look forward to having her teach one day a week and giving those classes her personal touch. You are going to love her!

## PART II: Other Events

## PART III: Classes + Workshops

### Oct 31: Tricks 'N Clicks class

Teaching your dog tricks isn't only a great activity and mental/physical exercise for your dog, it also strengthens the bond between you and your dog. You can practice the tricks at home and on your walks and impress people around you with these simple (or not so simple!) tricks. You'll learn different tricks step by step; learning some completely during the 6-week class and giving you the expertise and tools to continue on to more tricks in the future. Your imagination is the limit! This class is for dogs at any age or training level after just one class at BetCo (P1 or FC), with or without any prior knowledge of tricks (you don't need to know any either). ☺

### Nov 3: Weight Pulling

Tired of your dog pulling you around? Wouldn't you like to utilize all that energy into something positive? This will not only tire out your dog faster, but can also be used to haul firewood, pull the kid's sled or move other heavy objects from place A to B. This workshop will also be a good **warm-up for the mushing workshop** coming up February 2014! The specifically designed harness will encourage your dog to lean forward and pull, and the dog can easily distinguish between the times when he's allowed to pull and the other times, when he's not allowed to pull (on a collar or head halter). **Equipment and harnesses to practice with will be provided** for this class, starting for dogs at about 40lbs. If you have your own harness or equipment, please bring it! Your dog should be at least 1 year old (growth plates closed) to participate. For younger dogs we encourage you to audit (observe without your own dog). **Offered only once a year**; this class will consist of two sessions held on **two Sundays, Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> from 1-2:30pm.**

## PART IV: Open Play Time and Daycare

- OPT every Friday evening  
Next scheduled closure: **November 29 (Thanksgiving weekend)**
- DDC every Tuesday and Thursday  
next scheduled closure: **November 28 (Thanksgiving)**

## PART V: Class Schedule

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

<u>CLASS</u>	<u>Nov 2013</u>	<u>Dec 2013</u>	<u>Jan 2014</u>	<u>later</u>
<b><u>Behavior Classes</u></b>				
Puppy 1	Sun 11/3	Mon 12/9	Sun 1/12	Feb 2014
Foundation Class	Sun 11/3	Mon 12/9	Sun 1/12	Feb 2014
Puppy 2	Sun 11/3	Tue 12/10	Thu 1/16	Mar 2014
Elementary School			Thu 1/16	Mar 2014
High School			Thu 1/16	Jul 2014
CGC-test (one day)				Mar 9 2014?
C.L.A.S.S. - BA				Apr 2014
CLASS Evaluation	Mon 11/25 (one day)			May 2014
Rally College				Mar 2014
Rally Practice				TBA
Tricks ‘N Clicks				May 2014
Freestyle				Feb 2014
<b><u>Sports Classes</u></b>	<b><u>Nov 2013</u></b>	<b><u>Dec 2013</u></b>	<b><u>Jan 2014</u></b>	<b><u>later</u></b>
Nose Work Beginner			Wed 1/15	July 2014
Nose Work Odor				Mar 2014

Nose Work Practice	Wed 11/6	Wed 12/4	Wed 1/15	Feb 2014
Treibball Beginner				Feb 2014
Treibball Intermediate				Apr 2014
Treibball Practice	Tue 11/5	Tue 12/10	Tue 1/7	
Flyball Beginner				Summer 2014
Flyball Practice				Summer 2014
Agility Puppy/Beg	Sat 11/2		Sat 1/11	Mar 2014
Agility Skills	Sat 11/2		Sat 1/11	Mar 2014
Agility Sequencing	Sat 11/2		Sat 1/11	Mar 2014
Agility Trialing	Sat 11/2		Sat 1/11	Mar 2014
<b>Weight Pulling 2-week class</b>	<b>Sun 11/3</b>			Fall 2014

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.

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

## **PART VI: Monthly Story**

### **Teaching Tricks - Not Just for Fun**

**Does your dog know a trick or two?** Tricks are not only fun, they're good for the soul - the dog's and yours!

What's the difference between a trick and obedience; let's say between "Shake" and "Down"? When we ask our dog to lay down, sometimes there's a MUST involved, right now and here. More pressure 'to be obedient' is put on the dog to perform. Asking the dog to stretch out its paw is done just for fun, and if the dog doesn't do it right away, no harm done, just try another time, maybe practice a bit more before trying to show off with spectators. That's the best part of teaching tricks: NO PRESSURE!

And funny enough, often dogs perform tricks better than their regular obedience commands! Actually, exactly for that reason: NO PRESSURE! Dogs tend to perform much better if they have been taught a new behavior without pressure, just for fun. So maybe we want to change around and teach ALL OBEDIENCE commands as if they were tricks! BINGO! That's what the trainers at SeaWorld do with their killer whales, dolphins and otters and how the military trains dolphins to find underwater mines. Police canines and even the protection work of 'Schutzhund' will often start off their training that way!

That's how our positive reinforcement or reward-based training programs began; by looking at the amazing tricks captive wild animals could perform with great accuracy and predictability (exactly at the right time during the show). Finding dangerous underwater mines is not just a trick - at least in our eyes... but the dolphins still think it's great fun and don't know that lives may depend on it - their own and ours.

I started out (many years ago) training dogs using correction-based training and with the philosophy of 'being the boss'. It can be hard to change long-held habits, and teaching tricks to my dogs has helped me convert my old habits over and build healthy new ones. Now I find it's easier (and gets better results) to use the same approach for obedience training. I still catch myself sometimes putting pressure on my dogs in obedience, which usually backfires because my dogs, like most other dogs, perform worse under pressure. Then I need to go back and think about how I'd teach that obedience command if it would be just a trick ... When I do that, the pressure is off, the fun is back, and my dogs can do it!

Sally, my Aussie/Husky Mix, loves showing off her tricks and sometimes helps me tidy up. She'll bring me the food bowls for her and Lucy, grab a pen from under the desk, run after a lost glove or hat on the trail behind me and brings me the clipboard, cones and other items after a finished class. Retrieving is the start for a huge variety of tricks and therefore an important part of our Tricks 'N Clicks class.

Lucy, my Jack Russell Terrier, isn't much of a retriever, but happily learned tricks like roll-over, dancing on her hind feet and jumping in my arms. These are great ways to exercise her in the winter inside our small cabin and have helped her relaxing when she gets overwhelmed. Sometimes, when this happens, she just stands there frozen like a hood ornament and won't hear me calling her (overwhelmed by environmental stimuli), but when I give her the cue to jump in my arms, she comes flying!

Teaching your dog tricks isn't only fun and exercise but also the gateway to better obedience, to a better understanding of reward-based training and to becoming a better companion for our dogs!

Enjoy teaching your dog some new tricks while fighting the winter blues,  
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  
Member of The Dog Gurus

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