

Dear dog lover,

We continue with another monthly story at the end of this email: “Going on a camping trip – my own ‘little Iditarod’”

April offers beginner classes for puppies and adults in the evening, and daytime agility classes. There’s still room for agility beginners and intermediate level on Tuesday afternoons.

The next round of classes for all levels starts May 14/15 and sign-ups have already started! We added High School and Rally College for all Elementary School graduates, and offer the regular classes like Puppy 1, Puppy 2, Foundation Class and Elementary Class as well.

Check the schedule for a class that fits you, and just sign up for it! Look for the weekday that says “START CLASSES” to find out the exact date of a class start. All classes run once a week, so follow the class downwards the same weekday to find the day saying “END CLASSES”.

Reserve your spot! Your payment is never lost, even if the class is already full. Your payment will 1) save you a spot at the class, 2) or save you a spot on the waiting list, or 3) can be carried over to a later class, 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 started.

Below you’ll find:

- 1) Dates and times of upcoming classes
- 2) How to sign up for the classes
- 3) Information on the Open Play Times
- 4) This month’s story: Going on a camping trip – my own ‘little Iditarod’

1) DATES AND TIMES OF UPCOMING CLASSES:

Behavior classes starting Mar 29th:

The classes will run for seven weeks, with a break on Apr 26th, and end May 17th.

Instructor: Claudia

Saturdays 10-11am: Puppy 1 – Preschool (first week: 10am-12:30pm without the dogs):

Saturdays 11:15am-12:15pm: Foundation Class (first week:10-12:30pm without the dogs)

Agility classes starting March 29th:

The classes will run for six weeks, with a break on Apr 26th, and end May 10th.

The times include set-up, change-over, or take-down of the equipment.

Instructor: Claudia

Saturdays 1:30-3pm: Agility Beginners / Puppies (signed up: Tugger, Sam, Whitney, Gizmo, Cody, Dazzle; waiting: Lucy, Lola, Abby)

Saturdays 3-4:30pm: [Agility Intermediate-B](#) (signed up: Mandy, Fea, Bruno, Prilla, Rooster, Spirit; waiting: Penny, Annie, Junior)

Saturdays 4:30-6pm: [Agility Advanced](#) (signed up: Sara, Kick, Max, Rockee, Zipporah, Bessie; waiting: Mabel, Kiana)

Note: Any people on the waiting list will be the first ones to have a spot in the alternative/next agility class, which will start Apr 1st or May 31st.

Agility classes starting April 1st:

The classes will run for six weeks, and end May 6th.

The times include set-up, change-over, or take-down of the equipment.

Instructor: Claudia

Tuesdays 2:30-4pm: [Agility Beginners / Puppies](#) (signed up: Lola, Boss, Jezebel)

Tuesdays 3:45-5:30pm: [Agility Intermediate-B](#) (signed up: Annie, Junior, Bryg)

Requirement for Ag IM-B: Mastering all equipment successfully after Ag Beginners. You can take IM-B before having done IM-A. You'll need two IM classes before moving up to Advanced. To make that more fun, we offer two different IM curriculums.

Behavior classes starting Apr 21st:

The classes will run for seven weeks, with a break on May 26th, and end Jun 9th.

Instructor: Rose

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

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

Behavior classes starting May 14th/15th:

All classes will run for seven weeks and end Jun 25th/26th.

Instructor: Claudia

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

Wednesday 6:15-7:15: [Rally College](#)

Wednesday 7:30-8:30: [Elementary School](#)

Thursday 5-6pm: High School-CGC (4-week course)

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

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

2) HOW TO SIGN UP FOR THE CLASSES:

Until the web page had a full overhaul, which is in the makes, there're still some non-functional "Register now"-buttons. The best way to the registration site is to click on the left menu on "DOG CLASSES", then in the list of subtitles on "REGISTRATION". Please be aware, **Agility has its own registration form and payment page!** You have to click on "agility classes" in the left menu first, to get to the correct form. My web designer is still working on that form, so it's at times possible you can only pay, but not fill out a form.

Please note **our registration policy: Only the payment will hold your spot.** Spots are reserved in the order I receive payment for them. For P2 voucher holders, the voucher will be your payment and has to be mailed in or dropped off. You can always sign up for the class you want to join, even if it would be full. Only the payment will keep you on the waiting list, in case somebody else drops out before the class starts. If I can't get you into that class, your payment will either be used for the next available class, for another class you wish to join instead, or fully reimbursed!

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!

3) SOCIAL HOUR - OPEN PLAY TIMES:

Due to the success of the **Open Play Times**, we'll continue offering those year-round, twice a week. We have moved the play to the indoors, on Tuesdays AND Fridays. 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, in case we ask for them!

Fee: \$5 at the door, punch card \$25 for 6 visits. Vaccinated dogs only (5-way/DHPPi, dogs over 6 mo: Rabies, Bordetella).

Dates: every Tuesday and Friday evening

6-7pm: small, young or timid dogs (up to ~40#, very timid or small dogs will play within the additional safety of a pen)

7-8pm: large and rambunctious dogs (over 50#)

You can check the web page 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).

4) GOING ON A CAMPING TRIP – MY OWN ‘LITTLE IDITAROD’

Next weekend I'll take my dogs out for a camping trip with the sled. "My" dogs include: My pet dog Sally, our sled/pet dog Ruby, two Iditarod retirees Brevig and Sweet Pea, and sure enough, our mascot Lucy, the Jack Russell Terrier. We have trained through the winter up to 2-hour runs, bringing us about 10-12 miles. That looks like nothing compared to an Iditarod team, but on a smaller scale it's all the same. We're not planning on getting to Nome, but to our remote cabin, about 15 miles away from the road system. My team will bring us out there one day, and we'll return the next day back to work.

This will be the highlight of my winter training. We have been at the cabin several times, but usually by Argo or snowmachine, never by dog team. I trained Ruby, a wonderful team dog, to be my lead dog over the past two years. Last year she learned to lead a two-dog team, with Sally next to her. She learned to stay on the trail despite winds,

water, or clear ice. She learned to be confident going out, instead of ducking behind me whenever possible. She's definitely not the "born" lead dog, but has learned to enjoy the responsibility coming with that.

This year was the first time for Brevig and Sweet Pea to be in my team. Brevig is a steady puller, but like Ruby better in the team than in lead. Up front she starts wandering and loses focus and pulling power. Since I now have Ruby up front, I can keep Brevig back in the team, which in my little team is also the wheel position. Sweet Pea is crazy. She didn't have the stamina for a long distance team, but in my team, she's pure power. She loves to run, and jumps up and down, giving me once a good nose bleed with that. ☺ If there's no question about where the trail goes, she can also go in lead and keeps her pulling power.

And Sally? Oh well, she showed us how to avoid pulling by all means. ☺ She learned that with a dog team we'll get out further and maybe see more Moose. That she likes! So she stopped interfering, and now runs with the team in any position. She's proud to go in lead, and a little annoyed when I put her back in wheel. She's the best 'trail finder' I have, if the trail is old, blown over, hidden within other criss-cross tracks or going through overflow/ swamp water.

Now that you know more about my team, we need to pack the sled. Even though it's only a 2-hour trip to the cabin, I need to plan on taking longer, in case we get lost, tired, or weathered in. I'll also need to pack the food for the dogs, since there's nothing for them at the cabin. Frank will be going out with his own little 5-dog team, and carrying the stake-out for both teams. But the food needs to be with me, in case I for whatever reason never make it to the cabin and have to camp out.

Let's look at an Iditarod musher's mandatory gear (I'll mention only the items helpful for me as well). One extra feeding for all dogs, two sets of booties per dog, snowshoes, axe, cooker, sleeping bag. I'll have to put all that in my sled, too. The axe is necessary either to cut down trees fallen on the trail or to cut firewood for cooking, melting snow, or drying wet clothing. With the snowshoes I might have to brake trail if we get snowed in overnight. I most likely won't need to bootie my dogs, but Sweet Pea tends to form snowballs between her toes, and I'll most likely use booties for her for the trip. I'll also need room for my mascot, Lucy. She has a warm bag to cuddle up inside when she gets too cold. Not to forget the gear for me, including chemical handwarmers, extra gloves, my food, a thermos with hot water, chocolate ☺ ...

I'll continue this story when we're back from our trip with next months' newsletter!

Below is my team on a training run, about 4 miles from home. It was about 10 to 15° Fahrenheit, where the snow gets too cold for my spoiled pet dogs ☺. So Sally is the b/w one with yellow booties, Ruby is the red/white lead dog, Sweet Pea is on the left in wheel with her head lowered, Brevig is on the right in wheel with her head high, and Lucy sits in the sled with her red sweater and black booties on.



See you at the Regine Dog Training Facility,
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.

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This is NOT a mailing address!