

Dear dog lover,

This month's story: "Summer time, competition time – agility and obedience"

The snow is gone, everything dries out and we have started using our outdoor field for the play times! The parking lot never failed during thaw-out, a couple spots on the road will need some attention this year, but overall, it was a wonderful spring. We look forward to the summer, with our Open Play Times and the agility classes being out on the grassy, fenced field.

The Doggy Day Care dogs are now able to enjoy the fenced outside area as well. We're taking them out! They'll be indoors and out, we'll mix it up accordingly to the dogs we have and the weather. For the summer we're also extending the times and days: You can now **bring your dog between 7am and 8pm for no extra charge!** We're also adding the Tuesday for Day Care, so you can now **bring your dog Tue-Fri**, so schedule your dog in now! Please call ahead of time – we won't be here at 7am if the first dog isn't scheduled until 10 ☺.

The Agility Classes starting May 31st have some more spots available, starting right after the Memorial Day Weekend. We offer two classes each, to keep up with the demand. Let me know if you prefer one spot over the other, otherwise I'll send out an email next week on how I plan on dividing the classes. This is a **fun Saturday activity for dogs and handlers**, and adult dogs can sign up without taking a behavior class first. The dog should be friendly (with other dogs and people), and come to you for a hot dog ☺. Puppies should be 6-12 months and have taken or at least started a puppy class. **After graduating from Agility Beginners**, every dog needs to go through **two Intermediate classes**, before moving up to Advanced. Advanced Trial is for dogs already preparing for specific competition runs.

The renewal of our web page is well under way, so please keep checking it out.

The latest update is our **Dog Blog**, which you can sign up for additionally to the monthly newsletter. The dog blog will allow YOU to share any dog related information, regarding health threats, lost/found dogs, fun stories and even pictures, dog owner resources like books, seminars or dog rescue, sell/trade/search for used dog-related items (no dogs), ... You can even choose to have the blog come to your email inbox automatically!

Web page navigation help, especially for our newer list members: When you check the calendar on the web page for upcoming classes, please keep in mind that **all classes are held once a week**. So to find a class and its starting date, look for the correct abbreviation, e.g. FC for Foundation Class, then follow the calendar vertically up or down for the day that shows "START CLASSES" and "P1/FC seminar". You can visit the payment page just to find out the prices for the class you're interested in, without committing to anything yet. **We now can take credit card payments over the phone and at the facility** (any time Claudia is there personally to log into the virtual terminal ☺). See below on how to register.

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: Summer time, competition time – agility and obedience

1) DATES AND TIMES OF UPCOMING CLASSES:

Agility classes starting May 31st and July 19th:

Instructor: Claudia and/or Kat

All classes will run for six weeks, with a break on July 5th, and end July 12th or Aug 23rd respectively.

The times below include 30 minutes set-up or take-down of the equipment. The faster the students are, the more time of that can be added to the class time ☺.

Saturdays 10-11:30am: [Agility Beginners / Puppies](#)

Saturdays 11:30-1pm: [Agility Beginners](#)

Saturdays 1-2:30pm: [Agility Intermediate-A](#)

Saturdays 2:30-4pm: [Agility Intermediate-A](#)

Saturdays 3:30-5pm: [Agility Advanced](#)

Saturdays 5-6:30pm: [Agility Advanced-Trial](#)

Behavior classes starting June 6th:

Instructor: Claudia

HS will run for 4 weeks, and end June 27th;

RC will run for seven weeks, with a break on July 4th, and end July 25th.

Fridays 5-6pm: [High School-CGC](#)

Fridays 6:15-7:15pm: [Puppy 2 - Kindergarten](#)

Fridays 7:30-8:30pm: [Rally College](#)

Behavior classes starting June 16th:

Instructor: Rose

The classes will run for seven weeks, with a break on July 7th, and end Aug 4th.

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 July 16th/17th:

Instructor: Claudia

All classes will run for seven weeks and end Aug 27th/28th.

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

Wednesday 6:15-7:15: [To Be Announced](#)

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

Thursday 5-6pm: [To Be Announced](#)

Thursday 6:15-7:15: [Puppy 2 - Kindergarten](#)

Thursday 7:30-8:30: Elementary School

Coming up later:

HS on Tuesday eve in September, to prepare for a CGC test in October (on a Sunday).
Pet Partner® seminar and evaluation in November (two weekends). Helpful classes: FC, ES, HS

2) HOW TO SIGN UP FOR THE CLASSES:

It's easy now!!! Just use the yellow menu bar on the left. You'll find a button "Registration", which brings you directly to the **one registration form for ALL classes**. After clicking on "enroll" at the end, you'll get to the payment page, which explains all payment options, policies, and allows you to pay online, too. You can also check out the payment page first, to learn about prices, payment and cancellation policies.

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. After you filled out the registration form, you can email me the number of the voucher, mail the voucher to us or drop it off at the facility. **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. 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, on Tuesdays AND Fridays. **We're already outdoors**, as weather permits. 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! Fee: \$7 at the door, punch card \$35 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) SUMMER TIME, COMPETITION TIME – AGILITY AND OBEDIENCE

How I got involved in competing with my dogs? It all started with my leash-dog Maggie. You might have read about her already. She was that Greek stray dog with the independent mind. So I tried to find activities which would help me in bonding with her. We started with basic obedience training and soon found great joy in agility classes. Maggie would in the end stay with me and conquer the obstacles even in a not-fenced open area with lots of rabbits and squirrels. We sure didn't start that way. The obedience was necessary to develop the control over her, first right next to me in heel-position, then slowly further away from me, to send her over the agility obstacles like jumps, tunnels, tire, teeter-totter, A-Frame, and more. But it became clear, that we found one more activity for the summer, besides leash-biking and on-leash hiking, which Maggie liked enough to stick around for.

Soon I joined a local dog sport club, where people encouraged me to take Maggie to her first trial. She was already 3-4 years when she came to me, 7 years when I started agility training, and 9 years when I went to my first competition in Germany. She entered immediately as a veteran, allowing her more time and lower jump heights. The distractions were huge, including her other favorite sport right next to our agility field, which was lure coursing. A 'lure' (usually just a white plastic bag) is pulled over the grass in a huge loop, which the dogs chase around, and back then they used a chain saw motor, which could be heard over a great distance. The distinct raise and fall of the sound like wee-weeee-wee to go faster or slower, Maggie would get frantic in the car ½ mile away about that!

I was really surprised when Maggie decided to finish the full agility course despite the chain saw motor being fired up right during her run. I couldn't help but go over there and allow her to chase the lure during our lunch break. She thanked me with another focused run on the agility course in the afternoon.

We continued agility competitions when we moved to Alaska, until Maggie was about 14 yrs old. I have some great pictures of her on the course with me, one of them being published on my rack cards and on my web page, and used in other ads and stories to show how much fun this sport can be for a dog. Look for the black-and-tan Shepherd-mix! On EVERY picture, Maggie looks at ME, even when she's in mid-air over a jump. I still feel honored by so much attention from a stray dog!

Maggie also led me in my first obedience trial. Germany required for a dog to go to an agility competition, to first have passed an obedience test, which is called "Schutzhund BA". It's the obedience training required for every protection dog before entering protection dog training. It resembles the Novice Obedience level of an AKC trial, but includes exercises like a moving sit or down, which you already saw me talking about at the class seminar, if you've been there. Having used some of the old correction-style training methods, Maggie never liked it, but we passed.

Using the reward-based training with my next dog, Sally, I made it my personal goal to train her a moving down positively, without any threat or physical 'help'. And she loves it! After a long time of "licking my wounds" from the correction based obedience training, which I've learned to dislike in Germany, I finally found the heart to enter Sally in Obedience competitions. And she loves it! Without my inner opposition, I think she'd have been ready long time. Now she stars in Rally Excellent, where she has to show a "moving down", and in Open Obedience, where she

glows when performing her “drop-on-recall”, almost visibly smiling at me as if she wants to say “Here comes our favorite one, mom!”.

Now obedience has become another favorite sport for me, playing games with Sally like “finding heel”, “how fast can you sit when I stop?”, “how long can you look at me without interruption?” and more. Her attention has improved dramatically, and my control over her on walks off-leash is (in my eyes) phenomenal, being able to throw in obedience sessions and commands any time.

Did I get you interested in competing with your dog? Let me tell you, no dog is too old to start, and the excitement at the trials is fun, not stress! A great chance to spend some time with other dog lovers, either at the class while getting ready/ practicing for a competition, or at the trial itself, cheering on others and being cheered on by your friends!

Or maybe you just want to improve your dog's overall obedience on your walks? Rally College is starting in June, for obedience experienced people or Elementary School graduates, and Agility classes don't require anything but a friendly, hot-dog-loving dog! So come on over to the Regine Dog Training Facility, for fun sports with your dog!

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.

Your BetCo Team at

The Better Companion - Regine Dog Training Facility

Claudia Sihler, CPDT

Rose Cotter-Lyford

Frank Sihler

(907) 357-2521

betco@mtaonline.net

www.bettercompanion.com

HC 35 Box 5355-G, Wasilla, AK 99654

Want to find the facility on a map online? Try google maps! Our physical address is:

1400 Regine St., Wasilla, AK, 99654

This is NOT a mailing address!