

Dear dog lover,

We sure hope we get some more snow after this "Pineapple Express" went through. We're looking forward to our mushing and skijor seminars in February! We still have some spots left, so go ahead and sign up! If you want to just try out if mushing is for you, we have loaner sleds available, and if you liked it, Frank can build you a sled afterwards. Only if we don't have a trail for the seminar, we'll cancel it and reimburse your full payment.

So for now it's not "stay warm", it's rather "stay dry"!

Enjoy this month's edition,  
Claudia

**This month's story (at the end of this email): "Caution – Trap lines!"**

**Mushing and Skijor seminars still some spots available!** We'll take three Sundays in February to offer seminars in mushing and skijoring. You can sign up for single or multiple days in any combination.

Sunday, Feb 8: Mushing I - without your dog: \$55

- What equipment do I need? Connecting the dogs to the sled, the harness, booties, musher's gear
- Workshop: Making your own lines from polyrope (material will be provided)
- The sled – parts, types, driving techniques
- Practical training: sled pulled by snowmachine

Sunday, Feb 15: Mushing II – with your 1-2 dogs: \$75 (Mushing I+II: \$120)

- Safely hooking up the dog(s), "Line Out"-command
- Practice with your own dog team (1-2 dogs)
- Teaching the dog(s) to pull despite handler being behind them on the sled
- Safe mushing – uphill, downhill, curves, other teams
- How to teach directions
- After the run: checking the dogs for injuries – what if?

Sunday, Feb 22: Skijor Seminar: \$55

For intermediate cross-country skiers – one dog per skier.

- Learn to ski with your dog
- Teach your dog to run in front of you
- Part indoors, then outdoors on trail (at the dog training facility)

**We still have room in the February classes:** Puppy 2 – Kindergarten, Tricks 'N Clicks and Agility (advanced and trial) in February.

**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: Poll: A dog's job – fulfilling life!

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

### **Behavior classes starting Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>:**

Instructor: Claudia

All classes will run for seven weeks and end Mar 16th.

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

Monday 7:30-8:30pm: [Tricks 'n Clicks](#)

### **Behavior classes starting Feb 7<sup>th</sup>:**

Instructor: Claudia

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

Saturday 10-11am: [Puppy 1 – Preschool](#) (first week: 10-12:30pm without the dogs)

Saturday 11:15-12:15: [Foundation Class](#) (first week: 10-12:30pm without the dogs)

### **Agility classes starting Feb 7<sup>th</sup>:**

Instructors: Claudia/Kat

These classes will run for six weeks and end Mar 14<sup>th</sup>.

Saturday 1:30-3pm (including set-up): [Agility Puppy/Beginners](#) FULL

Saturday 2:45-4:15pm (including set-up): [Agility Intermediate](#) FULL

Saturday 4-5:30pm (including set-up): [Agility Advanced](#)

Saturday 5:15-6:45pm (including set-up): [Agility Advanced Trial](#)

### **Mushing Seminar Feb 8<sup>th</sup> + 15<sup>th</sup>:**

Instructor: Frank – two time Iditarod finisher

Sunday, Feb 8<sup>th</sup>, 10am-2pm: [Mushing I – without dogs](#)

Sunday, Feb 15<sup>th</sup>, 10am-1pm or 1-4pm: [Mushing II – with 1-2 dogs](#)

### **Skijor Seminar Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>:**

Instructor: Kirsten – member of the US National Skijor Team

Sunday, Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10am-2pm: [Theory and practice – for intermediate skiers](#)

### **Behavior classes starting Mar 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>:**

Instructor: Claudia

Most classes will run for seven weeks, with a break on Mar 25/26 and end Apr 22/23.

High School will run for 4 weeks, have a break on Mar 25, and end Apr 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

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

Wednesday 7:30-8:30: [High School-CGC](#) (4-week course)

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

Thursday 6:15-7:15: Overflow [Puppy 1 – Preschool](#) or [Foundation Class](#)

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

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

More agility classes in April

Rally College in May

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

It's easy now!!! 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 on "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.

Please note **our registration policy: Only the payment will hold your spot**. Spots are reserved in the order I 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. 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! 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.

**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, 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 started. **We now can take credit card payments over the phone and at the facility.**

### **3) 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.

Every Tuesday AND Friday:

5-6pm: toy and small dogs up to 30#

6-7pm: puppies and adult dogs 40-60#

7-8pm: Adults over 60# (first 8 dogs)

8-9pm: Adults over 60#

If the discrepancy between sizes/temperaments of dogs is too big within one group, we will either have a special section fenced off for the smaller/ more timid dogs of the group, or divide the dogs into indoors and outside play (if weather permits). This is to assure that everybody has fun and nobody gets overpowered.

We also give Canine Good Citizens a discount:

Is your dog a Canine Good Citizen? If your dog passed the CGC-test within the last 3 years, we'll give you a \$5 discount on your punch card for Open Play Times!

**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).

### **4) CAUTION – TRAP LINES!**

Not all dog owners might be aware of it, but winter season is also trapping season. Your dog might get caught in a snare or trap right on a trail! We all got alerted to traps when an Anchorage resident caught his neighbor's dog in a trap in his yard. I heard about trapping in general from different resources and angles over the past several months, from attending a seminar on "sharing trails" held by

someone from the Alaska Trapping Association, to dog owners who also trap, work at Fish and Game, or actually had their dog caught in a trap once.

So how big is the danger of our dogs getting 'trapped'? If I remember right from those conversations (please, refer to ADF&G's web page <http://www.wc.adfg.state.ak.us/index.cfm?adfg=regulations.main> for the exact regulations!), trapping is not allowed within the municipality of Anchorage. In the Mat-Su Borough, trapping is widely allowed and mainly regulated by trapping seasons for the different animals. So your dog can get caught in a snare or trap, almost anywhere, and the size of the snare or trap depends on the kind of animals that are permitted to trap during that time in that game management unit.

How do I know if someone uses an area for trapping? Responsible trappers will actually put a sign up, often even with a phone number. But because too many "anti-trapping"-people then destroy their traps, trappers started to use more subtle signs to mark their trapping lines, such as a bird wing fluttering from a pole, survey tape or flagging and piles of bait. Trappers sometimes post notices alerting others to the presence of their line. Some trappers let their organization (Alaska Trapping Association, ATA) know where they plan to trap during the season. So you can contact ATA and ask if they know of someone trapping on the trails you're using with your dogs.

Because often the wildlife they're trying to catch is using the same trails we do, the trappers will set the traps on the trail, not necessarily in the bush next to the trail. They mostly use remote areas, away from heavily used multi-use trails. But there might be the beginning trapper, who starts with common trails, like the Palmer Hay Flats. Bottom line is, your dogs could be in danger on any trail, unless it's a specified 'non-trapping' area like Anchorage.

I always thought my dogs would be safe as long as they stay in visual distance with me, but that's wrong. A friend told me that her very obedient dog got in a snare only 75 feet away from her, and until she realized what happened, ran over to help, and got the snare away, the dog was already bleeding through the nose. He survived, but it scared him and his owner big time.

"Sharing the Trail with Trappers" is an article you can find on the web page of the Alaska Division of Fish and Game (ADF&G) at: [http://www.wc.adfg.state.ak.us/index.cfm?adfg=wildlife\\_news.view\\_article&article\\_s\\_id=195&issue\\_id=35](http://www.wc.adfg.state.ak.us/index.cfm?adfg=wildlife_news.view_article&article_s_id=195&issue_id=35). You can also call your local ADF&G office to find out more about trapping.

Let's not only hope, but be aware, informed and keep our dogs close, to avoid having that experience of our dog getting 'trapped'!

Stay safe,  
Claudia

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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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