

Dear Dog Lover,

Our monthly story at the end of this email: “My first own dog”

Open Play Times: We now use the late hour on **Fridays from 8-9pm** for specialty meetings, the new “Play Match”. This will allow people who can’t make the early hours, to come from 8-9 on specific days. For the **month of November, we’ll dedicate this hour to our small breed dogs up to 25#**. The large breeds get the extra hour on Tuesdays from 8-9pm, once we need to split them up (see next paragraph).

One quick Open Play Time note: We’ll be more inside again, which means **large dogs might start to reserve a spot again for the play times from 7-8pm**. Indoors we take up to 8 dogs, and as soon as we start getting more dogs than that, we’ll open the additional hour from 8-9pm, at least on Tuesdays. For Fridays, we’ll reserve that late hour for small breed dogs, who’s owners can’t make the early time.

The classes starting Oct 28/29 will be the last behavior classes for this year. The next classes after that start Jan 13/14, 2010.

Agility will start Dec 5th, being the last class for 2009. The next Agility classes after that start Feb 6, 2010.

Like last time you’ll find all changes from the October newsletter in **RED** below. Please, even if you’re already signed up, check the schedule below to see if your class is affected.

Enjoy this beautiful fall, snow is coming soon!
Claudia

Below you'll find:

- 1) Information on upcoming events
- 2) **REVISED:** Dates and times of upcoming classes
- 3) How to sign up for the classes
- 4) **REVISED:** Information on the Open Play Times
- 5) This month's story: My first own dog

1) INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS:

Mushing Seminar 2010:

Mushing Part I: Sunday, January 24th
Mushing Part II: Sunday, January 31st

Mushing Part I - without your dog: \$55

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

Mushing Part 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?

If you'd like to try it out before buying all the equipment: we have a couple loaner sleds and loaner dogs, to add to your one-dog-team 😊.

Skijor Seminar 2010:

Skijor Seminar: Sunday February 7th

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)

2) DATES AND TIMES OF UPCOMING CLASSES:

Behavior classes starting Oct 28th/29th:

Instructor: Claudia

All classes will run for seven weeks, with a break on Nov 25/26 (Thanksgiving) and end Dec 16/17.

Wednesday 5-6pm: Rally College

Wednesdays 6:15-7:15: Puppy 2 - Kindergarten

Wednesday 7:30-8:30: Elementary School

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

Thursday 6:15-7:15: FC or P1 (first week: 6-8:30pm without the dogs)

Thursdays 7:30-8:30: Foundation Class (first week: 6-8:30pm without the dogs)

Agility classes starting Dec 5th:

Instructors: Claudia/Kat

These classes will run for six weeks, with a break Dec 26th through Jan 2nd and end Jan 23rd.

Tentative times – will change if we need to add or cancel a class:

Saturday 11-12:15am (including set-up): [Agility Puppy/Beginners](#)

Saturday 12:15-1:30pm (including set-up): [Agility Puppy/Beginners](#)

Lunch break: 1:30-2:15pm

Saturday 2:15-3:30pm (including set-up): [Agility Intermediate](#)

Saturday 3:30-5:30pm (including set-up): [Agility Advanced](#)

Saturday 5-7pm (including set-up + take-down): [Agility Advanced Trial](#)

Behavior classes starting Jan 13th/14th 2010:

Instructor: Claudia

All classes will run for seven weeks, and end Feb 24/25.

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

Wednesdays 6:15-7:15: **FC or P1** (first week: 6-8:30pm without the dogs)

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

Thursday 5-6pm: High School starts Feb 4th, ends Feb 25th

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

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

Mushing Seminar Jan 24th + 31st 2010:

Instructor: Frank – two time Iditarod finisher

Sunday, Jan 24th, 10am-2pm: [Mushing I – without dogs](#)

Sunday, Jan 31st, 10am-1pm or 1-4pm: [Mushing II – with 1-2 dogs](#)

Skijor Seminar Feb 7th 2010:

Instructor: Kirsten Ballard – member of the US National Skijor Team 2009

Sunday, Feb 7th, 10am-2pm: [Theory and practice – for intermediate skiers](#)

3) HOW TO SIGN UP FOR THE CLASSES:

It's easy!!! On our webpage 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 "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. **Take advantage of our pre-registration fee by signing up a minimum of 14 days before the start of your class.**

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 fill out the registration form for P2, you can email me the number of the voucher, mail the voucher to us or drop it off at the facility.

Reserve your spot! Please note **our registration policy: Only the payment will hold your spot.** Spots are reserved in the order we 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. **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 refunded 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 starts. **We now can take credit card payments over the phone and at the facility.**

4) 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 or 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.

Our Open Play Times have become a safe playground for dogs of any size due to the newer size restrictions for each group. Only timid and absolutely non-reactive dogs can be slightly heavier than the group limit. The group from 7-8pm is indoors limited to 8 dogs, and reservations can be made in advance. Just call us and we explain the details.

Every Tuesday AND Friday:

5-6pm: toy and small dogs up to 25#

6-7pm: puppies and medium adult dogs 30-50# (giant breed puppies can be heavier)

7-8pm: Large adults over 60# (indoors: 8 dogs max; outdoors: 10 dogs max)

New: Fridays 8-9pm: "Play Match"

Fri, Nov 6, 13, 20 + 27: Small Breed Dogs up to 25#

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).

5) MY FIRST OWN DOG

I walked dogs for other people all the time. First I rang the bell at homes with dogs, asking permission to walk their dog. Then they came to me, asking me to walk their dog. Some of those dogs I took home, to my mom and little brother. They were amused, sometimes a little annoyed, but mostly ok with it. I tried to keep a low profile, having (or training them into) well-behaved dogs, to keep the family peace.

Finally at age 21, I was a student at the Veterinary University since 2 years, I asked my mom if I could have my very own dog, adopting one from the shelter. Hmmm, she said, but it shouldn't be any bigger than the neighbors German Shepherd, which I kept bringing home all the time already, and I should know that all dog chores are mine to keep, never hers. I promised, but honestly needed to ask her for one thing: if I would be stuck with long hours at school, she or my brother would need to take the dog out for a potty break.

I went to the shelter and looked at all the dogs. Only one dog caught my attention, because he didn't bark. He was there the first day, and a little scared about the whole situation. He had a golden coat, long hair, and was already as big as our neighbor dog, and not fully grown yet. Maybe he was already a little bigger, ok. In his favor was his look: he obviously was a Collie-mix, and my mom has very fond memories of a Collie in her childhood. Shelter staff called her as my 'landlord', and she said YES!

Jumper , we called him that because he jumped all over us 😊, was my center of attention for the next months. I observed him, I talked to him, I looked at him constantly. We didn't use a crate for time-outs, it was normal to have the dogs in the house loose at all times. Remember this is 20 years ago! Soon he was all over me as well. He would nudge me, lay his head in my lap constantly, and lean into me as often as he could. First I liked it, but soon it got a little too much. I loved analyzing dog behavior, and had to realize, that I didn't own him anymore, he owned me.

I changed the program. Plus I got really busy with College anyway. So Jumper got more ignored than ever before. No greeting ceremony (sometimes just because I had to run to the phone or bathroom immediately), no petting the dog who puts his head in my lap, no laughing about his jumping. Soon he changed. He stopped his pushy behavior, laid down more, and when I came home from College, he wouldn't even get up anymore. He patiently waited for me to invite him over, and to take him for his frequent walks.

He mellowed out quickly, too. When I bicycled with him, he trotted mostly behind me, and on the walks he stayed nicely with me. It was easier now, but almost a little boring. He got somewhat lazy. By now I lived in an apartment together with a student colleague. We both left town for a week or so, and asked a good friend to stay at our place and take care of our two dogs. She was eager, because she'd get away from her home for a little, and be with dogs. She was a dog fanatic, and couldn't have her own yet.

With Susi, our friend, Jumper was different: He was perky, ran with the bike, was attentive and playful. Things I had missed a little, and thought he grew out of when he turned into an adult dog. Now we could see that it wasn't age related, but came from the different ways of interacting with Jumper. Maybe he now jumped up on her occasionally, but I'd take that to increase his speed at running along with the bicycle.

Looking at Susi, she did all the things with Jumper I considered 'wrong' earlier: constantly interacting with him, talking to him, petting him, allowing him to nudge her. She knew her time with the dogs would be limited, so she wanted to get as much out of it as possible.

After again analyzing the situation, I again made some adjustments. A healthy middle is now what I wanted. I invited Jumper to jump up on me occasionally, I'd greet him happily but briefly when I came home, and I'd play more with him at home, sometimes allowing him to start it, maybe by putting his head in my lap. If he got too demanding for my taste, I'd cut it down, and when he got too laid back, I'd perk him up, or invite Susi to come with us on our walk.

Susi was always a welcome and refreshing visit, for the dogs as much as for us. She later brought with her a young German Shepherd from a friend, and we could return her favor: As much as my dog Jumper needed her refreshment, this dog needed some off time, to wind down from the excitement of being with Susi. We could show Susi how to ignore the dog to allow her to sleep, instead of the constant taking to her, which made the dog overly nervous.

And with my dogs now, I try to find the way that works best for me: Mixing good leadership with a little spoiling, to get a well-behaved, happy, active dog, still perky enough to run with me. It's rarely the bicycle now, it's agility, ARGO, snow machine, dog sled ... And when I'm not happy with my dogs' behavior, I adjust to the one or other extreme, to again find that healthy middle!

Have you found your healthy middle with your dog?

Claudia

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