

Dear Dog Lover,

**Our monthly story at the end of this email: “Maggie the party crasher”**

**We’re adding two more books to our product store:**

- **Skijor With Your Dog** – revised edition by Mari Hoe-Raitto and Carol Kaynor, both from Fairbanks.
- **Living with Kids and Dogs... Without Losing Your Mind** – by Colleen Pelar, CPDT-KA

You can get your skijor equipment here as well, and don't forget our Skijor Seminar coming up Feb 7, 2010!

**We'll be closed Dec 21, 2009 until Jan 3, 2010. No classes, no Open Play Times, no Daycare.**

**Open Play Times:** For the **months of November and December**, we dedicate **Fridays from 8-9pm to our small breed dogs up to 25#**. This is additionally to their times from 5-6pm, to add a second hour for the tireless dogs, or to accommodate owners with later off-times. The large breeds get the extra hour on Tuesdays from 8-9pm. Small and medium dogs can come without reservation, the large dogs should call ahead to ensure a spot in the playtime. They're the only group restricted to 8 dogs maximum.

**NEW: Open Play Times 2010:** For 2010, we'll move the Open Play Times to **Mondays and Fridays, no Tuesdays**. We'll also switch the hour from 8-9pm: **Mondays will be for small dogs and Fridays for large dogs**, additionally to their regular hours. You can always check the hours online on the calendar and also below under paragraph 4).

**I added Rally Practice for Rally College graduates on three Thursday evenings in January.**

**I've moved Tricks 'N Clicks to an earlier date in March.**

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

Enjoy the snow!  
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: Maggie the party crasher

### 1) INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS:

#### Mushing Seminar 2010:

Mushing Part I: Sunday, January 24<sup>th</sup>

Mushing Part II: Sunday, January 31<sup>st</sup>

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 7<sup>th</sup>

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:

#### Aqility classes starting Dec 5<sup>th</sup>:

Instructors: Claudia/Kat

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

**New times:**

Saturday 10-11:15am (including set-up): [Agility Puppy/Beginners](#)

Saturday 11:15-12:45pm (including change): [Agility Puppy/Beginners](#)

Saturday 12:15-1:45pm (including set-up): [Agility Intermediate](#)

Lunch break: 1:45-2:30pm

Saturday 2:30-4pm (including change): [Agility Intermediate](#)

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

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

**Behavior classes starting Jan 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> 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)

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: [Rally Practice](#) on Jan 14, 21, 28; [High School](#) starts Feb 4<sup>th</sup>, ends Feb 25<sup>th</sup>

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

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

**Mushing Seminar Jan 24<sup>th</sup> + 31<sup>st</sup> 2010:**

Instructor: Frank – two time Iditarod finisher

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

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

**Skijor Seminar Feb 7<sup>th</sup> 2010:**

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

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

**Agility classes starting Feb 6<sup>th</sup>:**

Instructors: Claudia/Kat

These classes will run for six weeks, with a break on Feb 13 (Agility Trial) and end Mar 20.

Saturday 10-11:15am (including set-up): [Agility Puppy/Beginners](#)

Saturday 11:15-12:45pm (including change): [Agility Puppy/Beginners](#)

Saturday 12:15-1:45pm (including set-up): [Agility Intermediate](#)

Lunch break: 1:45-2:30pm

Saturday 2:30-4pm (including change): [Agility Intermediate](#)

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

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

### **Behavior classes starting Mar 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup>:**

Instructor: Claudia

All classes will run for seven weeks, and end Apr 21/22.

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

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

Wednesday 7:30-8:30: [Tricks 'N Clicks](#)

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)

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

It's easy!!! 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 "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.** Please read our cancellation policy – you almost can't lose!

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 (indoors) 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 limited to 8 dogs, and reservations can be made in advance. Just call us and we explain the details.

Every Tuesday AND Friday (in 2010 every MONDAY 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)

**Nov + Dec: Tuesdays 8-9pm: Large Dogs over 60# (if needed)**

**Fridays 8-9pm: Small Dogs up to 25#**

**Jan 2010: Mondays 8-9pm: Small Dogs up to 25#**

**Fridays 8-9pm: Large Dogs over 60#**

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).

#### **5) MAGGIE THE PARTY CRASHER**

Maggie was my second dog. She was also adopted, from a private rescue organization. I fell for her, because I had some special criteria on my mind for the dog that would have to fill the void of Jumper. The first dog is always special, and Jumper was such a wonderful dog, I couldn't think of another dog being worth replacing him ever. So to fill the emptiness, the new dog would have to meet very special criteria. Since I started already having an interest in sled dogs, but didn't think it was realistic to have a Husky in an apartment while being busy at college for long hours, I wanted a mix between the agile and independent Husky and the obedient, docile German Shepherd Dog. I also wanted a female, and a young dog that was already over its puppy stages, but still easy to form. I thought the perfect age would be about one year.

Then there was this ad in the paper, which friends found for me: Husky/Shepherd, female, 12 months, needing a home. I was sold at the sight of the ad. The dog was a couple 100 miles away, where the rescue people had their sanctuary and some foster

homes nearby. They brought me the dog, and even though she didn't look as sporty, she was cute, with big gremlin ears, and I kept her. She came from Athens, Greece and had lived with a foster family (or several?) for the past 2 months or so.

Little did I know about taking on a stray dog, which she was not only by circumstances, but I believe by bloodlines. She had it in her, down to the bones: The ONLY reason to leave the house is to search for food. To stay with Claudia would limit her chances of finding food. Hunting is the most entertaining but also hardest way to find food, so once hunting for wild game was unsuccessful (rabbits, mice, squirrels, ducks, swans), she changed to enclosed animals (pet ducks, pet rabbits...) or even further, begged people for food (dog owners, cat owners, homeless people, construction workers at lunch...).

She bonded with me somewhat, as her roommate or landlord, and did see me as a leader, according to her behaviors at home. We worked on basic obedience and even started agility up to competitions, but I just couldn't trust her off-leash on walks. She'd start slowly to sneak away from me, in her effortless trot, and once a specific distance was reached, she looked back at my fruitless calls with a "See ya!" on her face, and off she ran. Or she would meet another dog, look at me pitiful, showing play behavior with the other dog. "Oh mom, please let me off the leash so that I can play better with this dog!". The other dog's owner would say "look at her, she'll stick with my dog, and he won't take off." So I believed her, again and again, and she betrayed me, again and again. The two dogs would together run across the field, and at the end, the other dog turns around, and she gives me that look again: "See ya!", before she takes off into the woods or brush. Maybe her "See ya" meant – "wanna come with me"??? I just misunderstood.

She was usually gone for several hours, before I got a phone call. After unsuccessfully hunting the area, she chose people she'd follow home so that they could feed her. That was always successful. Emptying cat dishes, gulping down turkey steaks, pork ribs and other goodies as she was starving for several days was always better than the dog food dish at home. She always got rewarded for taking off.

One time I was at Frank's place, and she took off on me during a walk in his neighborhood. I kept checking my answering machine at home until about 10pm, then gave up and went to bed. I'd have to check at the shelter the next day. She was street smart from Athens, so I was pretty sure she was alive and well, just somewhere else. The next morning I did have a call on my answering machine, from 10:30pm, just after I checked the last time. It was a Greek restaurant, several miles away from where I lost her.

The had a wedding party there last night, and Maggie snuck in and went to the children's table. She put on her 'starving'-face, and they fed her roasted pork. Nobody ever questioned her presence or whom the owner was. In Germany well-behaved dogs are allowed to be brought into a restaurant. She crashed the party successfully – until later that night, the owner of the restaurant tried to find the owner of the dog, to ask if she should collect some of the leftovers for the dog to take home. That's when they all

found out – there was no owner! She found instead my phone number on a tag on Maggie's collar, and called, but it was too late that evening, at 10:30pm.

The owner of the Greek restaurant quickly decided to take the dog home, and the next morning we connected and I drove over to the restaurant to pick up my dog – well fed and well taken care of. So for Maggie, it always paid off to run away from Claudia. I couldn't compete with the wealth of goods she found away from home.

Maggie was with me from age 3 (we guess – she kept looking like 10 months, but later we thought she must have been older already), until the age of 14. I could trust her off-leash when in the agility ring, or at lure coursing, and sometimes for little distances like house to car or car to gate, but never on a walk. She was in all other circumstances a wonderful dog – the straying was her only bad habit. So I promised myself that the next dog would have to be a dog that can be trusted off-leash, and got myself my first puppy – Sally.

Claudia

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