

Dear Dog Lover,

Our monthly story at the end of this email: “Therapy Dogs”

Have Fun With Your Dog is this summer’s motto. Two new sports now to offer, using the dog’s nose in different ways:

Treibball is the new “urban herding sport”, using exercise balls instead of sheep. Treibball is an R+ team sport, that builds communication skills between the dog and handler, and improves attention and off-leash reliability. Dogs of any size can compete and handlers of any capability can participate, which makes it a fun, skill-building activity. Learn more about this sport at www.americantreibballassociation.org. **We’ll start June 22nd** with 4-5 practices on Wednesdays, from 6-7pm. Find more info about our practices at [Other Dog Sports](#).

Nose Work starts **June 28th**, running on Tuesday evenings. This is the newest fast-growing sport around dogs. Taking elements from detection work, dogs will learn to alert to a certain scent. This sport is **easy on the handlers**, no obedience is required, it tires the dogs out and can easily be copied at home. Six dogs maximum per class.

Agility will start again **July 23rd**, being held each Saturday. Beginner classes are at 10am, and as you move up the different levels, your class will move towards later. Agility classes are held year-round, but only two classes will be **held outside on the grass**, the June/July and the July/August classes. Six dogs maximum per class.

Sign-up is open for the Recall- and the LLW-Workshop. The Recall Workshop will be an all-day event on July 10th, 10am - 4pm, maybe a little longer. We’ll take 8 dogs maximum, \$95 will be the pre-registration fee until June 26. You can also audit this workshop without your own dog for \$45 until June 26. After that the fees will be \$105 and \$50 respectively. Read more under “upcoming events” below.

Our Daycare is now open two days a week, Tuesdays and Thursdays. We dropped the monthly fee and kept the punch card system as usual.

The online calendar can look very confusing. Please don’t hesitate to call or email us with any questions about upcoming classes or practices.

Like last time you’ll find all changes from the June 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 summer,
Claudia

Below you'll find:

1) Information on upcoming events/ workshops

- 2) **New classes and workshops:** Dates and times of upcoming classes
- 3) **How to sign up for the classes**
- 4) **Information on the Doggy Daycare and Open Play Times**
- 5) **This month's story: Therapy Dogs**

1) INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS:

Sunday, July 10th: Recall Workshop (RC WS)

Practice a better recall with your dog! We'll mix up short seminar sessions with lots of practical hands-on training, the latter mainly outdoors. We show you how to set your dog up for success, how to find the best reward for your dog, how to get your dog to WANT TO COME, and what to do when he doesn't.

This is a 5-6hr workshop, 10am-1pm, 1hr lunch (on your own), 2-4pm (latest 5pm; afternoon session outdoors, rain or shine)

Date: Sunday, July 10th, 2011; 10am – 4pm (latest 5pm)

Location: Regine Dog Training Facility

Fee: working spot: \$95 pre-registration (until June 26), \$105 regular fee

Auditing (without dog): \$45 pre-registration, \$50 regular fee

Only people- and dog-friendly dogs at this point, please!

Maximum 8 dogs, payment will reserve your spot.

July 29-31: Dog Shows at the Palmer State Fairgrounds

All-day event; we'll have a booth there and my dogs as well as some of our Rally students will enter the Obedience/Rally trials that weekend. Admission is free. Bring a camping chair. Food vendors are on the grounds.

Sunday, Aug 14th: Loose Leash Walking Workshop (LLW WS)

This workshop is for dogs that pull constantly as well as for the 'special occasion-puller'. Your dog doesn't pull – usually? Only when he sees another dog? You want to keep your arm in the socket when walking your dog, or just wean your dog off the Gentle Leader® or another anti-pull device? We'll practice at different leash lengths, not only with the dog right next to you.

This is a 3-hr workshop.

Date: Sunday, Aug 14th, 2011; 9am-12pm

Location: Regine Dog Training Facility, Wasilla

Fee: working spot: \$55 pre-registration, \$60 regular fee

Auditing (without dog): \$25 pre-registration, \$30 regular fee

Only people- and dog-friendly dogs at this point, please!

Maximum 6 dogs, payment will reserve your spot.

Sunday, Aug 28: Dog Day at the Alaska State Fair in Palmer

We'll have our presentation at 1-2pm in the corral.

We'll again need dog/handler teams to help us with our demonstrations of Elementary/ High School exercises, Tricks 'N Clicks exercises, and a Nose Work Presentation.

Please contact us if you can help! The first 18 volunteers will get a free entry ticket for the State Fair for that whole day.

Saturday, Sep 10: Responsible Dog Ownership Day at the Regine Dog Training Facility

We have lots of plans already – stay tuned for more info!

Some highlights: agility, nose work and other demos (who wants to demo???), swap meet, meet the breed, free hot dogs and cookies, ...

CGC-test, First Aid for Dogs class (fee applies).

Let us know if you're interested in helping with some of the demos.

September 2011: Delta Society Pet Partner Workshop and evaluation

Details and fees TBA

Let us know if you're interested.

Saturday, Sep 24: K9 Athlete's Symposium in Willow

We've been asked to give a demonstration of Nose Work.

Who wants to help???

November 2011: TTouch Workshop

Details and fees TBA

Let us know if you're interested.

2) DATES AND TIMES OF UPCOMING CLASSES:

Drop-in practices running right now:

Indoors or outside – please bring clothes accordingly. Training punch card available online. One card for all practices!

Nose Work Advanced (maximum 6 dogs – please call or email to reserve a spot):

Supervisors: Claudia, January

- For 'Intro to Odor' Graduates: Tuesdays 7:45-8:45pm. Sundays starting June 26, 4:45-5:45pm. Field trip on Aug 14. Reservation required.

Rally Practice:

Supervisors: Claudia, Ella-Kate

- Rally Practice for Rally College graduates: Three Wednesdays, 7:30-8:30pm: 7/20; 7/27; 8/3.

Treibball Practice:

Supervisor: Karla

- Treibball Practice, no pre-requisite: Four Wednesdays, 6-7pm: 6/22, 6/29, 7/6, 7/13. Reservation required.

Flyball Practice:

Supervisor: Karla

- Flyball Practice for Flyball Beginner Class graduates: Four Wednesdays, 7:30-8:30pm: 6/22, 6/29, 7/6, 7/13. Reservation preferred.

Nose Work Classes starting June 28th:

Instructors: January, Claudia

The class will run for 6 weeks and end Aug 2nd.

Nose Work Beginners: Tuesdays 5:15-6:15pm (starts WITH the dogs)

Nose Work Intro to Odor: Tuesdays 6:30-7:30pm (starts WITH the dogs)

Recall Workshop July 10th:

Instructor: Claudia

The workshop will run for 6 hours.

Recall Workshop: Sunday 10am-4pm

Behavior classes starting July 18/19th:

Instructor: Claudia

All classes will run for seven weeks, and end Aug 31/Sep 1.

Puppy 2 - Kindergarten: Wednesday 6:15-7:15pm

Elementary School: Wednesdays 7:30-8:30

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

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

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

Agility classes starting July 23rd:

Instructors: Claudia, Kat

The classes will run for 6 weeks, and end Aug 27th.

Agility Puppy/Beginners: Saturday 10am-12pm (class 10:30-11:30am)

[Agility Skills Training](#): Saturday 11:30am-1pm (class 12-1pm)

Lunch break: 1-2pm

[Agility Sequencing](#): Saturday 2-4pm (class 2:30-3:30pm)

[Agility Trialing 1](#): Saturday 3:30-5pm (class: 4-5pm)

[Agility Trialing 2](#): Saturday 5-6:30pm (class:5-6pm)

Loose Leash Walk Workshop Aug 7th:

Instructor: Claudia

The workshop will run for 3 hours.

[LLW Workshop](#): Sunday 9am-12pm

High School class starting Aug 10th:

Instructor: Claudia

High School runs for 4 weeks and ends Aug 31st.

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

Puppy class starting Aug 14th:

Instructor: January

The class will run for seven weeks, with a break on Sep 4th (Labor Day weekend), and end Oct 2nd.

[Puppy 1 – Preschool](#) (first week: 6:30-8:30pm without the dogs): Sunday 2-3pm

Nose Work Classes starting Aug 23rd:

Instructors: January, Claudia

The class will run for 6 weeks and end Sep 27th.

[Nose Work Intro to Odor](#): Tuesdays 5:15-6:15pm (starts WITH the dogs)

[Nose Work Beginners](#): Tuesdays 6:30-7:30pm (starts WITH the dogs)

Upcoming classes:

This program will round up our summer. We'll continue all behavior classes through the winter, and will offer some of the sports indoors. In September we'll celebrate our **Responsible Dog Ownership Day** and offer a **Delta Society Pet Partner® seminar and test**. Also in September we'll repeat our popular **Rally Class**. Watch our schedule for upcoming classes and events like **Weight Pulling** and the continuation of **Treibball**.

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 and workshops**. 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 on the pricing page – 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 us the voucher number, 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) DOGGY DAYCARE AND OPEN PLAY TIMES:

Doggy Daycare: Offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays 6am-7pm, with their playtime ending at 5pm, at which time they'll be kenneled if not picked up before.

Open Play Time: Canceled for Mon, July 4th and Mon, Sep 5th; possibly canceled for Fri, Sep 2nd.

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. Vaccinated dogs only (5-way/DHPPi, dogs over 6 mo: Rabies, Bordetella). We also require having the dog dewormed or a fecal sample checked.

First-timers: bring your vaccination papers, we want to see them! Dogs over 6 months, please for the first time make an appointment with us to come on a Friday, when Claudia and Frank are managing the play times. After that, we'll discuss with you which hour will be best and if you can come Mondays as well.

Fee: \$7 at the door or punch card \$35 for 6 visits.

Our Open Play Times (indoors + outdoors) have become a safe playground for dogs of any size due to our 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 Monday AND Friday:

5-6pm: puppies, 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 adult dogs over 60# (indoors: 8 dogs max; outdoors: 10 dogs max)

8-9pm: By appointment only –for evaluations. \$35

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) THERAPY DOGS

First of all I'd like to clarify some definitions of terms. People often confuse the therapy dog with a service dog.

A **service dog** is trained to help one specific person in a special way. That could be a guide dog for the blind, a hearing dog for someone deaf, a helper dog to pick up dropped items, bring items and help with other chores or a dog that will support a person standing (up) who has balancing problems. Service dogs are mostly bred for their purpose, to reach genetic stability of the temperament and character the dogs are bred for.

Then there is the **companion dog** who is there for the mental support of a person, e.g. for an autistic child or a person with depression. These dogs are also often specifically bred for their purpose. Special breeds are more suited for the task, e.g. Golden Retrievers are a very common breed. Then within the breed of the Golden Retriever, there are certain lines established that focus on the character needed in a companion dog.

A **therapy dog** is there for lots of people. That dog will live in a regular household as a pet dog and go out with his handler to meet strange people and lighten up their day, e.g. in a nursing home or hospital. A therapy dog could also be part of the Read To Rover – Program, or something similar. Children with reading difficulties can read to a dog and improve their skills in a more comfortable and less judging environment. Therapy dogs are often not specifically bred for that purpose. They're pet dogs that show their

temperament and character throughout their life, and when the owners look into what kind of activity would suit that dog, then therapy dog might come up as a good choice. All kinds of breeds and mixed breeds are seen as therapy dogs, from the Yorkshire Terrier over the Cocker Spaniel to the Retriever or Bernese Mountain Dog; and even the Pit Bull can be a good therapy dog. Even though the breed might not be known for that, but the individual often proves that prejudice wrong

There're several ways to certify a dog as a therapy dog, and in Alaska we have basically two options:

1) **Therapy Dog International (TDI®)**: At some of our dog shows a judge will come up who is also a TDI evaluator. Then a TDI test can be scheduled and anybody can come with his dog and take that test. If the dog/handler team passed the test, then the handler/owner can send in paperwork to get the TDI certification. That paperwork includes a detailed health exam and certificate from the veterinarian. For specifications about the test and health requirements, you can go to <http://www.tdi-dog.org>.

2) **Delta Society Pet Partner® program**: We have evaluators here in Alaska who will offer evaluations scheduled depending on the demand. Usually a seminar will precede that evaluation to guide the handlers through the full process of becoming Pet Partners. Delta Society has a stricter program than TDI and requires re-evaluation every two years, but also provides more guidance and insurance coverage. For more information, visit <http://www.deltasociety.org/Page.aspx?pid=259>.

If you think you have the dog with the right temperament to visit kids at school, elderly people at nursing homes, sick people at the hospital or read with children at the library, this might be the program for you! Size of the dog doesn't matter, it's the gentle character, the patience, the solid nerves of the dog's character that we're looking for. And a handler who's a good advocate for his/her dog and has good control over the dog's actions, not to forget ☺.

Contact us if we got you interested, we'll have a Delta Society Pet Partner seminar and evaluation coming up in September!

Happy visiting,
Claudia
Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KA
(Certified Professional Dog Trainer)

Your BetCo Team at
The Better Companion - Regine Dog Training Facility
Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KA
Frank Sihler, Iditarod Finisher
Kelly Saunders (office)

(907) 357-2521
betco@mtaonline.net

www.bettercompanion.com

1400 E Regine Ave, Wasilla, AK 99654