

Dear Dog Lover,

Our monthly story at the end of this email: “Why training with a clicker?”

If you receive this email in full html, you can just [click on the events in blue](#) to get to the correct page on our web site!

We'll have a booth at the CIKC Dog Shows July 29-31. Visit us at the Palmer State Fairgrounds!

[Sign-up is open for the LLW-Workshop on Aug 7th](#). Working dog spots are full, but we take sign-ups for our wait list and you can still pay for auditing as well. Working spots are \$60, auditing \$30.

With only two months left to use our field, we're hurrying to get as much use of it as possible for the dogs.

A **[Flyball Class](#)** will be offered **starting Aug 10**, and you can sign up for our 4-week class without any pre-requisite required! Pay only **\$75** until July 27, after that it's \$80, still a good deal! **Wednesdays, 7:30-8:30pm**, a full hour of training, set-up not included! Limited to 6 dogs. After you took this class, you can join our Flyball practices using the training single pay or punch card.

[Treibball Practice](#) will pick up again after a 2-week break on **Aug 10, Wednesdays 6-7pm**. Take advantage of our drop-in style practice with a low fee of \$18/hr or get a punch card for \$90 for 6 times. We'll eventually change this set-up and start with a class before the more advanced people continue with their drop-in practice, just like it's done with Flyball and Nose Work. If you just want to **take a peek** into this sport, reserve your spot for the drop-in date you'd like to join by emailing us! Limited to 6 dogs.

Also on **Aug 10 starts our [High School Class](#)**, where we **practice public manners** in 10 everyday situations. This is also the preparation class for the [Canine Good Citizen® test](#). The test will be held Sep 10 at our annual RDO-Day. You can take the class without testing, or come to the test without having taken the class ☺. The class is a 4-week course, on Wednesday evenings 7:30-8:30pm.

We're again looking for volunteers for our Demo at the Alaska State Fair on Aug 28.

Pre-registration period ends Aug 14th for our **[Delta Society Pet Partner® seminar and evaluation in September](#)**. This program trains volunteers and screens volunteers and their pets for visiting animal programs in hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, schools and other facilities.

NEW: Sign-up now to reserve a working spot for a **[TTouch Workshop in November!](#)** We have invited a TTouch instructor to teach us about this method to calm, increase

confidence and lower stress in our dogs – at home, out and about or at the veterinary hospital.

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: Why training with a clicker?**

1) INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS:

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 7th: 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 7th, 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, Treibball 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, search and rescue, treibball 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 17, 18 + 25: Delta Society Pet Partner Workshop and evaluation

We **extended the deadlines below** to better accommodate that summer is flying by too fast. ☺

We're ready to take sign-ups for this **therapy dog program**. Delta Society's Pet Partners program trains volunteers and screens volunteers and their pets for visiting animal programs in hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, schools and other facilities.

Dates for the seminar and evaluation:

Seminar: Saturday, Sep 17, 10am – 5pm (without dogs)

And Sunday, Sep 18, 10am – 1pm (with working dogs)

Evaluation: Sunday, Sep 25, 10am – 4pm (students will reserve 30min slots)

Fees: working spot: **\$125 until Aug 14th**, after that \$135 regular fee. Book included.

Seminar Auditing (without dog): \$95 until July 31st, after that \$105 regular fee. Book included.

Evaluation: **\$20 until Aug 14th**, \$25 regular fee.

Book only: **\$45 until Aug 14th**, after that \$55.

Delta Society recommends, but doesn't require that new teams take the seminar before attempting the evaluation. If you choose to "self-study", contact us to order the book for you (price: \$45), and sign up for the evaluation only. The book is included in the fee for the seminar.

We need all sign-ups for the seminar and book orders by Aug 14th, so that we can order and hand out the books prior to the evaluation.

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

We've been asked to give a demonstration of Nose Work. Check out the web page at [WDMA](#) for more information on this event.

Who wants to help???

November 2011: TTouch Workshop

We now are ready to take sign-ups for this wonderful workshop! **We expect this workshop to fill quickly**, even though the deadline to sign up isn't that close.

Please read the full descriptions on our web page.

TTouch is a system of gentle touches and body work, non-habitual movement and groundwork exercises, to calm, relax and focus your dog. It enhances balance and well-being and can help your dog with:

- Nervousness, tension and stress
- Excessive barking and chewing
- Leash pulling and jumping up
- Fear and shyness, hyperactivity
- Car sickness
- Aging
- Digging and scratching

Bonus Class: DeStressing through Energy Balancing

3-5 techniques will be demonstrated and explained, for DeStressing your dog (and you), through energy balancing:

Chakra Connecting, Chakra Balancing, EFT, Acupressure, and EEM Daily Energy Routine.

This is a 1-day workshop with one bonus hour Sunday evening for all attendees

Dates and Times: Nov 20 and 21, 2011 (same workshop repeats next day)

Sunday, Nov 20: 10am - 5pm

Monday, Nov 21: 9am - 4pm

Bonus Class DeStressing: Sunday, Nov 20, 6-7pm

Location: Regine Dog Training Facility

Fees: One day with dog: **\$130 pre-registration (until Sep 30)**, \$150 regular fee (Oct 1 – Nov 20)

Auditing (without dog): \$80 pre-registration (until Sep 30), \$95 regular fee (Oct 1 – Nov 20)

Come a second day (with a different dog) and save \$30 of your registration fee!

Bonus Class: free for all attendees, all others \$25

Payment is required to hold your spot. **All payments are non-refundable.** Payments can be transferred to another attendee.

Maximum 10 working dogs per day.

Please bring your own lunch, we'll provide hot/ cold beverages and some snacks.

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. **Break on Aug 9+16.** Sundays **until Aug 7:** 4:45-5:45pm. **Sunday Aug 21: 3:30pm.** 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: Wednesdays **Aug 10 – Sep 28**, 6-7pm. Reservation required.

Flyball Practice:

Supervisor: Karla

- Flyball Practice for Flyball Beginner Class graduates: Wednesdays, **Aug 10 – Sep 28**, 7:30-8:30pm. Reservation preferred.

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 (indoors arena)

Flyball class starting Aug 10th:

Instructor: Karla

Flyball runs for 4 weeks and ends Aug 31st.

Flyball: Wednesday 7:30-8:30pm (outdoors fenced field)

Puppy class starting Aug 14th:

Instructor: January

The class will run for **six** weeks, with a break on Sep 4th (Labor Day weekend), and **end Sep 25**.

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

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)

Behavior classes starting Sep 7th/8th:

Instructor: Claudia

All classes will run for **six** weeks, have a break on Oct 12/13 (instructor gone for continued education) and end Oct 19/20.

Puppy 1 – Preschool: Wednesday 5-6pm

Overflow P1 or FC: Wednesday 6:15-7:15

Foundation Class: Wednesday 7:30-8:30pm

Puppy 2 - Kindergarten: Thursday 5-6pm

Elementary School: Thursdays 6:15-7:15pm

Rally College: Thursdays 7:30-8:30pm

RDO-Day Sep 10th:

CGC® - test: Saturday 10am

Dog First Aid class: Saturday 3pm

Weight Pull Workshop Sep 11/18th:

Instructor: Kat

Each of the two sessions will be 1.5 to 2 hours, depending on the number of participants.

Dogs need to be 1 yr or older.

Saturdays, 2-4pm: Weight Pulling

Delta Society Pet Partner Sep 17/18th + 25th:

Instructor: Mary Troll; Evaluators: Sharon and Kathleen

Seminar: Full day Saturday, half day Sunday Sep 17/18

Evaluation: 30min time slots on Sunday, Sep 25

Saturday, 9/17, 10am-5pm: [Seminar](#)

Sunday, 9/18, 10am-1pm: [Seminar](#)

Sunday, 9/25, 10am-finished: [Evaluation](#)

Upcoming classes:

We'll try to find a way to continue some of our now outdoor sports inside during the winter, if the demand is there.

Agility classes will start again Oct 1st. Check out our [TTouch workshop in November](#) in the events section above.

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. Please note that **some workshops have their own cancellation policy**, even though they use the same registration form as the classes. Take advantage of our **pre-registration fee** by signing up a minimum of **14 days before the start of your class**. Different deadlines might apply to some of the workshops and seminars.

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 six 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 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, 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 our 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: info@bettercompanion.com, (907) 357-2521

5) WHY TRAINING WITH A CLICKER?

People state they can't handle that extra thing in their hands. They can't click fast enough, and they don't want to always have to remember to take the clicker. Point

taken, it's a little awkward, especially in the beginning, especially when handling the treats and the leash at the same time.

It was awkward to me at first, too. But then I started using the clicker, and my dog's eyes lightened up just because she saw that thing in my hands, not even the treats. Sure, it means treats, but she now is **clicker savvy**, too.

The clicker helps communicating with the dog in a lot of ways. First of all, it's so **distinct**, that there're no mistakes. We use the clicker in training to tell the dog **1) "you did that right!" and 2) "that's worth a reward!"** This element is important in training a dog, since all the dog's behaviors are either increased because of a good outcome for the dog or decreased because of a bad outcome for the dog. A dog doesn't sit because we say "Sit", but because of the **outcome**.

If you want to catch the dog doing it right, why not just praise the dog instead of the click? The **accuracy** of the clicker can help training the dog better. It's proven by science, that we can faster perform a mechanical 'push a button' than forming words in our mouth and getting them out. With a little practice, you also will be faster to click than to form words and get them out. The newer clickers are **ergonomically shaped** to make clicking much easier than in the past. That millisecond faster can be essential when shaping a dog's behavior, especially when we don't lure the dog, but let them 'think'. We observe them and like in the **"hot/cold" game** for kids, we click them for getting 'hotter', and just ignore them when they're getting 'colder'. Since every click gets them a reward (treats being the fastest and easiest choice), not to click can already be quite frustrating. There's no 'cold' necessary, they know they are wrong when no click is heard.

If you have a clicker and your dog knows what it means, **try that game** out by getting the dog to look at the door, or the TV. Remember, click and reward for hot and hotter, not just for the end-result! Start clicking for the dog turning the head just slightly away from you and your treats. You'll see your dog thinking, as he/she's trying to figure out what makes you click! Try not to help with pointing. 😊

Praising with a "good dog!" can even **backfire**. What if the dog got confused and took 5 tries to get it right? Our "good dog" could carry some sarcasm with it, meaning "finally, you got it!". Even though you say the right words, the tone might say something different. The clicker is unmistakably the same tone every single time, and means "you did right!".

In clicker training it's actually better not to **handle the treats** at the same time you handle the clicker. You can decide if you'd like to have a treat ready in your hand while you push the clicker button, or keep it in your pouch until you clicked, THEN take it out and give to the dog. If you move your hand towards the treat pouch or bring the cookie out of the pouch WHILE you click, the tone of the clicker becomes worthless. The **click** has to happen **BEFORE** any other sign of getting fed, **like Pavlov's bell** was ringing

BEFORE the caretakers would open the gates. It's a pre-cursor, a sign to tell the dog "food WILL come", a **promise** for a treat.

With good clicker training you'll actually get a dog that's rather clicker savvy than treat oriented. That is a huge difference, because you don't have to have a treat on you to lure your dog into action. **Your dog will love the action itself** that got you to click, and will start loving to offer behaviors, especially the correct ones. That makes a dog perform much better for you later on even without treats. The performance becomes almost 'self-rewarding', especially some easy tricks.

The clicker is only used in the very beginning of teaching a new behavior, or to refine later in between. As soon as the accuracy in timing isn't as important anymore, the clicker can be faded out and the reward changed to a variable schedule. That means sometimes the dog still gets a cookie, sometimes just a praise, and sometimes something totally different, like a play with a toy, a walk, or just plain freedom off the leash, or a run in the yard. That will in the end stabilize the behavior, because the dog never knows what he's getting, and will 'work' for the HOPE of a great reward, not for the expectation of a treat.

So you can teach your dog a lot with the clicker, and fade the clicker out before it gets too much in your hands. Try it out, maybe at our classes, it's fun!!!

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