

Dear Dog Lover,

Our monthly story at the end of this email: “Clicker Training for Horses?”

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

Stay safe,
Claudia

Our April Newsletter:

PART I: News

1) Schedule change summer workshops - Conflict with PetExpo! Oops!

PART II: Events

2) March 30: Nose Work Odor Recognition Test (ORT) at CIKC in Palmer

3) May 17/18 preview: Nose Work trials in Wasilla - volunteers get to see the most!

PART III: Classes + Workshops

4) Treibball Intermediate for our beginner graduates in April - one hour later

5) Summer Workshops - new date for Feisty Fido!

6) Summer Workshops - new date for Agility Contacts!

PART IV: Open Play Time and Daycare

7) Next Scheduled Closures

PART V: Class Schedule

PART VI: Monthly Story

8) Clicker Training for Horses? Yes!

PART I: News

Schedule Change Summer Workshops - Conflict with PetExpo

Thanks to some very attentive clients, we realized that we scheduled two summer workshops on the same day as the **Pet Expo in Anchorage, June 14th**, where we'll be having a booth and possibly some demos. Since we can't move the Pet Expo, we'll have to move those two workshops to a different day.

Our Feisty Fido and Agility Contacts workshops will be held **ONE WEEK EARLIER, on Saturday, June 7th instead.** We'll contact all current sign-ups regarding this change and will give a full refund to anybody who can't come on the new date.

Unfortunately, there's an ASCA/NADAC agility trial in Chugiak on that same weekend of June 6-8, but I can work around that and only attend Friday and Sunday of the agility trial. ☺

PART II: Events

🐾 March 30: Odor Recognition Test at CIKC in Palmer

This is an event for our **Nose Work enthusiasts**:

Nose Work practicing students who's dogs have their ORT: please volunteer! ☺

Nose Work practicing students who's dogs don't have their ORT (yet): Get yourself and your dog registered with the NACSW now to have your scorebook in time and also be sure to sign up for the **NW yahoo groups**: With **NACSW** and in Alaska with **k9noseworkAK** (search the yahoo groups) to stay informed and get nose work related emails as well as info about how and when to sign up for ORTs, trials and practices directly from the source.

Nose Work class students: please volunteer! You can learn so much from volunteering! At ORTs, volunteering will allow you to observe the test, whereas spectators are usually not allowed unless they're family members or close friends of a specific dog.

The test will be held by Cheri Hagen at the Cook Inlet Kennel Club building in Palmer. Birch, Anise & Clove odors will be tested. You can test for one, two or all three odors! For more information contact Cheri Hagen at stoneridgeak@gmail.com.

🐾 May 17/18 preview: Nose Work Trials in Wasilla - volunteers get to see the most!

This new sport is great for all dogs that have a nose (and what one doesn't?!), and volunteering gives you the best insight! While there are few spectator opportunities at a Nose Work trial, volunteers are able to see all the different dogs - using their nose to find a little swab with a specific essential oil scent on it - and watch how different handlers cope with the different types of hides. Competitors can only see their own dog, not any other dogs/handlers, so volunteering before you compete is highly recommended! Contact Cheri at stoneridgeak@gmail.com for more info.

PART III: Classes + Workshops

🐾 Treibball Intermediate for our Beginner Graduates in April - one hour later

For all Treibball Beginner graduates now and earlier: We **changed** the classes in April around so that **Treibball Intermediate** will be offered a bit later **at 6:15pm on Tuesdays**. If we don't get enough sign-ups for that class, we'll probably offer **Rally Practice** instead.

Summer Workshops! : Feisty Fido, Shy Dog and Recall

They're back and on the calendar; sign-ups are already open for our once-a-year specialty workshops! Please note the **new date for Feisty Fido - one week earlier!**

May 31: Shy Dog Workshop - Learn techniques to help your dog warm up faster towards new people. Get lots of practice during this 4 hour workshop. Maximum 6 dogs and every dog will be worked singly. Our only workshop where we allow a **second person for free** - to get more "strangers" for the dogs to meet, especially guys 😊. All participants should be 14 years or older.

June 7: Feisty Fido Workshop - Increase your toolbox with more techniques for encounters with other dogs on your walk. It doesn't matter if your dog wants the other dog to go away or to come and play - improper behavior on leash (called leash reactivity) is always undesirable and embarrassing, and will get worse without proper behavior modification. Maximum 6 dogs for this 4 hour workshop. Additional people can audit (come without their own dog) for half price.

June 28: Recall Workshop - Still not happy with your dog's recall? Use this 4 hour practice time to find out what makes your dog come (or not) and how to change your approach to increase your success. We'll use all participants as distractions, so friendly dogs only for this workshop. You can always come without your dog (audit) for half price and learn from the other participants how to improve your recall at home.

Summer Workshops - Agility

To bridge our long gap of no agility classes during May and June, we are again offering our three well-received agility specialty workshops. Each workshop will be about 2.5 hours long with 6 dogs maximum. Please note the **new date for Contacts - one week earlier!**

May 31: Go Weave! - learn to teach the weaves with different approaches not shown in class. Discover what training method works best for your dog and get a lot of practice time under supervision. Find the correct entry, go from another obstacle to the weaves.

June 7: Contacts! - lots of practice time for A-Frame, Dog Walk and Teeter. We work at your dog's level to either help overcome fears, improve distance handling or increase the difficulty by changing the height and/or adding other obstacles in different configurations.

June 28: Jumping Jack! - showing you ways to improve the dog's love for jumping, play with just two jumps, and practice lead outs and send outs. Develop enthusiasm and speed! We'll add a few other obstacles like tunnel and table to lighten up the jump work and add variety.

PART IV: Open Play Time and Doggy Daycare

Next Scheduled Closures

OPT every Friday evening
 Next scheduled closure: **May 23 (Memorial Day weekend)**

DDC every Tuesday and Thursday
 next scheduled closure: **Thanksgiving?** ☺

PART V: Class Schedule

Listed are start dates. The classes will run one hour, once a week for 6 weeks unless otherwise specified. A **“maybe” for a class means YOU can tell us** if you want this class to happen. Enough student interest could put it on the schedule! ☺

Click [here](#) to view the online calendar by month. To see who’s instructing the class you’re interested in, go to our online [calendar](#) and click on any week of that class to see the details.

Click [here](#) to register for a class.

Already registered? Click [here](#) to pay for a class.

Or contact us by email or phone: info@bettercompanion.com, (907) 357-2521.

| <u>CLASS</u> | <u>April 2014</u> | <u>May 2014</u> | <u>June</u> | <u>later</u> |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Behavior Classes</u> | | Workshop Shy dog | Workshops Feisty Fido, Recall | |
| Puppy 1 | Mon 4/7 | Thu 5/15 | | July 2014 |
| Foundation Class | Tue 4/8 | Thu 5/15 | | July 2014 |
| Puppy 2 | Mon 4/7 | Wed 5/14 | | July 2014 |
| Elementary School | | Wed 5/14 | | July 2014? |
| High School | | | | July 2014 |
| CGC-test (one day) | | | | Sep 2014 |
| C.L.A.S.S. - BA | | | | Fall 2014 |
| CLASS Evaluation | | | | Fall 2014? |
| Tricks ‘N Clicks | | | | TBA - fall? |
| <u>Sports</u> | <u>April 2014</u> | <u>May 2014</u> | <u>June 2014</u> | <u>later</u> |

| <u>Classes</u> | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Rally College | | | | Sep 2014? |
| Rally Practice | Maybe Tue 4/8 | | | TBA |
| Freestyle | | | | TBA - fall? |
| Nose Work Beginner | | Wed 5/14 | | TBA - fall |
| Nose Work Odor | | | | July 2014? |
| Nose Work Practice | Wed 4/2 (2 times) | Sat 5/10 (1 time) | | summer 2014 |
| Treibball Beginner | | | | TBA - fall? |
| Treibball Intermediate | Tue 4/8 | | | TBA - fall? |
| Treibball Practice | Tue 4/8 (4 times) | Tue 5/6 (2 times) | Tue 6/3 (3 times) | July 2014? |
| Flyball Beginner | | | | Summer 2014? |
| Flyball Practice | | | | Summer 2014? |
| Agility Puppy/Beg | | | | July 2014 |
| Agility Skills | | Sat 5/31 (Workshop) | Sat 6/7 + 6/28 (Workshops) | July 2014 |
| Agility Sequencing | | Sat 5/31 (Workshop) | Sat 6/7 + 6/28 (Workshops) | July 2014 |
| Agility Trialing | | Sat 5/31 (Workshop) | Sat 6/7 + 6/28 (Workshops) | July 2014 |
| Weight Pulling | | | | Fall 2014 |

You can check our web page www.bettercompanion.com for info on classes, doggy daycare, Open Play Times, our facility and schedule, read testimonies from other students, print out the registration form (or fill one out online) and more.

Or contact us by email or phone: info@bettercompanion.com, (907) 357-2521.

PART VI: Monthly Story

 **Clicker Training for Horses?**

Sure! Quite a few horse trainers are using the clicker training method for horses! Some were already using clickers even before it became common practice in the dog world. Who would have imagined this?! But when you think about it ... it makes sense. It works!

Why am I thinking about this now? Well, we now have horses, too! I know how well clicker training works for dogs and other animals - so it seems only natural to use it to train the horses. Let me share my story ...

I have always liked horseback riding. I first learned the English riding techniques back in Germany, then I learned a bit of Western riding. I never rode competitively; it was always just for fun and later more towards relaxing trail riding. I never had my own horse - that was just a dream. Then I quit riding for many years due to time restraints, money, and other interests. The dogs became my main focus (and still are).

Two years ago, on vacation in California, we finally managed to fit a trail ride into our schedule. I had forgotten how much fun it was! We only walked the horses that day, never even trotted, just enjoying the scenery, the mountains, the sunset over the water. And I loved it! Some would say it was just dumb tourist stuff - just riding single file behind each other, but I didn't care - I was riding a horse! The next summer, I managed to ride with friends on a loaner horse almost every week (thanks Karla and Lori!!!) and enjoyed every outing. Then the opportunities to ride died down for a while, with my schedule getting busier, the weather getting worse, the trails being muddy or frozen ... and I didn't get to ride for several months.

Then we got to ride again during our winter vacation in Mexico this past January. This time the horses were much smaller and we weren't as sore as we had been from riding on the big horses. Frank saw how these Mexican people cared for their horses - with love, always friendly and gentle, and even with limited resources they kept their horses in great shape.

We had always said we wouldn't get horses in Alaska. It was too cold, too expensive and what-not. But the wishing was still there. Then Frank, who kept looking through the internet, found some information on Icelandic horses. Icelandic horses are perfect for Alaska! They are small, easy keepers, with sturdy legs and a thick coat adapted for harsh conditions like Iceland (or Alaska!). Long story short (well ... shorter) - we are now the proud owners of two Icelandic horses!

One of the mares we bought has a foal, born in December. Until the foal can leave her mom and be with its new owner, we'll take care of her and start working with her. What a perfect opportunity for clicker training! I have already started a bit with clicking for handling; like touching the belly and picking up feet with the foal. I've worked on refreshing some clicker training previously done with the adult mares, too, targeting a lid I was holding. In one short session, my mare remembered to lift her head higher or to touch a target on the ground.

Now that we have our own horses, I can play with the horses even if I just have a few minutes between chores or classes because they are right behind our house. It's wonderful! We can watch the filly run around from our window, and my dogs can come with us and share the time as well. The adult mares are both already about 20 years old (middle age for an Icelandic horse), so we can learn from them as much as we can still teach them a few new tricks. We're very happy to have found such great companion animals, not only for trail riding!

I'll be exploring more about their clicker abilities - it will be a fun activity for when weather doesn't support a horseback ride. I look forward to telling you more about clicker training horses in a later newsletter. Have a great spring with ALL your companion animals!

Claudia

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