

Dear Dog Lover,

**Our monthly story at the end of this email:** “Canine Good Citizen Advanced - the newest AKC title!”

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

Stay safe,  
Claudia

## **Our January Newsletter:**

### **PART I: News**

- 1) Warning about chicken jerky
- 2) Renting our facility during the holiday closure

### **PART II: Events - 2014**

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## **PART I: News**

### **Warning about chicken jerky**

After a client of mine had her second dog out of the same litter die from **acute kidney failure** at the young age of 4 (the first dog was only 3 years old), and the blood work supported **toxicity** as a cause, ruling out strictly genetic reasons, they talked about nutrition. It came out that the chicken jerky they had been feeding to all the dogs for years could be the reason! Veterinarians and pet owners already **suspected that chicken jerky** could be responsible for acute kidney failure, leading to death in a lot of

cases all across the US. Many people have posted to the FDA's web site with their suspicions, and the **FDA started to investigate**, but couldn't yet find a legitimate reason to blame the chicken jerky and to recall the product. You can go to their web page at <http://www.fda.gov/animalveterinary/safetyhealth/productsafetyinformation/ucm360951.htm> to read more about this issue. This family has 7 dogs, and only 2 of them got ill. The other 5 dogs are healthy and they now don't feed any more of the chicken jerky, just to be sure. So the jerky doesn't necessarily kill each dog, but could harm some dogs, maybe with a hereditary unknown weakness when digesting chicken jerky? **Be aware of what you're feeding** - and everything in modest amounts!

### **Renting our facility during the closure**

**Want to play with your dogs inside - with plenty of room to romp?** Have a **winter play date with friends** in a heated building instead of the cold dog park? **Practice** obedience or dog sports without the distraction of other class dogs? **Private rental times are available** either for clients who already have a key to the building or by appointment while office staff is here. Please make sure the building is available by reserving your spot ahead of time! Our fee is **\$25/hr**, adding \$10/hr for the use of our agility equipment (only for those with experience with the equipment). All dogs entering the building should have current rabies and 5-way vaccination and be dewormed or have a negative fecal sample. Ask our office for specifics.

## **PART II: Events**

### **Therapy Animal Handler Course: Feb 2**

**The Pet Partners® Therapy Animal program** is a volunteer program that trains only the handler, and also screens and registers volunteers and their pets for visiting animal programs in hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, schools and other facilities.

For those interested in volunteering with their pets and for professionals wanting to incorporate their animals into their work, this class fulfills the handler-training requirements for the volunteer Pet Partners® Therapy Animal Program.

**For Handler Course pre-requisites:** [www.petpartners.org/volunteer](http://www.petpartners.org/volunteer)

**Obedience Training Club of Chugiak (OTCC)/Chugiak Benefits Association (CBA)**  
Building 18606 Old Glenn Highway, Chugiak, Alaska

**\$100.00** - includes Pet Partners Student Handler Guide, snacks and pizza.

**Human End of the Leash Training, no pets please**

**Pet Partners Instructors & Evaluators:** Terry Yeomans and Pete Klebes

**Please Note: After the training, complete the screening!**

Individual screening of teams is done by licensed **Pet Partners** Team Evaluators. Teams (animals and humans) are evaluated for skills and aptitude for visiting animal programs. Teams who take the handler training and pass the screening can register to be **Pet Partners Therapy Animal Teams**. Animals **cannot** be fed a **raw protein diet**.

**For additional info, contact, Terry**, email [luv2labs@gci.net](mailto:luv2labs@gci.net), 907-694-4777, cell 973-513-0103 or

**Pete**, email [aktherapydogs@gmail.com](mailto:aktherapydogs@gmail.com), 907-727-8633

## **PART III: Classes + Workshops**

### **[Treibball + Freestyle for Beginners: Feb 11](#)**

These are both fun activities that can be easily practiced at home, to exercise and enjoy your dog daily and not only train once a week at class. They require little space to practice the beginner's skills and tricks taught in the class. You choose to practice - when, if, how often, indoors, outdoors, ... no equipment required that you don't already have in your household! This is the last opportunity to start these sports until fall! Check out our **Facebook page 'The Better Companion'** for samples of Freestyle and our **YouTube channel 'The Better Companion'** for Treibball videos! I won't link to them anymore - brought me in trouble with the last newsletter!

**Treibball**: starts **Tuesday, Feb 11**, 5-6pm (6-week class)

**Freestyle**: starts **Tuesday, Feb 11**, 7:30-8:30pm (6-week class)

### **[Skijor Workshop: Feb 2](#)**

We have again invited **Kirsten Ballard** to instruct our **annual Skijor workshop** at the Regine Dog Training Facility! Kirsten has competed in national and international races inside and outside Alaska in the US and Canada. She'll help you **get started with your pet dog**, explaining the variety of equipment available and then helping you and your dog on our own groomed track, practicing either with our loaner gear or bring your own gear! **We sell everything you need for skijoring** except the skis! Your own skis and intermediate skiing skills are required.

**Skijor Workshop**: **Sunday, Feb 2**, 10am - 1pm; **pre-registration: \$65** (until Jan 19)

### **[Mushing Workshop: Feb 9 + 16](#)**

**Teach your 1-2 pet dogs** how to pull you on a **lightweight mushing sled**! Learn about the mushing equipment, make your own lines for the sled and learn the tricks of the trade from experienced **Iditarod musher and tour guide Frank Sihler**! This 2-day workshop on two consecutive Sundays is the only mushing school available in Alaska for pet dogs! Only offered once each winter! This workshop will make you understand much better what Iditarod mushers and 'recreational' mushers experience when out

there with their teams. We call our own trail here around our facility the 'micro-Iditarod' trail ☺.

### **Mushing Workshop Part I: Sunday, Feb 9**, 10am - 2pm;

Theory; making lines; driving the sled (pulled by snowmachine) - without your own dog(s).

**Pre-registration: \$110** (until Jan 26); **Part I + II pre-registration: \$190** (until Jan 26)

### **Mushing Workshop Part II: Sunday, Feb 16**, 10am - 1pm;

Teaching your dogs to pull; how to teach directions; checking your dogs for injuries; trail etiquette.

**Pre-registration: \$110** (until Feb 2)

## **PART IV: Open Play Time and Doggy Daycare**

### **🐾 Next Scheduled Closures**

**OPT** every Friday evening  
Next scheduled closure: **Dec 20 + 27, Jan 3 (Holidays)**

**DDC** every Tuesday and Thursday  
next scheduled closure: **Dec 23 - Jan 3 (Holidays)**

### **🐾 See Your Dog On Facebook**

We want to try to take more pictures and short video clips of dogs in action at our facility. That could be at daycare, Open Play Times and even some classes! Don't miss out on your dog being featured! Like us on Facebook (search for 'The Better Companion' page) and you'll see your dog in your newsfeed. Then you can share your dog's adventures with your friends! I'm still learning all these things, since I joined the 'smart phone community' just a couple months ago. ☺

## **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](mailto:info@bettercompanion.com), (907) 357-2521.

<u>CLASS</u>	<u>Jan 2014</u>	<u>Feb 2014</u>	<u>Mar 2014</u>	<u>later</u>
<b><u>Behavior Classes</u></b>				
Puppy 1	Sun 1/12	Mon 2/10	Thu 3/6	Apr 2014
Foundation Class	Sun 1/12 Thu 1/16	Mon 2/10	Thu 3/6	Apr 2014
Puppy 2	Sun 1/12		Wed 3/5	Apr 2014
Elementary School	Thu 1/16			May 2014
High School	Thu 1/16			Jul 2014
CGC-test (one day)			Sun 3/9	Sep 2014
C.L.A.S.S. - BA				May 2014
CLASS Evaluation				Jun 2014
Tricks 'N Clicks				TBA - fall?
<b><u>Sports Classes</u></b>	<u>Jan 2014</u>	<u>Feb 2014</u>	<u>Mar 2014</u>	<u>later</u>
Rally College			Thu 3/6	TBA - fall?
Rally Practice	Tue 1/7 (4 weeks)			TBA
Freestyle		Tue 2/11		TBA - fall?
Nose Work Beginner	Wed 1/15		Maybe (If no Odor)	May 2014 (if not March)
Nose Work Odor			Wed 3/5	May 2014 (if not March)
Nose Work Practice	Wed 1/15	Wed 2/5	Wed 3/5	Apr 2014
Treibball Beginner		Tue 2/11		TBA - fall?
Treibball Intermediate				Apr 2014
Treibball Practice	Tue 1/7	Tue 2/11	Wed 3/4	Apr 2014
Flyball Beginner				Summer 2014?
Flyball Practice				Summer 2014?
Agility	Sat 1/11		Sat 3/8	July 2014

Puppy/Beg				
Agility Skills	Sat 1/11		Sat 3/8	July 2014
Agility Sequencing	Sat 1/11		Sat 3/8	July 2014
Agility Trialing	Sat 1/11		Sat 3/8	July 2014
Weight Pulling				Fall 2014

You can check our web page [www.bettercompanion.com](http://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 and more.

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

## **PART VI: Monthly Story**

### **Canine Good Citizen Advanced - the newest AKC title!**

Looking at the three evaluation levels of the **C.L.A.S.S. Program (Canine Life And Social Skills)**, offering **B.A., M.A. and Ph.D.** levels), which was founded by the APDT (Association of Pet Dog Trainers), the AKC (American Kennel Club) decided to also add a third level to their **CGC program (Canine Good Citizen)**. To the already existing **STAR Puppy (Socialization, Training, Activity, Responsibility)** and **CGC-evaluation (Canine Good Citizen)**; they have added the **AKC Community Canine**, earning a dog the **CGCA (Advanced CGC)**.

Now that we've got the terminology right, let's focus on the program. The CGC-test is most often offered in a rather controlled setting, can be held indoors and simulates real-life situations like the 'crowd' of 3-5 helpers, and the loose leash walk along cones. The Advanced CGC is tested in real situations like at dog shows, classes or in the community.

The **STAR Puppy** is the puppy level of the CGC program for dogs less than one year old. To earn the STAR Puppy award, puppies and their owners must attend at least 6 weeks of class as one of the 20 requirements.

All dogs (mixed breed and purebred) may take the **CGC-test** without completing a class and without having completed the STAR Puppy program. They must pass all of ten test items to become 'Canine Good Citizens'. Then they can choose between getting a certificate only or to **register their dog with AKC** and use the **CGC certification as a title**, with the letters CGC behind their name. **Mixed breed dogs as well as purebred dogs can be registered with the AKC for this purpose.**

Before taking the **AKC Community Canine test (CGCA)**, dogs must have a CGC test on record at AKC. This means they must be registered with AKC and have the CGC Title. They don't need to have gone through the STAR Puppy program, but they do need to have passed the CGC test and registered that result with the AKC as a title.

This means even though right now, **after passing the CGC test**, you have the choice between paying only **\$8 for a CGC certificate** or **\$20 for the CGC certificate and Title designation** (plus maybe the fees to list/register your dog with AKC if they aren't already) ... In order to be able to go on to the next level, you HAVE to pay the higher fees (for the Title designation). You can list any dog, even a mixed breed, with AKC for this program.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or go to [www.AKC.org](http://www.AKC.org) for more info about this program or on how to register or list your dog.

We'll offer **our next CGC test on March 9<sup>th</sup>**, after finishing our High School class (CGC-prep class), which starts Jan 16<sup>th</sup>. We could then offer BetCo's first CGCA test in the summer or early fall in conjunction with our RDO-weekend!

Looking forward to acknowledging your well-behaved dog in one of these tests,  
Claudia

Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KSA  
(Certified Professional Dog Trainer - Knowledge and Skills Assessed)  
APDT C.L.A.S.S. Evaluator  
AKC CGC® and STAR® Evaluator  
Member of The Dog Gurus

Your BetCo Team at  
**The Better Companion - Regine Dog Training Facility**  
Claudia Sihler, CPDT-KSA  
Frank Sihler, Iditarod Finisher  
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Robin Jacoby (office)

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