

City Dog Country Dog

TRAINING SOLUTIONS FOR BUSY LIVES



News
[WINTER EDITION]
2015
SERVING PORTLAND &
OREGON CENTRAL COAST

A quarterly newsletter bringing you informative treats from the dog world, and keeping you up-to-date with our services

[Call of the Wild] Spirit of Dog Retreat

This year for the first time, we held a one-day retreat that focused on the psychological and spiritual gifts that dogs bring to our lives. The retreat concluded with a memorial celebration held at the base of a huge old Douglas Fir tree, overlooking a creek. The day held many touching, sad, and also humorous moments as we put our every day lives on pause and took time to remember, appreciate, give back, and let go.



[A Trainer's Story] Scaredy Dog Success!

BY MEREDITH HAYNES

A sweet and sensitive dog named Lucia has frolicked into my heart, curled up into the most precious dog ball and settled right in. This pint-sized Goldendoodle began attending the dog daycare where I work. Her puppy class instructor recommended this for her as a young pup, to increase her confidence.

She started out very reserved and shy, so we gave her space to take in all the action without the pressure to respond. After a while she began approaching other dogs and playing. Watching her go from wallflower status to romping and dashing around in the sea of dogs was a wonderful thing to witness. A slow and low stress introduction was just what she needed to come out of her shell.

Lucia's "mom" Kim knew that Lucia's timid nature would require finesse in introducing her to new environments. But as it turned out, the environment outside their home and outside daycare was always changing. Whenever anyone passed by, the environment became new again. At home, Lucia started barking and lunging at everyone she saw go by as she watched out the window. She did it on walks as well. This sweet little lamb, so lovely and gentle with Kim's 2-year-old niece, sister Krista and her dog Etta, was completely overwhelmed by strangers, wherever they appeared in her world. Walking her, especially when combined with pushing a stroller, was a stressful chore instead of an enjoyable activity.

Committed to Lucia's happiness and wellbeing, Kim and Krista sought my help for training. I was initially shocked to see how much of an effect Lucia's environment had had on her behavior. But knowing how far she had progressed at daycare, I was ready to start the training process.

We came up with ways to reduce the amount of time Lucia spent worrying about strangers walking past her house, then concentrated on using distance and cheerful redirection each time a stranger appeared on walks. With lots consistency and practice, walks have become easier and easier. Now, Kim is excited when strangers appear because she can go through a specific training exercise and see it working in the moment!

Dogs like Lucia can be so memorable because they speak to the shy kid in all of us. Sometimes a little careful planning, patience, and positive guidance goes a long way to instill a sense of safety, allow confidence to flourish and better yet, have fun!

If your dog shows signs of fear or apprehension such as a tucked tail, recoiling, barking or lunging in new situations, here are some tips that may help:

- Give your dog time and space to take in what the environment is giving out
- Avoid forcing your dog into situations in which she is not yet comfortable
- Move your dog away from scary things to prevent defensive aggression and help build a sense of ease
- Use high value treats and upbeat verbal encouragement
- Take baby steps and celebrate small victories
- Know that each new situation will likely require the same gradual approach as the last

"To his dog, every man is Napoleon; hence the constant popularity of dogs." – ALDOUS HUXLEY

[Did You Know?]

4 Ways Dogs Improve Our Health?

Stress relief. The verdict is in: dogs are better than vacations. The affection and loving acceptance we get from dogs are among the most effective soothers of human stress.

Lower blood pressure. Whether through the increased exercise of daily walks or the above mentioned stress relief, dogs have been shown to reduce high blood pressure.

Lower cholesterol. Dog guardians typically have lower cholesterol levels than people with no dogs, possibly because dog people might adopt a healthier lifestyle overall.

Pain reduction. People recovering from surgeries or living with chronic pain report experiencing less pain and fatigue after spending as little as 15 minutes petting a dog.

[Living with Dogs] Size Matters

Your Chihuahua may love Boxers and your Rottie mix may adore Dachshunds. But when little and big play together, keep close watch. Big dogs can unintentionally harm small dogs—and on the rare occasions when friendly play escalates into a scuffle, the smaller dog is at risk for serious injury or death. If you let your dog play with very differently sized dogs, supervise vigilantly.

No chasing.

Don't allow chase or wrestle games between a very large and a very small dog. If you see this happening, call your dog away with a treat. At the park, seek out areas with more dogs his own size.

Why is this important? Dogs love to chase things—balls, cats, sticks, Frisbees, and other dogs. They get this love from their wolf ancestry, along with the instincts to stalk, and grab and shake small prey animals. But wolves are all about the same size and live in the same social group their entire lives. Dogs, by contrast, have been bred into a staggering variety of sizes, and regularly meet dogs that are new to them. When dogs chase each other or wrestle, one dog may panic and begin to shriek or struggle like a prey animal. If that happens, a predatory reflex in the other dog may kick in.

Instincts are instincts.

Even dogs not usually into hunting-type activities can have their predatory reflexes triggered if the situation resembles a predator-prey interaction. A good example is when one dog flees from another in a good, old-fashioned game of chase. The rapidly retreating dog suddenly looks like prey.

The risk of predatory reflexes being triggered is much greater when there's a big size difference between two dogs.

So, supervise your dog's play sessions and be prepared to break up interactions with much larger or much smaller dogs. It's safer for everyone.



Lucia and friend

[A World of Dogs] The Best of Dog Times

It's human nature to get sentimental about the past. When we imagine dogs' lives 100 years ago, what likely comes to mind are idyllic scenes of working dogs herding sheep on green pastures or bouncing alongside horse-drawn fire engines (thank you, Disney). We forget—or never learned about—the popularity of dog fighting, the widespread animal cruelty of the 19th century, or the out-of-control stray problem that saw thousands of dogs rounded up and killed in inhumane ways. Today, fewer dogs do the jobs they were bred for, but they enjoy endless advantages never afforded their forebears.

Take, for example, medical advances in veterinary science over the last 20 years. Not only are there more and better treatments available, canine pain management options such as acupuncture, massage, TTouch, and swim therapy mean that dogs with injuries, arthritis, or in post-op recovery suffer much less. Then there's the field of dog training in which coercion and punishment are increasingly rejected and have been replaced by positive methods. More trainers undertake proper education in animal behavior and science-based training techniques. Canine play is much better understood now and is consequently taken seriously as a key way for dogs to stay happy and healthy. And dog activities abound. Agility, Rally-O, flyball, musical freestyle, dock jumping, Treibball—the options and variety are endless.

Also, public opinion nowadays is overwhelmingly against animal cruelty and exploitation. We largely agree animals are sentient beings and acknowledge our responsibility to care for and respect them. Dogs are no longer treated as property but as family members. They live in our houses; some even sleep in our beds, come to work with us, and go with us on vacation. Some attend daycare or have dedicated walkers tending to their exercise needs. They ride with us in cars, get baths and haircuts, and enjoy a snack while lounging on the couch as much as the rest of the household. Even if the majority of dogs don't get to work sheep in green fields anymore, most of them have never had it better.

[Dogs in Action]

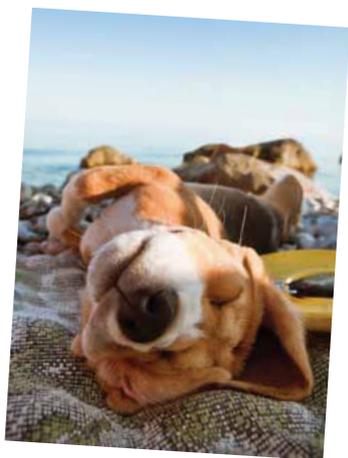
K9 Nose Works

K9 Nose work is a fun, low-key sport that takes advantage of dogs' amazing sense of smell and their love of having a job to do. In the same way Rally-O is a relaxed version of obedience competition, K9 Nose Work is a reward-based activity open to dogs of all sizes, temperaments, and scenting abilities. If your dog has a nose, he can play this sport.

The goal in K9 Nose work is to train your dog to search for three scents: Birch, anise, and clove. But you begin with kindergarten-level searches for a favorite toy or treat. Aside from advancing levels of classes and competitions, this is a sport you can easily play in your yard, or anywhere.

K9 Nose Work is excellent mental stimulation for dogs. Using what amounts to their super power—those 300 million olfactory receptors in their noses—to solve problems and be compensated for the effort with a favorite reward is just about any dog's idea of heaven. Unlike agility or flyball, K9 Nose Work isn't physically strenuous, so dogs of all ages can participate. It's also a great activity for young or shy dogs because it builds environmental and social confidence. Finally and most importantly, K9 Nose Work was designed to be easy to get started on, which makes it fun for dogs and humans alike.

For more info and to find training classes or groups near you, search online for K9 Nose Work and Canine Scent Work.



[Tips & Tools]

Keeping Your Dog's Eyes Healthy

Many eye conditions can be caught early and cured or minimized, so make regular eye exams part of your routine with your dog. Here's how to do it:

1. In a brightly lit area, examine your dog's eyes; they should be clear and bright. With your thumb, gently roll down the lower eyelids and check that the lining is pink, not red or white.
2. If gunk has collected in the corners of your dog's eyes, clean it out with a damp cotton ball. Wipe outward from the corner of the eye, taking care not to touch her eyeball.

Watch out for continual discharge or gunk, tearing, redness, cloudiness, tear-stained fur, or change in pupil color or size. See any? Then take your dog to the vet for a checkup.

[Healthy Dog]

Ear Mites

Ear mites are nasty little critters. As parasites go, they cause a relatively mild infection but an outsize amount of discomfort for their poor canine host. If your dog starts to scratch his ears excessively, shake his head, or desperately rub his ears against hard surfaces to the point of drawing blood, suspect ear mites. Other telltale signs include red-brown or black crusts in the outer ear, bumps in the ear canal, and abrasions or other evidence of vigorous scratching on the back of the ears.

The good news is that your vet can easily diagnose the problem and prescribe anti-parasitic medication to kill the infection. The bad news is that ear mites tend to attack anything furry, so you'll have to keep the patient quarantined from other animals in your household—and give your house a thorough cleaning. Barring any complications, the problem should be cleared up with 7-10 days of daily ear treatments and cleanings.

The Rhodesian Ridgeback

This handsome hunter is the endurance athlete of the canine world. His alias, the lion dog, gives away the Ridgeback's original purpose and explains his stand-out characteristics. To track big game through hot days in the bush, you need independence, intelligence, courage, a powerful frame, great stamina, extra-thick paw pads, the ability to withstand high temperatures, and imperviousness to insect bites. The Ridgeback has all this and more. He gets his name from the ridge of forward-growing hair along his back; he's also famous for his dignified demeanor and unwavering thousand-yard stare. Ridgebacks need vigorous exercise every day as well as consistent, reward-based training, so the breed is not for everyone. But if you're an avid hiker or runner and have the patience to train and socialize a self-reliant dog, the Ridgeback is a loving and loyal companion.

To give a Ridgeback a forever home, search online for the nearest rescue group.



2016

[Looking ahead !]

In 2016 we will hold our annual Call of the Wild Dog Camp (August 19-21) and Call of the Wild Reactive Dog Camp, as well as some new offerings which focus on connecting with nature: a Natural Dog Photo Safari, Wild is Calling Night Quests (guided sleep-out adventures) and all-day Adventure Hikes. More details to come in the spring issue of this NL, on our website, and in mail-outs – please join our mailing list to keep up with what’s on offer next year!



In Loving Memory

This year, City Dog Country Dog lost two of our beloved and well-respected team members.

Thistle, a Black Labrador, worked with City Dog Country Dog for 4 years as a therapy dog. She accompanied her partner, Heather Ohmart, to private sessions and public events, such as the Portland State University stress-relief program. It was a joy to see her gentle, patient face light up as student after student relaxed in her kind, affectionate presence. Thistle was also an excellent puppy educator, and helped Heather train many of the puppies that passed through our City Dog Board and Train program.



Suzi, a Yellow Labrador with a wonderfully kind and steadfast nature, was the Hearing Dog of our office manager, Mary Williams. She was a hub of calm in hectic admin moments. Often in meetings, a cool wet nose would suddenly materialize beside Mary, nudging her to let her know that her phone was ringing. Suzi took her job very seriously, right to the very last. Even when she was unable to walk, she found ways to alert Mary to sounds, as she had done her whole working life.



Thistle and Suzi were bred and raised by Canine Companions for Independence, a non-profit organization that provides highly trained assistance dogs to enhance the lives of people with disabilities.

[Our Amazing Team]

Caroline Spark, PhD, owns and operates City Dog Country Dog. She has a background in counseling and adult education, and multiple certifications in dog training and behavior consulting. Her special interests include canine psychology, behavior modification, and outdoor adventure events for dogs and people.

Heather Ohmart, BA, is a CCPDT certified dog trainer who runs our City Board & Train program, and specializes in raising and training puppies to be great family companions, therapy dogs, and service dogs.

Meredith Haynes, BSc, is a CCPDT certified dog trainer with a Master’s degree in Animal Behavior Counseling. Meredith is particularly interested in achieving peace and harmony in multiple-dog households, and helping dogs become less reactive on walks.

Julie Callow, BSc, is currently interning with City Dog Country Dog, and has almost completed her studies to become a certified dog trainer. Julie lives on the Oregon Coast and assists with private training sessions, Play & Train classes, Vacation Training Retreats and Call of the Wild Dog Camps.

Theresa Ciskowski, BSc, provides one-on-one boarding and sitting for reactive dogs through our Safe & Sound program, and assists at annual Call of the Wild Dog Camps.

Debbie Golob and her Irish Wolfhound mix, The Moose, are our Call of the Wild Dog Camp Rangers. They are constantly finding ways to take care of the natural environment and make our Country Dog events a success.

Mary Williams, MA, is City Dog Country Dog’s Office Manager. Mary’s eye for detail, passion for organization, enthusiasm, and warmth are at the heart of our day-to-day business operations.

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City: (503) 740-4886 • Portland
Country: (541) 547-3793 • Yachats
info@CityDogCountryDogTraining.com

www.CityDogCountryDogTraining.com