



Oberhund News

FOR REGINA'S DOGS AND THEIR PEOPLE

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Family Fun

I'm sitting on a bench in the training hall of the Regina Kennel and Obedience Club while boys and girls of various ages enter with their family dogs. I've been invited to observe a Junior Obedience class (for kids 7 to 18 years), and I'm looking forward to seeing the kids and dogs interact. Most parents are sitting along the perimeter, but I can see a few others observing from behind the glass in the kennel area near the front of the hall. Beside me a mother and daughter are waiting quietly with their dog Sparkle, an 8 month old cutie adopted from the Regina Humane Society. The daughter practices a few commands and tricks with Sparkle to pass the time until class begins, and as the other kids arrive, they do the same with their dogs. Everyone – two-legged and four- – looks happy to be there and eager to get started.

This is the third week of the six-week course, and the kids seem to be familiar with the routine. I've been told that neither the dogs nor the kids require any previous training to take the course as long as the kids can manage their dogs. (In the case of a child with an unmanageable dog, the parents are advised to take the dog through one or two sets of classes to resolve the issues.) The instructors, Cheryl and Cathy, begin with a doggie version of a homework check. All are given a chance to show the class tricks they taught their dog over the last six days. The class then gets to work on a new trick, followed by some basics (holding the sit, walking on a leash, etc). While the kids and dogs are practicing, the mother next to me kindly offers to let me flip through her daughter's course booklet. The duotang includes handouts on topics such as canine body language and grooming, and I also see there are homework sheets and fun sheets like crosswords. Soon the class progresses into Agility work, which seems to be everyone's favourite. (Stuff to play on and treats: what's not to love?) Cheryl and Cathy review the skills from last week as they help the kids direct their dogs through the tunnel, and after everyone's had a few turns, the instructors introduce the catwalk,

a piece of Agility equipment new to the class. The class progresses smoothly. Everyone waits patiently for a turn – well, almost everyone. Occasionally a four-legged student tries to bark to the front of the line.

When there are about 15 minutes left in the class, Cheryl points out a teenage boy and his younger sister, explaining that Stuart had taken the class once already with Candy, the family's dog, and because of his keen interest, is now practicing with one of the instructor's trained dogs while Heather takes the class with Candy. A teenage boy voluntarily coming to class? With his sister? I must find out more, so Cheryl points me in the direction of the kids' mother who has been watching the class through a window in the adjoining room.

I introduce myself to Janis, explaining that I'm curious about her family's experience with the class, in particular why her teenage son is voluntarily taking it twice. Janis is happy to oblige.

"Our neighbour told us about the course after seeing Stuart and Candy outside playing together so much. Our kids are devoted to Candy but really did not have the skills to control her properly. They both were very interested in teaching her tricks and had seen us in an earlier adult class. When we suggested that Stuart might want to go to the beginners' class on his own, he was thrilled; he was very keen to teach Candy agility skills."

Thinking of adolescents in general, I ask Janis if she worried that Stuart wouldn't enjoy the class; that he'd find it too much like school with the workbook and homework.

"It turned out not to be the case for him. He learned a great deal and thoroughly enjoyed it. He even came to class on his birthday,



Stuart, 14, and Heather, 10, after class with their family dog Candy, a 3 year old Samoyed. Candy loves balls, squeaky toys and games of chase.

shortening his watersliding time. Heather became very interested while watching her brother and thought it would be fun to try to train Candy, too, so we enrolled her in the beginners' class. Stuart wanted to take the advanced class, but because of low enrollment and time conflicts, it was canceled. Despite taking the beginners' class already, Stuart still wanted to come, even if it meant watching his sister from the sidelines. The instructors, Cathy and Cheryl, saw that Stuart was very serious about learning more, so they made special arrangements and generously allowed Stuart to join the class using one of their trained dogs."

I can see from Candy's body language that she's enjoying herself, and I wonder if she has figured out when it is a class day.

"Candy loves the class, especially the Agility part, and she has learned the Saturday routine. She watches where we are driving and she gets excited when we pull up to the building. We let her out of the car, and when she smells the kennel club and the other dogs she can hardly wait to get in, pulling us in the door!"

I'm curious about how the class has benefited the whole family, in particular, the kids' relationships with each other, Candy, and their parents.

Continued

Good Reads

I'll be Home Soon! How to Prevent & Treat Separation Anxiety

by Patricia B. McConnell, Ph.D (2000)

A must read for every dog owner. This compact, comprehensive guide is easy to read and offers expert advice. McConnell explains what separation anxiety is, what it isn't, how to prevent it, and how to treat it. It's short read, but an essential one.

Rescue Ink: how ten guys saved countless dogs and cats, twelve horses, five pigs, one duck, and a few turtles

by Rescue Ink with Denise Flaim

This is a collection of stories about the guys from Rescue Ink (www.rescueink.org), a group of tattooed, muscled men with the goal to rescue animals from abuse and neglect, even if that means confronting animal abusers directly. Learn how each became a member of the group, and the stories of some of the animals they've rescued. It's a fun read for all animal lovers and it is available for borrowing from the Regina Public Library.

Obedience Without Conflict: Clear Communication & Obedience Without Conflict: The Game

by Ivan Balabanov (2003)

This DVD set is not for the average dog owner who just wants a well-mannered dog. This is for a competitive obedience trainer who wishes to excel without compulsion methods. This DVD set is available for borrowing from the Regina Public Library.

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Family Fun – continued

"The entire experience has been a win-win for us all. Since taking the class both kids have been more attentive to Candy's needs, working together with her. Heather likes to brush her and Stuart continues to practice tricks with her and loves to take her for walks and play hockey with her. Because of the extra attention and training, Candy responds to the kids better; she's more attentive and manageable."

Since kids will often forget to do dog-related chores, I ask Janis if it has been helpful to have an instructor, rather than a parent, explain the importance of regular training, grooming, and all the other dog-related responsibilities.

"Yes, definitely. The kids see the instructors as the experts and will remind us of what they have learned."

As the class ends, the instructors remind the kids about their homework for the week and

then class is over. Unlike regular school, there is no sigh of relief, no mad rush to leave. It's obvious that the kids want to be here and have enjoyed the class.

I ask Janis if her kids plan to continue after this course is over.

"Both kids want to continue so we have to see how we will sort this out with two kids and one dog. Stuart will definitely be taking the next one and Heather may repeat the beginner one. We will have to see. Our neighbour who first told us about this course has offered to help us set up an agility run in the backyard this summer and we are all very excited about this."

I imagine a backyard with Agility equipment and I must admit I'm a little envious of the fun Candy and her family will be having this summer.

Book Review

***Reaching the Animal Mind: clicker training and what it teaches us about all animals* by Karen Pryor (2009)**

Have you ever heard of a pet fish being trained to swim through a hoop? Do you want to learn how to train your dog to blow bubbles? Are you looking for a book that will satisfy your inquiring mind and leave you happy and hopeful?

While browsing the New Books section at the Regina Public Library I picked up a copy of *Reaching the Animal Mind: clicker training and what it teaches us about all animals* by Karen Pryor (2009). (It has a smiling dog on the cover. How could I resist?) I recognized the name Karen Pryor, a well-known respected trainer and author of several books on animal behaviour, and knew it would be an engaging read. I was not disappointed.

Don't let the title fool you into thinking this is a technical read for clicker trainers. This book is full of fascinating anecdotes that will engage readers of any level of expertise, especially those who are curious about animal and human behaviour. Pryor shares the latest scientific knowledge of how animals' brains work

(including human brains) and why punishment-free training and teaching methods are so effective. Even in its human application, called TAGteaching, it has shown amazing results for coaches and teachers of students with developmental problems.

As a bonus, there is a website to supplement the book (www.reachingtheanimalmind.com). The site includes related articles, links, photos, and, best of all, videos to illustrate examples mentioned in the book. I highly recommend the footage of the clicker trained fish (See Chapter 4 section) and "Shaping Demonstration: Blowing Bubbles" (See Chapter 2 section).

If you love animals and instinctively know that they have far more intelligence and a greater emotional range than many "experts" believe, you will enjoy this book as I did. I know in my heart that Pryor and her scientific work will continue to help improve the lives of all animals.



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A Holistic Journey

What makes a design consultant with a successful business in British Columbia move to Wolseley, Saskatchewan and begin a personal endeavor known as Nature's Touch Animal Massage?

A complicated question, to be sure, so Judy Lechowicz simplifies the question by describing the beginning of her natural/nont-traditional/holistic path with animals almost 20 years ago. Her story starts with Yoi, a problematic cat she adopted from the SPCA in Kamloops. Yoi (Japanese for "beautiful") was highly stressed: she had been at the shelter for a year and a half, had been adopted and returned several times, had health problems, and was labeled as having behavioural problems – specifically, Yoi had "pooped" in the living room. Judy knew enough to examine the stool and she soon realized that Yoi's problem was not a behaviour problem but a health problem. In addition to a variety of ailments, Yoi also had a colon problem for which the vet recommended a high fibre diet. The canned food was expensive and looked awful, but it smelled good. Yoi loved it, but Judy was still not happy with her cat's health. Yoi had a lot of bowel movements, about six a day, and Judy knew something wasn't right. She was making changes to her own diet and was well aware of the power of food to change one's health. She saw a PBS program about making your own pet food, and later, at the health food store, she stumbled upon a recipe book tucked in the back of the store: *Natural Health Care for Dogs and Cats* by Dr. Pitcarin. Judy was convinced that making her own pet food was the right thing to do and bought the book. Yoi was not convinced; she ignored it. Judy suspected that Yoi was addicted to additives, so she waited for her to get hungry enough to eat it. She waited for three days. (At the time, Judy didn't know about transition diets.) After three days, Yoi began to eat the homemade food. For the next two weeks, Judy experimented with different foods and ways to prepare it, and in two weeks Yoi's food transitioned from sautéed to raw and she became interested in all sorts of food. Yoi's health improved drastically; her coat changed for the better and its colour became brighter; her upper respiratory ailments disappeared and after about a year, there was no trace of the colon problem. In addition to physical improvements, within a month, Yoi's disposition improved: she became more confident and less shy.

Judy jumped right in with her next dog Annie, a Bernese Mountain Dog. She raised her on a raw food diet, and Annie lived to be 9½ years, which, according to her vet, was double the average lifespan for the breed. Judy also began to delve into non-traditional (at the time) dog training methods, holistic health, and natural spiritual healing. At one point, Judy hired an animal communicator to help her deal with the fear issues of Rolf, one of Annie's pups Judy had kept. When that experience was also a success, Judy was utterly convinced that the natural/non-traditional/holistic path she was on was the right one for her. Judy knew that she wanted to help animals more than with just food, so she began her training in a variety of non-traditional healing areas.

Judy studied and became trained and certified in animal massage, Reiki, and advanced nutrition for dogs and cats, and in the spring of 2009 started Nature's Touch Animal Massage (www.petmassage.ca). She teaches about natural diets for dogs and cats; she's a Reiki II practitioner with special training for animal Reiki; and she's a small animal massage practitioner specializing in maintenance, performance, and rehabilitation massage.

Judy's natural/non-traditional/holistic path continues to unfold for her, and she continues to follow her interests and expand her knowledge, currently in a very special course in animal hospice care.

Judy suggests the following resources for anyone interested in pursuing a similar path.

animal communication:

Awakening to Animal Voices (2004) by Dawn Baumann Brunke. www.animalvoices.net

raw food:

Natural Nutrition for Dogs and Cats: The Ultimate Diet (1998) by Kymythy Schultze www.kymythy.com

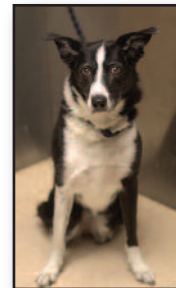
animal reiki:

Animal Reiki: using energy to heal the animals in your life (2006) by Elizabeth Fulton and Kathleen Prasad www.animalreikisource.com

Shelter dogs waiting for adoption

Panda

Meet Panda, a 9 year old spayed Collie mix. She loves walks and is very good on a leash. She is calm and passive and likes quiet nights at home and doing pet therapy visits. Her best four-legged friend is Tia and her new forever family must include both dogs. They've both been waiting since October 28th. (File # 13548)



Tia

This is Tia, a 12 year old Shepherd mix. She enjoys walks but is gets tired more quickly than she used to; she is shy and quiet and needs a peaceful, calm household. Tia is well-behaved, knows a few tricks and is open to learning more. She's a happy girl with a pleasant disposition who would love to sit at your feet and enjoy your company, but she would not do well without her companion Panda. File # 13549



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Judy Lechowicz
SAMP, AACC

Why do dogs do that?

Predatory Drift

We love our dogs but sometimes we make the mistake of thinking of them as little people. While they are highly intelligent, have similar emotions, and are deserving of our love and attention, we can forget that they are animals with instincts that can cause them to behave very differently from what we may expect. One such behaviour we need to be aware of is "predatory drift."

Pat Miller, in her book *Play With Your Dog* (2008), defines predatory drift as when "something from a dog's evolutionary past triggers the larger dog's brain to perceive the smaller dog as a prey object – a bunny or squirrel – instead of the canine pal he's played happily with for months, or years. Often, the trigger is the smaller dog running, yelping, or squealing. The bigger dog gives chase, and tragedy ensues" (p.28).

So be wary of allowing overly exuberant, uncontrolled play such as chasing, especially when the dog's "playmate" is smaller than the dog. Make sure to look for signs that play might be getting out of control and act beforehand to de-escalate the play, taking timeouts to let the dogs calm down. The reaction by the larger dog is immediate, often a quick shake of the neck of the "prey," so if you wait until predatory drift happens, it's usually too late.

For more information on predatory drift, check out this article online: <http://www.alldogsgym.com/content/view/378/>

Donate a Dog Bed

Comfy Canines

While visiting the Regina Humane Society's website one day I saw a request for Kuranda dog beds. Intrigued, I explored further. What a great idea: a virtually indestructible dog bed that provides comfort, is easy to clean, and keeps the dogs off the cold concrete (and any messes on that concrete). Kuranda's website claims the beds calm the dogs and lower stress levels, and because of their material and design, the beds are good for dogs with skin allergies. There must be something to these claims because the Regina Humane Society has been using them and is hoping for more.

"The Kuranda beds have been a wonderful addition to our kennels. Every dog who gets one sleeps on it. They not only keep the dogs off the floor, but they are comfortable and warm. The kennel staff are very happy with the beds because they not only make the lives of our dogs that much more comfortable but are easy to clean and almost indestructible."

~ Lindsay West, Supervisor of Kennel Operations,
Regina Humane Society

"These Kuranda beds let me have a peaceful sleep and help keep me clean and healthy. Thank you to everybody who has donated a bed."

~ Burtina, an adoptable dog

It would be great if every shelter dog could sleep on one. If you would like to donate a Kuranda Dog bed at wholesale price (the company will deliver it directly to the shelter), or even purchase one for your own dog, visit www.kuranda.com and click on "Donate a Bed." (Tip: To reduce the "shelter list" to a manageable size, choose "Saskatchewan" from the first dropdown menu and click on "Go" before selecting from the list of shelters.)

Dog Events

* If you have any dog-related events you'd like publicized, please contact Jennifer at 533.1701.

Pet Expo 2010

January 30, from 10 am to 5 pm at Conexus Arts Centre; tickets are \$5 (kids 10 and under admitted free), with proceeds going to the Regina Humane Society. For their safety and comfort, organizers respectfully request that you leave your pets at home for this event. For more information call 525.9999 or visit www.conexusartscentre.ca

Regina Humane Society Annual Telethon

January 31, from 6:00 pm to 10:00 pm on Access Communications Channel 7; for more information on how you can get involved, call 543.6363, ext. 258

Pet First Aid Course

February 20, 3 pm to 8 pm & February 21, 1 pm to 6 pm This two-day course is held at the Regina Humane Society and taught by Louise Yates, Certified Pet First Aid instructor. (www.HappyPetBoarding.ca) Tuition is \$125 + GST. To register call the Shelter at 543.6363 ext. 221

People For Animals Fundraising Bingos

The bingos are held at Fantasyland Bingo (2029 Park Street). See www.people4animals.ca for list of dates/times.

Important information for Regina dog owners:

Regina Humane Society

Lost and Found Department: 949-7770;

After hours emergencies 543-6363

Cathy Lauritsen Memorial Off-leash Dog Park

The park is located south of 13th Avenue and west of Lewwan Dr. The creek edge of the park is not fenced, so escape artists will have an opportunity.

Dog Bylaws

Dog related bylaw information can be found at the City of Regina's website (www.regina.ca). Not picking up after your dog: \$100. Letting your dog off leash: \$100. Watching them romp off leash at the dog park (or safely outside City limits): priceless.

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