

WHO'S NEWS

August 2022

Have we got news for you!



WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

We had the opportunity to rent Shari's Pup Playpen, a fully fenced 110 ft by 110 ft field at Hwy 7 just west of Lakeridge, during the summer and our students had a blast! Tuesday night was for Agility, led by our 2 highly talented Agility Trainers – Mindy & Nicole!

We started out on Wednesday night offering our brand new games based programs – Stress Free Walks, Off Leash Freedom and Game On! They were so popular that we had to add another set of classes on Thursday nights in July & August.

Many of our students told us that these programs did more for their dog than all of the obedience training they had done previously! It has been such a hit that we have a new surprise in What's New?

Sadly, our August classes are the last to run at this wonderful outdoor facility as our nights are becoming longer. But we plan to be back in May of next year!

Lynda Kitson, Director

What's New?

Stress Free Walks, Off Leash Freedom and Game On! will now be offered at our Ajax location. We plan to bring them to our Beaches location soon!

Our Beaches location re-opens in September and classes are already starting to fill.

We've added Rally Obedience Level 1 to our Beaches location starting in September. Sign up soon!

Training Insights



TRAINING IS SIMPLE, BUT IT'S NOT EASY

It's very true! Training a dog is not rocket science. It's not like learning algebra or performing heart surgery. Even training children can be challenging. So why should dog training be any easier? Our biggest struggle as humans is that we forget that our dog is just that, a dog. It's not human, but as humans we tend to try to humanize them, and that's our downfall.

One of our first hurdles is that our dogs don't communicate verbally. The only verbal communication they offer is barking or growling. When they do bark, most of us tell them to be quiet. By the way, never tell or reprimand a dog for growling. That's their warning signal for you or whoever to stop. Dogs instead communicate through body language and are masters at it. This is also why they pick up on hand signals much faster than words.

As humans, we talk all the time. Even when we speak to our dogs, we speak in sentences. Dogs, at adulthood (usually about 2 years of age) only have the ability to learn approximately 165 to 200 words. That's not much considering we use approximately 20,000 words in daily conversation. Our constant chatter becomes white noise to our dogs. This is no different from when we turn on the radio or television for background noise. A lot of the time, we're not really listening to it. I don't know how many times I have purposely turned on the radio to hear the weather and then completely missed it because I got busy with something else. This is what our constant chatter is like for our dogs.

There are some words that our dogs seem to learn much faster than others such as dinner, cookie, treat, etc. I just have to say carrots or melon and my dogs come running because they love those foods. Dogs quickly learn the words that are important to them. "Sit" or "down" or "stay" isn't important to them. Those words are important to us. That's why training our dog is not easy. Words like that take longer to teach. Imagine if you were visiting a friend and they told you to jump. Why would you? What's in it for you if you jump? You were just standing there, now your friend tells you to jump. Now if someone said chocolate to me, I'd be right there. I'd even jump for it.

Another hurdle is that at adulthood, dogs have the maturity level of about a 3 year old child. It takes time and patience for a 3-year-old child to learn things. So why do we expect our dog, or even young pup to learn faster than a 3-year-old? That's not realistic - they're a dog. We often make training harder than it should be and get frustrated because we expect our dog to learn faster than what they are capable of.

Loose leash walking is another hurdle. I always tell my students that teaching your dog to walk nicely on a leash is going to be the hardest thing for them to learn. In most cases it takes months. So why is this so hard? It's because it's not natural for dogs to walk next to anything. If you watch dogs when they are off leash, they will come together, check each other out, sniff the ground and then go their own way. A few may come back together to check something out, or have a game of chase and then break it off. You will not see 2 dogs walking shoulder to shoulder down in open space. That's a human thing. It's what we do. We walk side by side and have conversations with each other. Dogs don't do that. They can't figure out for the life of them why we don't want to sniff the ground or go run and play when there's so many exciting things to check out.

Dogs have the most incredible noses, which poses another hurdle. They can pick up scents from miles away. An intact male can pick up the scent of a female in heat from 3 kms away. They know who or what has walked by earlier. For them, when they pick up the scent of something really interesting, it's like when we're trying to track something that we want to catch a glimpse of. So exciting!

I remember one of the times when Molly (a Golden who is no longer with us) and I were performing with the Woofjocks Canine Allstars at Canada's Wonderland. My kids (who were adults) were there to watch the show. I was very concerned that Molly might pick up their scent while we were on stage and sure enough, she did. She jumped right off the stage, only to be quickly surrounded by a group of children who wanted to pat her. Fortunately, she loved children, but was still determined to find her own family.

Training is not easy because we make it too hard. We treat our dogs as if they are human beings, capable of learning like we do. That's not fair to them. They are not human; they are a domesticated animal. They don't communicate verbally and don't have the mental ability to understand our language, only a selection of words. We ask them to do things which aren't important to them and make no sense as to why we want them to do it. In a nutshell, we set our expectations too high and forget that they are dogs.

When training your dog, put yourself in their paws. Understand and accept their limitations. Have patience. Learn what motivates them and don't make so much white noise. All they want to do is make us happy, so let's help them by realizing what it's like to be a dog.

Lynda Kitson

But wait,
there's
more...



UPCOMING NEWS!

- Scent Detection classes start up again in September and are now listed on our Classes page of our website.
- Rally Obedience is now offered at our Beaches location!
- We now offer 3 Levels of Tricks, from Novice to Expert!
- We've added a Level 2 to Sports Prep!
- A new and improved CGN/Therapy program is coming soon!
- Feel free to email us at info@whoswalkingwho.ca if you have any questions.



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