



# Redfern Ramblings

Mid-Winter 2009 Edition

## Special Events

Mark your calendar NOW and plan to attend the following special events:

- **Valentines Day Party** — Feb 7 (Sat) 4 PM
- **S.T.A.R Puppy & CGC Testing** — Feb 14 & Mar 14 (Sat) 1 PM
- **Dog Scouts Troop 171**  
Troop Meeting — Feb 15 (Sun) 4 PM  
Mar 15 (Sun) 4 PM  
Apr 19 (Sun) 4 PM
- **PhoDOgraphy Badge Preparation** — Mar 1 & Mar 22 (Sun) 4 PM
- **Hike** — March 28 (Sat) 4 PM
- **Arthritis Walk** — May 2 (Sat) 10 AM
- **The Power of the Click** (2-day Seminar on basic & advanced points of Clicker Training) — (Sat-Sun) Feb 21-22
- **Redfern Therapy Group** Mar 4, Apr 1 (Wed) 6:30 PM
- **Mutt Movie Night** — March 7 (Sat) 6 PM
- **Spring Party** — Apr 4 (Sat) 4 PM
- **Harrisburg Kennel Club Dog Show & Obedience Trial** — April 11 (Sat) 8-4
- **The Healing Power of a Dog** (2-day Seminar on Animal-Assisted Therapy) — (Sat-Sun) April 25-26
- **Dog First Aid Seminar** — May 16 (Sat) 10 AM - 3 PM

## Worth Repeating

*"Whoever said you can't buy happiness forgot about puppies." — Gene Hill*

### CONGRATULATIONS!

Some of our furry students have some brags from recent dog shows!

**Dale Evans** (Cairn Terrier) and owner-handler Eleanor Parker earned a 2nd Place ribbon in Novice Rally during their first show in Red Lion on January 25.

**Tyler** (Golden Retriever) and owner handler Peggy Witmer earned a 4th Place ribbon in Novice Rally during their first show in Red Lion on January 25.

**Ch. Keilissa's One of the Gang AKA "Dilly"** (Bernese Mountain Dog) finished his Breed Championship on January 30. All points were under Bred-By-Owner category. Dilly is owned by Flo & Mike Smith.

## Clicker 101 — The Importance of the Indicator

First of all, some basics about the Clicker Training Process:

1. Dog does a desirable behavior (without a command or label).
2. Trainer quickly uses the Indicator (such as a Clicker).
3. Dog receives a treat/reward/reinforcement.

[NOTE — for the purpose of this article a "Clicker" will be used to ANY sound produced by any mechanical device]

From time to time we see handlers trying to shortcut the process, by eliminating Step #2.

If is extremely important to remember to use your indicator, which can happen a lot faster than the delivery of the treat/reward. The indicator is the clue to the dog that the behavior that immediately preceded the indicator is a desirable behavior. Combined with the treat this increases the likelihood that the behavior will be repeated.

Types of indicators:

- [A] **MECHANICAL** (such as a Clicker, a bell or other repeatable sound produced by a mechanical device). Advantages — Consistent sound, anyone can use it and it sounds exactly the same to the dog. Disadvantages — Requires the clicker to be used any time, anywhere that a desirable behavior occurs.
- [B] **A HUMAN-GENERATED SOUND** (Such as "Yes", "Good" or any easily-repeatable word). Advantages — Don't need to carry a separate device. DIS-advantages — Inconsistent; depends on the mood of the trainer; different people cannot precisely imitate your voice, tone, pitch, inflection, attitude; the sound is different with each individual.

[Note — We recommend you ultimately train your dog to recognize BOTH types of indicators, so you are prepared to reinforce behavior any time, anywhere. That way you are ALWAYS prepared to "catch your dog doing something right!" We believe the Clicker delivers the most consistent reinforcement, and therefore should be the PRIMARY tool to avoid confusing the dog. The "sound" is a fall-back option.]

If we skip the Indicator we have broken the "contract" we established at the beginning of our training. That contract says that "When I do something desirable I will get immediate recognition and ultimately a reward." The Reward is the ultimate "pay" for which the dog works. The Indicator is the rapidly-delivered recognition that marks or identifies the behavior, and ultimately announces "PAYDAY is coming soon".

Timing is critical! No matter how hard we try we simply cannot deliver the treat (reward) as fast as we can provide the indicator. So the indicator instantaneously MARKS the behavior. The treat that follows is the reinforcement.

## Stewards Needed

If you would be interested in helping as a Ring Steward at the April 11 Harrisburg Kennel Club show, contact Betsy at redfern@ioweb.com.

## Pet Rescue Video

Our Oxygen Mask Project should be ordering masks soon. For a video of an actual pet rescue go to [www.redferncanines.com/petrescue](http://www.redferncanines.com/petrescue)

## Seminars — Your Chance for In-Depth Learning

*Sharpen your skills. Deepen your understanding. Our Seminar Series offers the opportunity to be immersed more deeply in a subject, to help you in your work with your dog. Usually a full one- or two-day event, you will concentrate and practice and have the opportunity to share your experiences with other owners, handlers and trainers.*

**The Power of the Click** (Feb 21-22) is a 2-day event to explore the details of operant conditioning, including demonstrations and hands-on practice with your dog. Topics include: theory and history; how NOT to use a clicker; choosing the best reinforcement; use of a partner to train; teaching the indicator; when and how to put a cue on a behavior; improving speed, dexterity and accuracy; shaping behaviors, rate and frequency of rewards; use of "jackpots", fading the use of rewards, teaching complex skills ("chaining behaviors") and more.

**The Healing Power of a Dog** (April 25-26) prepares the owner to be a therapy dog handler in various ther-

apy settings. It is NOT a seminar to train a dog to pass a therapy dog evaluation. It IS a seminar to teach handlers the fine points of therapy and how to be a professional in therapy sessions. Topics include: the difference between Animal Assisted Activities (AAA) and Animal Assisted Therapies (AAT) and the benefits of each; skills involved in therapy dog training; HIPAA training to ensure compliance with federal law concerning health privacy rights; preparing your dog (and yourself) for visiting; being your dog's advocate during a visit; handler skills for dealing with the person being visited; useful skills for dogs in visiting; the parts of a visit; how to prevent yourself professionally during visits; trouble-shooting problems, and more.

All 2-day events include lunch and snacks. We recommend bringing note-taking supplies and a comfortable folding chair.

We're happy to answer questions after classes, by Email or phone. Pre-registration is required and is available online.

## Dog Scout Troop 171



Troop 171 has had some great events and we're preparing for a busy Winter and Spring.

The **bell-ringing** at the Harrisburg Mall was very successful. We raised **\$375** for the Salvation Army (more than 10 times

the usual proceeds from that shift!) Dogs & humans had a super time, in spite of the bitter cold. Needless to say we've been invited to do it again next year.

The **Pictures With Santa** project raised more than **\$700** toward our Oxygen Masks Project. Combined with individual donations from a variety of sources we're over \$1300 and should be able to order the "first batch" of mask sets in the near future. We're hoping to make some of those presentations "media events" to draw attention to the project — and to Dog Scouts in general.

It may be cold right now, but mark **March 28** on your calendar for the **first Hike** of the new year. Look for more details regarding location soon.

We're getting ready to do some prep work with the **Art of Shaping** badge, so we can turn our furry friends into Puppy Picassos and Rover Rembrandts. If we can get some quality work from that we can have our own private "art show", and raise some more funds toward the Oxygen Mask Project.

Folks interested in the **PhoDOgraphy** badge are invited to participate in two free sessions. The first will be "Getting to Know Your Camera" on March 1, followed by "PhoDOgraphy Techniques – Tips & Tricks for Photographing Your Dog" on March 22.

Troop 171 will be coordinating the Dog Walk portion of the **Arthritis Walk** on Saturday May 2, under the able guidance of Paula Marinak. Dogs must be leashed (max 6 ft, no flexi-leads), current with shots, under control and handlers must clean up. See the rules distributed by Paula for details. More information will be coming at the next meeting.

Our next regular **Troop Meeting** will be Feb 15 at 4 PM. At that time we will continue to work on the Dog Scout Badge and learn about some more of the Merit Badges that we're working on.

### Some of the Dog Scout Merit Badges we'll be working on as a troop are:

- **The Art of Shaping.** Using clicker training to teach the dogs to PAINT!
- **Fundraising.** Dog & human team raise money to support local charities & community service organizations.
- **Community Service.** Dogs and humans team up to help out their local communities.
- **PhoDOgraphy.** Learning how to take better pictures of your dog, and how your training pays off by changing ordinary pictures into good composition and layout.
- **Backpacking.** Learning how to pack and hike with dogs.



Keep checking the website and announcements at the Training Center for additional future events.

### Dog Scout Dues are Due

Membership Dues for Dog Scout Troop 171 (\$12 per year) are due for 2009. Please bring to the next meeting or drop off during class time.

## Current Class Listings

Class Title	Beginning Date/Time	# Class Sessions
Rally -- Level 1	Feb 16 (Mon) 6:30 PM	6
Puppy Class	Feb 16 (Mon) 7:45 PM	6
Manners Class	Feb 17 (Tues) 6:30 PM	6
Beginners Class	Feb 17 (Tues) 7:45 PM	6
Advanced Agility	Feb 20 (Fri) 5:30 PM	6
Agility Level 2	Feb 20 (Fri) 6:30 PM	6
Agility Level 1	Feb 20 (Fri) 7:45 PM	6
Rally -- Level 2	Feb 28 (Sat) 11:30 AM	6
Obedience Competition -- Novice	Feb 28 (Sat) 12:45 PM	6
CGC/Therapy Dog Preparation	Mar 1 (Sun) 1:15 PM	5
Beginners Class ---- Afternoon Class ----	Mar 4 (Weds) 3:30 PM	6
Beginners Class	Mar 5 (Thurs) 6:30 PM	6
K-9 Sampler Class	Mar 5 (Thurs) 7:45 PM	5
Reliable Recalls	Mar 8 (Sun) 2:30 PM	4
Loose Leash Walking	Mar 21 (Sat) 9:00 AM	4
Manners Class	Mar 21 (Sat) 10:15 AM	6
Tracking -- An Introduction --- NEW ---	Mar 21 (Sat) 2:00 PM	6
Tricks Class	Mar 24 (Tues) 5:30 PM	3
Puppy Class	Mar 31 (Tues) 6:30 PM	6
Rally -- Level 1	Mar 31 (Tues) 7:45 PM	6

**PLEASE REMEMBER** (when registering online) to complete the Class Application AND Payment Forms. If a Payment Form is submitted without the Application it is necessary to contact you to get important information.

**NOTE** — If the class you prefer is not scheduled at a time convenient to you, please let us know ... we may be able to make an adjustment, or schedule a new class based on general interest.

## Learn to Take Better Pictures of Your Dog

YOU are invited to participate in two sessions sponsored by our Dog Scout Troop. They are **FREE to members of Dog Scout Troops 161 and 171**. Others are welcome to participate for \$10 per session or \$15 for both sessions.

Whether you're using a "disposable" camera or a "costs-more-than-your-neighbor's-HDTV" setup, we'll address some issues you can use.



"Getting to Know Your Camera" on March 1 (Sun, 4 PM) will be an opportunity to get to know all those buttons and dials and doo-dads and what they can (and can't) do to help your picture-taking. *Bring your camera, separate flash (if applicable) AND YOUR CAMERA MAN-*

*UAL* so we can learn and share what we have. If you're in the market for a new camera, maybe our collective experience can help you narrow down your choices.

"PhoDOgraphy Techniques — Tips & Tricks for Photographing Your Dog" on March 22 (Sun, 4 PM) will explore some of the things that make the difference between ho-hum snapshots and pictures that catch your eye. Bring some pictures you have taken of your dog and we'll examine a few things that could give them some extra zip. Also, if you see a "really good picture" in a magazine or online, BRING IT WITH YOU and we'll try to examine what makes it special. We'll talk about lighting, composition, technique and subject matter, and how some simple adjustments can make a difference in the final result.

### Worth Repeating

*"To his dog, every man is Napoleon; hence the popularity of dogs." — Aldous Huxley*

### Puppy Watch

Next litter planned for late Spring. No puppies currently available. Up-to-date information will be announced on the website.