

NEWS

from Fit-N-Trim Dog Sport Training

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Bryce checks out people at the beach

Spring Brings New Puppies



Flame lights up Ramunas' and Jen's world

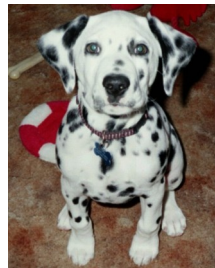
The word is that the puppy boom is not over so stay tuned to learn of more new arrivals and see the latest pictures. We'll look forward to tales of Q's and ribbons soon.



Benjamin looks a little guilty!

What would spring be without new puppies? We have a bumper crop this year so show some sympathy as their harried owners talk of 3AM walks and rugs covered with chew toys and dream of quieter days ahead. We've spotted (no pun intended) Elaine Hamill's Felix and Jen Johnson's and Ramunas Svarcas's Flame getting to know people at the bubble. And, of course Karen's Bryce makes

frequent appearances as well. We hear that Bob and Mindy Pelletier are about to



start puppy class with Chance. And Joanne Dunn has welcomed her new Corgi, Benjamin.

Felix is quick to sit



Chance takes a very short rest

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It started almost eleven years ago when I rescued a beautiful puppy from certain misfortune. Livey was only seven weeks old and so adorable. Mike and I were empty nesters so we treated her like a child...loving every minute of it.

From the beginning, I took Livey to puppy obedience classes and we had a great time. One day, I saw an ad for dog agility training. I had seen a couple of demos at the Topsfield Fair and thought that maybe one day I try it

out if I ever had the nerve. With all those people sitting around watching them in the center of the ring with their dogs...how brave they must be, I thought. So we started training and training and we were having a lot of fun building our confidence together. Then, about five years ago, my friend, Linda, told me about Fit-N-Trim and its competition class. She said the owner was quite a competitor herself and had all the right equipment and experience. So it began. I was so intrigued, I've missed only one or two classes since we started. Karen turned out to be a great trainer...she could always answer your questions or figure

Judy Regan and Livey

out what to change. We worked on so many different handling skills till we got it right. We learned how to run sequences and even did some obedience from time to time. Livey was as happy as I was and we became quite a team...we looked forward to every class. We met a lot of people and dogs along the way and became friends with many of them. Even Mike took a liking to the sport. Pretty soon, I was addicted!

Two and a half years ago, we started trialing. I even found myself right in the middle of that giant ring at the Topsfield Fair with everyone watching.

“On January 11, 2009, Livey and I achieved our goal...a C-ATCH title!”



On January 11, 2009, Livey and I achieved our goal of getting a C-ATCH title, making Livey a CPE champion. That day is one of my favorite memories...just to think

Judy and Livey (cont'd)

that Livey and I could do this together. The whole experience has been very humbling.

We are still continuing on our journey...maybe Livey is a little slower now and sometimes even a little less enthusiastic, but what the heck...how would you feel if you were 77 years old?

I would like to thank Karen Gorman for all her expertise and help

over these past five years. She certainly knows her agility and is great at passing it on to those of us who want to learn.

Most of all, though, I need to thank Livey. Most of this she does for me, although she does love the game. I love my beautiful dog. Thanks, Livey, for taking me along on this wonderful adventure.

“We need to constantly evaluate where the dog is in his learning curve and ‘push the envelope’ a bit to maintain progress.”

Adjust Your Training as Your Dog Learns and Improves by Elaine Hamill



A common mistake I frequently see in obedience (and agility) training is that the trainer does not change the reward criteria as the dog improves. We all start at the beginning. We show the dog what we want, helping him all along the way, to teach him what we want him to do on cue. When we start, I tell my students to make it impossible for the new dog to be wrong. We achieve this by using many props and lures and setting goals reasonably for the beginner dog.

So far, so good. Here’s the problem: we humans are creatures of

habit just like our dogs. We get used to training in certain ways and expecting certain results – we get into a rut. As the dog learns and progresses, our training needs to change too. We need to constantly evaluate where the dog is on the learning curve and “push the envelope” a bit to maintain progress.

Let’s use the recall as an example. The goal is an off-lead, fast, accurate response ending with the dog in a straight front sit using minimal handler cues, as would score high in the obedience ring. We start on-lead, usually with very many cues including voice, body postures and food lures. With every training session we evaluate how well the dog understands these cues. As we see the dog progress, we should reduce the cues gradually. For example, we should try not holding the leash or not bending down so far, or only saying the command once. What may be a breath-taking challenge this week will soon become old hat. That means we

need to make the challenge harder, by adding distance or not bending at all, for example.

The only way you’ll know when to make things harder is by studying your dog as you work with him – handler attention is the key! This is also how you’ll know if you’ve gone too far and need to ease up on things a bit. Advanced dogs may have to get the whole exercise or maybe even several exercises correct – even perfect – before getting a food or toy reward. It depends on the dog. It’s a give and take process that ends with your dog achieving your goals for him, hopefully with a mostly steady, gradual climb in improvement and understanding.

Happy training! The view is better when you get out of that rut!



Summer Camp - June, 2009

Fit-N-Trim's Summer Agility Camp was a rousing success last year. This year Fit-N-Trim will run two camps:

- **Advanced/Intermediate Agility** will be held on June 25th and 26th. Advanced is for those who have some competition experience. Intermediates should have some sequencing but may not have seesaw and poles under control yet.
- **Beginner Agility** on June 27th, is for handlers and dogs who have not had agility training or who have completed Beginner I. Dogs should be well-mannered and friendly with other dogs.

Both camps will run from 9AM to 4 each day. Those of you who attended last year will be pleased to learn that Cindy Ratner will join

us again as an instructor. Cindy is a very experience trainer and competitor and her insights were invaluable to us.

This year Kym Jarvis will also join us. Kym loves to play games with dogs! She has been an instructor and activities director at Competitive Edge Sports Camp and agility and earth dog instructor at Dog Scouts camp. She also completed the Instructor Training Course with Dogs of Course and has attended the DogSense course at Legacy Canine with Terry Ryan. Kym founded the Romp and Roll Doggie Playground in Newbury, Massachusetts. She is currently the Enrichment

Programs Coordinator for the Union County Humane Society in Marysville, Ohio and is very active in Miniature Schnauzer rescue.

Word has gotten out and enrollment is limited so reserve your place now by emailing Karen at kunabug@comcast.net.

Rates:

- Advanced/Intermediate: \$195*
- Beginner: \$100*

*includes lunch



Student Brags



Jen and Storm, C-ATE

What a year it has been for our Fit-N-Trim instructors, students, and their amazing dogs! Here are just a few of the highlights:

- **Jen Johnson** and **Storm** completed their C-ATE (CPE Agility Team Extraordinaire), at B0-Gee last month. CPE awards the C-ATE to teams that have amassed 5000 points at the C level (no faults allowed).
- **Sallie Baliunas** and her crew, **Krypto**, **Spikie**, and **Ava** continue to clean up

in the CPE world. Each received a plaque for completing 1000 points and another for being in the Top Ten (Specialists) in New England. Spikie, her 14 year old terrier, whose first full year of agility was 2008, got a Third. Ava, her 10-year old Teddy Roosevelt Rescue Terrier, who began training in December, '07, came in Second. Krypto had a Fifth place. Sallie sends special thanks to Karen, Jennifer and Paige.

- **Elaine Hamill's Linus** was the number one AKC agility Dalmatian in 2008. Alvin and Linus gave her a late Christmas present by Q'ing 10 times in 10 runs at the Bearded Collie trial this year. Both double Q'd both days and placed in every run. Linus finished his Excellent FAST title with 2 firsts, including a perfect 80 point run.
- **Rolanda Dane's Remi** got his CPE C-ATCH2 in February. At Nationals, **Jack** took 2nd in Novice

and had an outstanding 97 in his first off-leash Rally event.

- **Karen** and **Reno** headed off to AKC Nationals in NC in March where Reno ran clean in two of the first three runs. 259 dogs competed in his height class.
- **Anne Francoeur's Reilly** got his NJP at a trial in which he triple Q'd. Anne had thought she would be content with a novice title but has found herself signing up for Open.
- **Judy LeBlanc's Charlie** finished his AKC NA, NAJ, and NF titles and **Linda Coe's Conor** has finished CPE Level 2.

Please send us your brags...we know there are many more of you quietly advancing out there and we would love to hear from you.





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“Helping you and your dog reach your goals with confidence”

CPE Nationals 2009

Congratulations to all of you who made the CPE Nationals. Best Wishes for a successful weekend.

- Darcy and Holly
- Mike and Livey
- Lauren and Zoey
- Jen and Storm
- Rolanda and Remi
- Cindy and Mako
- Sally, Krypto and Ava
- Judy and Reese
- Paige and Ellie
- Ramunas and Star
- Rose and Jake
- Trish and Sailor
- Pam, Brandy, Cody and Cassie



Aspen

*Dec. 12, 1994
March 24, 2009*

The Old Green Tennis Ball

If I had one more day with you
If you could walk and run
I'd take that old green tennis ball
We'd go and have some fun
We'd hike up to the lake we know
The spot you loved to swim
I'd take the old green tennis ball
And, yes, I'd toss it in
If I had one more day with you
If you were young and strong
We'd jump into the car and drive
You loved to ride along
We'd drive up to that mountain trail
The one that goes straight up
We'd gaze down on the world below
And, yes, I'd steal a hug

If I had one more day with you
But time does take its toll
My friend, my boy, who once was young
With grace, has now grown old
And so today, I keep you close
No more you're left behind
I keep you in my heart, my friend
That's where I feel you shine
And for that old green tennis ball
The one we used to toss
I'll save it for another day
The day, the bridge, we'll cross

- Chris La Voie

Upcoming Classes and Events

Fit-N-Trim starts new sessions every six weeks. Look for:

- A new **Beginner Agility** class starting in the next few weeks at the bubble. Check the website for dates and times.
- **Puppy Kindergarten** (for dogs 2 to 5 mos. old) starting Saturday, April 25th at 9AM at 108 Newburyport Turnpike (1st class without dogs)
- **Basic Manners** (for dogs 6 months old and up) on Saturday, April 25th at 10:15AM at 108 Newburyport Turnpike
- **Drop In Manners** every Tuesday at 6PM \$15 per class
- **Carting:** Fit -N-Trim is planning a Carting class so if you would like to teach your dog to pull a cart let Karen know.
- **Intermediate and Advanced Agility** continue in 6 week cycles. See website for the schedule.

Check out www.fit-n-trimdogagility.com for descriptions and the location for these and other classes and workshops. Be sure to check the What's New page for upcoming game dates and special events.

Don't forget to sign up for Agility Camp!