

***"The reason a dog has so many friends, is that he wags his tail instead of his tongue"***  
***--Anonymous***

Hi Everybody!

We've had two weekends in a row of Agility competitions (trials) here at the school. It has been exhausting but really lots of fun!

The NADAC trial weekend was cold and wet, but it did not dampen the fun. The Games trial is probably the most fun of all my shows and Sarah Fix, our judge is a favorite. The dogs ran really fast with the cold weather and we gave out lots of qualifying ribbons, which means we had some great runs!

The TDAA trial (Teacup Dogs) had great weather and a judge that was new to Cool Critters, but had really nice courses and fun agility games. It was a small entry because we changed the date for that one but now that we are on the calendar, hopefully next year there will be a bigger entry.

Our next trial is NADAC on February 4 & 5, and it will be all the Regular and Jumping classes as well as the Extreme Games. The premium is available for downloading at [coolcritters.com](http://coolcritters.com).

A big thank you to everyone who brought empty gallon jugs to use inside the tunnels holders! I now have quite a few extras in case they deflate.

### **No Classes**

There will be no Friday morning Agility classes on February 3 (we will be setting up for the NADAC trial)

No classes all day Wednesday, February 22 and Thursday, February 23

### **State Agility Tournament**

Every year, on the last weekend of June, teams from agility groups all over Florida come together and participate in the Dog Agility Competition of Florida (DACOF). Cool Critters was one of the founding groups of this competition many years ago, and we send two teams. Each team consists of 3 Novice, 3 Open, and 3 Excellent dogs and handlers. The raffles that we hold on all the trials help to defer the costs of sending these teams to the tournament. This year, as usual, the tournament will be held at the Silver Spurs Arena in Kissimmee, June 24 and 25.

The dogs of course have to be experienced enough to participate, and we have some great dogs at Cool Critters this year! I require that the Novice dogs have had some experience trialing since the tournament is quite a large and busy event.

I will be publishing a Roster of our Agility dogs and students on the Bulletin Board page at Coolcritters.com. The roster must be turned in to DACOF by February 27, and I will be picking the team around the middle of March. If you would like to be part of the team, make sure your name is on the roster, and let me know that you want to participate! It's always lots of fun. We decorate the crating area with a theme each year, and Cool Critters has won two first places and one second place with our decorations. The decorating committee is spearheaded by Dr. Jackie Royce and Don White. Can't wait to see what they have planned this year!

## **New Classes**

We have started a daytime Basic Agility class on Wednesdays at 10:30AM. The Wednesday morning Rally class has been moved to 11:30AM for the next 8 weeks.

We have also started a daytime Super Star Puppy class on Fridays at 10:30AM. The Friday morning Agility class will be from 9 to 10:30AM, Intermediate and Advanced together for the next 8 weeks.

February classes:

Super Star Puppy class starts Wednesday, February 8 at 6PM

Basic Agility starts Monday, February 13 at 7PM

## **Why do Dogs Bark?**

*from Jean Donaldson's book **The Culture Clash***

**Watchdog Barking** serves the dual purpose of alerting other pack members that there is an intruder or change in the environment and warning the intruder that they have been noticed. Dogs bark much more than their ancestors, wolves, who hardly ever bark. In domesticating them, we have selected for more barking. The predisposition to watch-dog bark varies among breeds and individuals.

**Request Barking** starts off as a behavioral experiment by the dog, kind of a "let's see what this produces." Typical requests include opening doors, handouts from your plate, invitations to play, and being let out of a crate or confinement area. This behavior is a problem not because the dog tries out the experiment but because the experiment usually succeeds: the owner reinforces

the barking by granting the request and a habit is born. Dogs zero in on whatever strategy works.

**Spooky Barking** occurs when the dog is fearful or uncomfortable about something in the environment. It's the dog's way of saying: "Back off - don't come any closer." This is much more serious than garden variety watchdog barking because the dog in question is advertising that he is afraid and therefore potentially dangerous if approached.

**Boredom Barking** can result when the dog's daily needs for exercise and social and mental stimulation aren't met. The dog barks compulsively. This is very much like pacing back and forth, tail-chasing or self-mutilation. Chained dogs and dogs left outdoors are more likely to exhibit this kind of barking.

Barking is a self-reinforcing behavior and takes a lot of work to control. Sometimes dogs have a legitimate reason for barking, such as watch-dog mode or having to go potty. We must pay attention to why our dogs bark in order to address it and counter condition the behavior. Teaching the command QUIET! And rewarding the quiet response works, but will take time, if the dogs are used to barking at will.

### **Five Things to Keep in Mind When Picking Up a Dog**

From Vetstreet.com

**Do not lift by the front limbs!** When a dog is lifted by his front limbs, instead of properly supported by the chest and pelvis, it puts unnatural force on the elbows, shoulders, front toes and even spine as the pet dangles in the air. This can strain the muscles that support the front limbs and spine, tear ligaments, and potentially even dislocate a shoulder or elbow. In the worst-case scenarios, it can damage the bones and cartilage, particularly if the pet struggles and is dropped. The pain and risk of injury is compounded in older dogs who may already experience degenerative changes in these joints, such as [arthritis](#)

**Just because the dog doesn't yelp it doesn't mean he's not hurting!** One of the greatest myths I hear dog owners repeating is, "If he isn't yelping, he isn't hurting." Like people, some dogs are more dramatic than others and will waste no time letting you know if something bothers them. But other [dogs](#) are quite stoic and will tolerate discomfort to a much higher degree before protesting — assuming they protest at all.

Basic signs of anxiety in a dog are avoidance, struggling, averting his gaze, licking his lips, "half-moon eye" or showing the whites of his eyes, and

yawning are just a few. These signs are indicative of a dog who is uncomfortable, and that means you need to stop what you are doing.

**Do not lift by the scruff!** Some people believe that scruffing, or lifting a dog by the nape of his neck, is a normal way to pick him up. After all, that's how his mother carried him when he was a puppy. While this is true, it was only in the brief, early weeks of life, and this behavior doesn't continue when the pups are grown. Just as our mothers stop carrying us on their hips after a certain point, scruffing is not comfortable or natural for grown dogs.

**Avoid giving your dog a reason to bite!** According to the CDC, about 4.5 million dog bites occur each year in the U.S., and half of those take place at home, with a familiar dog. Children from 5 to 9 years of age are at highest risk. While there are many causes, understanding humane handling and the signs of stress are key ways dog owners can help prevent family members from becoming another statistic. While a dog owner may claim a bite is unprovoked, the truth is there is often provocation, but it is simply missed. There's no excuse for picking up a pet the wrong way.

**What is the right way to pick up a dog?** If the dog is small (under 25 pounds), place your dominant arm under his chest, between the front limbs, while tucking his back end between that same arm and your torso (what some of us might refer to as the football hold). For medium-size dogs (between 25 and 40 pounds), place your dominant arm behind the dog's back legs, and your non-dominant arm around his chest, in front of the limbs and stabilize the dog against your chest as you lift. This helps ensure the pet is properly supported and comfortable. Ideally, larger dogs really require two people to be picked up properly: one lifting from beneath the chest and the other lifting from the abdomen and rear.

If your dog is scared or in pain, care should be taken to avoid getting your face or hands near his mouth, in case he might bite. If he is injured and you need to lift him to safety, consider using a muzzle (only if he is not having difficulty breathing) and sliding him onto a board for support.

**All children should know some important safety tips:**

- Always, always ask permission before picking up a dog.
- If a pet shows signs of discomfort or tries to get away, let him go.
- If a pet appears injured, don't pick him up — get an adult to help.

**Congratulations to Our Latest Graduates**

## Super Star Puppy:

Jeremy & Fe Jemmett with Zeke (Labradoodle)  
Mark Ferrell & Will (Labradoodle)  
Karen & Kathy Alvarez with Bentley & Bailey (Labradoodles)  
Charlene Brazzeal & Buddy (All American)

Baha & Linda Menekseoglu and Chester (Beagle)  
Alana Avery & Darby (Cavalier King Charles).

## **Class Schedule:**

Monday:

6:00 to 7:00 PM - Super Puppy (Next class starting March 20, 2017)  
7:00 to 8:00 PM - Basic Agility (Next class starting February 13, 2017)  
8:00 to 9:00 PM - Intermediate Agility

Tuesday:

9:00 to 10:00 AM - Advanced Agility  
10:00 to 11:00 AM - Intermediate Agility  
7:00 to 8:00 PM - Distance Class

Wednesday:

10:30 AM - Basic Agility  
11:30 AM - All levels Rally Obedience  
6:00 to 7:00 PM - Super Puppy (New class starting April 12, 2017)  
7:00 to 8:00 PM - Intermediate / Advanced Agility

Thursday:

7:00 to 8:00 PM - Basic Obedience (Next class starting February 16, 2017)  
8:00 to 9:00 PM - Rally Obedience

Friday:

9:00 to 10:30 AM - Advanced / Intermediate Agility  
10:30 to 11:30 AM - Super Star Puppy class

...and now, time for a paws...

Ileana