



Obichaff

The Monthly Newsletter of the
Capital Dog Training Club of Washington, D.C., Inc.



June 2025

Volume 82 - Issue 5

"Happiness is a warm puppy." - Charles Schulz

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From the Editor



A while back I wrote about how Hadley suffered from a suspected partial CCL tear that we rehabbed. We later determined her core issue was, and often still is, her iliopsoas muscle - agility folks know what I'm talking about here!

Through physical therapy and a really great supplement regimen, we've gotten Hadley to a great place. I'm always looking for additional support for her, which lead us to a [PetsPEMF](#) mat. It utilizes electromagnetic pulses to stimulate blood flow and lower inflammation. Many people have heard of/used an Assisi Loop, which utilizes the same technology. There is a ton of great info on the above-linked website.

Members at Large[Bill Peyser](#)[Marnie McCown](#)[Shirley Blakely](#)**New Membership****Information**[Shirley Blakely](#)**Historian (not a
board member)**[Joan Adler](#)

We've found it to be a fantastic addition to her routine, especially after very active days. Our cat has some arthritis, as well, and will seek out the PEMF mat if it's on. I've also used it on my back. We all really love it!

Perhaps the best part, our Healthy Paws insurance policy reimbursed us for the cost. If you have a sport dog who could use some additional support during recovery, I highly recommend the PEMF mat!

Puppy Raising 101



Last week, we picked up our first Colorado foster - a little husky/lab mix (best guess) named Zucchini. We've fostered many pets, but this little guy is our first while having a yard. What a game changer! Yes, having a yard makes late night potty trips easier for everyone, but much of our puppy protocol remains the same. If you've taken one of my puppy classes, you'll find much of this very familiar. I practice what I preach over here!



Crate Training:

When puppy-raising, utilize your crate as your co-parent! Can't supervise directly? Crate time. Leaving the house? Crate time. Overnight? Crate time! It saves you from so much puppy-related frustration. Puppies under 6 months old need about 15-20 hours of sleep a day. If you've ever been around a puppy you know they aren't the best at meeting their own needs. Many puppy nuisance behaviors like barking, biting, and accidents in the house can be managed by the additional of more down time.

We keep a fairly regimented crate schedule going while housebreaking a puppy. This little guy wakes up around 7am and we

take him right out for a potty break. He gets some play time in the yard after he's done and then breakfast. By 9am he is back in his crate for a morning nap until around 11am. He comes out of his crate and again goes directly outside for a potty break and lots of play time. He gets some of his lunch during a training session where we work on name recognition, recall in the yard, and sit/down. We keep sessions light and fun! We'll head back inside for some tether time (more on this below) and a chew to soothe those teething gums.

Sometime around 1:30/2pm - this guy is ready for another nap. He comes back out around 4:30/5 for - you guessed it! - another potty trip. We then head out for a walk where he'll get some of his dinner for giving me attention, sitting nicely at cross walks, and whenever he needs some encouragement around new experiences. He gets another little nap in his crate for about an hour and then comes out for a potty break and more playtime in the yard for an hour or two depending on how he's feeling. We'll throw in another training session with the last bit of his dinner. By 8ish the sun is setting and he comes in with us to hang out while we watch some tv and he has a chew toy to help those pesky gums again. He goes out for one more potty trip and is typically in his crate for the night at 11pm. No accidents and a well rested puppy!





Tether time!

In our house, puppies operate on a "guilty until proven innocent" system. This means that I assume a puppy will poop on my floor, chew my coffee table, and chase my cats if given the opportunity! With that in mind, we manage behaviors so puppies can't practice making bad choices. In the house, Zucchini has been dragging a leash at nearly all times. This allows me to control his movements easily and prevent him from causing chaos. It also creates a sense of safety for my resident animals, since they know I'll stop the puppy if he's interacting with them inappropriately. Sometimes he is tethered to a person, sometimes a doorknob. He is able to observe how we

function inside without needing to be involved in everything. While doing this, he's also developing a really great "off-switch" and is learning to be calm in the house. This makes him a more desirable puppy for adoption since he's much easier to live with!



Socialization:

One of the best things about raising a puppy in a city is the constant access to new things. Zucchini has his core vaccines, so we're comfortable taking him out. Exposing this little guy to new sounds, smells, and sights is easy and accessible. We're working on neutrality around newness. This means we're strategic about the greetings we allow and the energy Zucchini has during those greetings. If he's really excited and nibby, we're going to decline if someone asks to say hi. If he's calm and collected, we'll allow for a greeting and encourage people to remain relatively calm while interacting with him. Pictured above you can see him taking a very flexible nap - what you can't see is that we were at one of Denver's most popular ice cream spots and there were kids, adults, and dogs around - he was great!

When it comes to dog greetings, we just say no! On leash greetings tend to come with a level of tension since dogs are being contained. We also have no idea what a strange dog's temperament is like, what their vaccination and/or health status is, or how they feel about socially awkward puppies. Instead, we've allowed Zucchini to interact with dogs we know well. He's been around well-balanced adult dogs who are teaching him what behaviors are acceptable and which are

quite rude.



Overall, this guy has an easy-going personality which has made it easier to get him on the right track. Regardless of personality, we keep all puppies well managed and well rested over here, and everyone is better for it!

One Week, Three Days of Trials in Three States--and Three Titles

In mid-April, my Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, Comet and I earned three different Scent Work titles in three different states in three trials, all in one week. It was sometimes nerve-racking, sometimes very hot and humid, but it was always fun doing scent work with him!



Comet and I have been training with Sandi Atkinson at Capital for the past year (after all, he is only 15 months old). Scent work training follows many of the same procedures used to train dogs to detect bombs, explosives, drugs, or to find lost people. Dogs in scent work can also be trained to detect allergens such as nuts or gluten in foods.

In Scent Work, dogs find a “hide”, which is a Q tip that has been treated with a specific odor such as birch, anise, or clove. In the first two trials at Bella Vista Training Center in Lewisberry, Pennsylvania,

and Troy, Virginia (outside Charlottesville), we completed all of the requirements for AKC Novice Scent Work Exterior, Buried, and Handler Discrimination, meaning we have now fully completed the regular Novice classes. It is interesting to note that the buried searches can be in water, possibly dispelling the notion of many a bad guy in movies that dogs cannot follow your scent if you walk through water, rather than on land!

In Handler Discrimination, the dog has to find a hidden object that has its handler's scent. This is a glove or sock for novice searches, and a cotton ball in the more advanced searches. The item is placed in a container, the same type of item from the judge is placed in another container, and the rest of the containers in the search are empty. We were given 2 minutes to find the container with my scent. In our first trial, in the first search, he found my sock in 12 seconds, and in the second search, he found it in 16 seconds, earning us a first and second place for those classes. In our next trial, he found my sock in 21 seconds, again earning a second place.

This photograph (below), taken from a virtual walk through shows a typical container layout, which is used for Novice container searches and handler discrimination searches. Note: this picture of containers is from a public NACSW website where 16 containers are used in the search. AKC [Regulations for AKC Scent Work](#) (purple cover 1/25) specify searches have 6 containers for the container search (Chapter 7) and 10 containers for the Handler Discrimination search (Chapter 8).



We then flew to New Orleans, where my family lives. Our final trial was in Hammond, Louisiana, where Comet earned the NW1 title for NACSW (National Association of Canine Scent Work), amid wandering peacocks and withering heat and humidity.

It was my first time flying with a dog in the cabin, and I am happy to talk to anyone about the lessons learned on that front. In the meantime, we will take a break on trialing for the summer and be ready to tackle AKC Advanced Scent Work in the fall.

Here is Comet in an Exterior search – with those flying ears, it is easy to tell he was in a hurry! Thanks to Alyssia Greiner for such great photographs.



Comet at the hide.



Before flying, Comet hung out in his travel crate for several weeks at home to get used to the closer quarters of a travel crate. We used the Sherpa Large soft travel carrier. It paid off because he didn't make a peep throughout the flight.



WANTED—RALLY COMPETITORS

Some Obedience Training Required

By Sandi Atkinson

The addition of Rally, a variety of dog obedience, to AKC's lineup of choices for dog owners interested in competition, has become very popular and resulted in lots of titles since its startup on January 1, 2005. One of the advertised attractions was that judging was to be more lenient than in the regular dog obedience classes. Moreover, multiple commands and signals are allowed. In traditional AKC obedience, look for deductions of several points for every repeated command to heel or for giving a command and a signal together (in a nonprincipal part of an exercise, to heel or finish, for example). Penalties even include failure to qualify if the handler repeats the command to come when called. But in Rally, the handler can (if necessary) keep up a steady stream of instructions and reassurance to the dog as they negotiate the course.

The first title, Rally Novice (RN), can be earned completely on leash (similar to Beginner Novice obedience). In Novice obedience, leading to the Companion Dog (CD) title, there is only one on-leash individual exercise, a heeling pattern.

Over the years, the AKC has clarified the Rally Regulations and

reduced unnecessary scoring variations among judges by more carefully explaining exactly what each Rally exercise entails. Still, there are those exhibitors who enter a trial without a good understanding of the Rally Regulations and ring procedure.

If you are going to all the trouble to train your dog, pay those high entry fees, and interrupt what might otherwise be a peaceful weekend spend shopping or doing useful chores around the house, then why not prepare yourself and your canine buddy to do the best you can in the ring? Show off the two of you to your best advantage. For a start, this means finding and reading the Rally Regulations. Then read it again, all of it, even including the part about the stewards' jobs! Find the descriptions of the signs on the AKC Website (www.akc.org), and read each one.

Is this the first dog you have trained? Become familiar with the Obedience Regulations as well as the Rally Regulations. Here you will find the definition of heel position, what is allowed in the ring, and what is not (how about carrying your dog into the ring for awards?). If you don't have years of valuable experience competing in obedience, two resources available to all of us are those little books! After reading them, discuss your questions with your training instructor or ask the AKC. For last-minute help at a trial, you may ask the Rally judge during your class walk-through.

Way back in 1983 when I started training my first dog (a Basenji), I focused on preparing only to enter the Novice A obedience class and earn a CD by practicing what I had done in class that week. I went over heeling patterns, stand for exam, recalls, and stays, pretty much as they would be done in the trial. I went to different places to train, but I wasn't terribly imaginative—because this was my first dog, and because the instructors weren't clued in to the special requirements of training a sighthound. I trained, or drilled, for about half an hour or more at a time. It seemed I was always looking for the magic wand that would fix the lagging and forge (!) a rewarding partnership. One outstanding day at an outdoor obedience training match*, I got my first “big win” in obedience—third place in a LARGE Subnovice** class!

Later at a different match, I saw live and in person a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, a tricolor named Oliver. Compared to the Basenji (who actually worked a lot better than most Basenjis), the Cavalier seemed like a dream come true. Part of my trouble was the breed I had chosen; but part was also my lack of ability to design a useful training program and adapt to the needs of my dog. I didn't know a lot about dog training, although I was working on learning. I knew nothing about using the maneuvers we now call Rally exercises to improve responses and make training more fun.

For example, if your dog lags on the right about turn, throw in a few 270-degree turns to the right (on leash, of course). You may have to practice them on your own without the dog if you aren't sure how to move your body and feet smoothly. Encourage your dog with lots of happy praise and treats. Break up the routine with time out for toy throwing or whatever will motivate your dog. When you return to the problem about-turn, your dog is likely to work harder to keep up with you because it doesn't know just how far this turn may go. The opposite number, a 270-degree turn to the left, is more a problem for larger dogs that don't know how to move their rear ends efficiently. Small dogs like Cavaliers usually execute an inside pivot turn as you move around them.

The fast-forward from sit can help change a lackluster start to one where the two of you move out together. After a few of these, go back to the regular start and your dog will be more interested in coming along with you. Don't forget your treats and praise!

Success in Rally depends on knowing the elements of obedience training—how to structure your training sessions, how to do the proper footwork, how to hold the leash (and when to train off leash, if ever), how to praise, how to correct. Especially with your first dog, there is no substitute for attending class to learn these skills. That's where you can start to learn when you are being effective or when you need to change tactics. Some clubs offer Rally-only classes, but you must have a good foundation in obedience before tackling these special classes. Follow up as you progress to Novice obedience class (and beyond!). After you know the basics, you might be ready to add a Rally class along with your obedience class. If you have to train for Rally without a class, all the more reason to stay in a regular obedience class.

Six months or more is not too long to get ready to enter your first Rally Novice trial, depending on your previous experience in dog training. During this time you will want to work on all of the Rally exercises, so that you can move smoothly from one class to the next when you start entering and earning titles. For example, the "backward heeling" exercise used in AKC Rally Excellent, Master, and Choice classes can take a long time to teach, even if both handler and the dog are experienced in working together. Aim towards mastery of all exercises, even with your beginning efforts. Effective training breaks down complex behaviors into smaller parts. The dog is helped to learn each part and rewarded appropriately. This skill is one you can learn from attending regular obedience class.

Unlike in regular obedience, once you have indicated to the Rally judge that you are ready and the judge replies with the order, "Forward!" you are on your own to complete the entire course and exit the ring. The judge is not supposed to issue other orders or

answer questions from you if you get stuck and forget the course or how to do the exercises. This would not be fair to other competitors! In regular obedience, the judge will tell you when to start, stop, turn, and change pace on your heeling pattern; and direct you through the other exercises. Therefore, the successful Rally team will need to develop a personal working rhythm for completing each exercise and moving on to the next, the next after that, and so on through the whole course. Starting off well is fine, but you then want to carry on smoothly until the end of the course. Some handlers lose focus after a few stations, like a singer who forgets the words partway through the song. OOPS!

At the trial, you'll become familiar with the course layout during the walk-through before your class starts; but your months of training must already have taught you how to recover from errors that either you or your dog make, and how to work in spite of distractions. Since there are few, if any, Rally matches, attending any kind of ring-time training opportunities, especially in unfamiliar locations, will give both you and your dog ring experience.

Volunteer to steward at Rally trials. Without the pressure of having entered that day, you can devote your time to watching what goes on. Clubs are always glad to have extra helpers. Stewards can learn a lot from talking to the judge as they help set up the ring. You can lay out the course, hand out armbands, make sure exhibitors are ready to go in the ring for judging, time the runs, or help with paperwork. You'll see many Rally teams—some really good, some average, and some who aren't quite "ready for prime time" yet.

A good Rally performance (you will know it when you see it) is not just a handler starting at the Start sign, walking through the course, more or less dragging the dog along on leash, "going through the motions" at each exercise station, and reaching the Finish sign. (By the way, all six of your team's legs must pass the Finish sign, not just reach it; see page 34, Rally Regulations.) A good Rally handler and dog team move together smoothly as a unit. The handler prepares the dog by voice command and hand or body movements for each exercise sign, performs the exercise as required, and proceeds to the next exercise sign. The dog is like a driver who is being directed to an unknown address by the front-seat passenger (the handler). The driver has no idea what is coming up and needs to know where to turn and what lane to get into well before the opportunity to do so presents itself. Likewise, the dog needs to receive sufficient, timely information from the handler about where to go and what to do. The applauding spectators will know that they have just witnessed a good team effort, and you will be pleased and proud when you exit the ring.

Take the time and effort to train your dog buddy for Rally

competition. Everyone likes to see well-behaved, yet spirited, dogs. Here's to your success in the Rally and obedience ring this year!

*Clubs used to hold training events run just like a licensed trial, where people and dogs could gain useful experience in competing, stewarding, and judging.

**A nonregular obedience class, just like Novice, but with all exercises on leash.

CDTC's CGCs

Submitted and tested by: Marnie McCown

Marnie McCown congratulates her latest FD2 recipients of the CGC!



April and Pumpkin



Emily and Buddy



Carla and Rousseau



The Mogollon Family and Vushka



Katarina and Bella

Congratulations to all these good dogs!

Braggs

Dianne Harab writes:

Willy earned his RAE title at the Greater Washington Bouvier des Flanders show on Saturday, May 3, 2025. He finished his title with a

score of 99, 1st place.



Submit yours to CDTCObichaff@gmail.com

Delegate's Corner

By: Joyce Dandridge

Check back next month!

Membership

We are pleased to inform you that CDTC Club Membership Renewal is open (from June 1 to June 30)! We greatly appreciate your continued support and dedication to our club, and we look forward to another year of fostering the strong bond between you and your beloved dogs.

Please refer to the email sent by Marnie on June 1st for more details and reach out to CDTCMembershipRenewal@gmail.com with questions.

Not yet a member and wondering how you can become one? Ask your current instructor for details or reach out to our **Training Secretary**, [Dianne Hardy](#).

Available Classes

[Class List and Registration](#)

Upcoming Classes/Tests/Trials

Classes

Register for all classes [here](#).

Permission is required to register for Beginner Novice, Novice, Open, and Utility Obedience classes
Contact [Training Secretary](#)

Fill out the [Agility Waitlist Questionnaire](#) to get on the wait list for the next available classes.

Email the [Agility Director](#) with all agility related questions.

Email [Training Secretary](#) with all other questions.

Training Groups

Rally Training Group

meets the 2nd and 4th Saturdays each month at 2pm.

Obedience Training Group

meets the 1st Saturday of the month

Conformation Group

More information to come.

Thursday Open/Utility Training Group

(Goldstein @ 12:30pm). Contact [Burton](#).

Friday Utility Training Group (Cleverdon @ 1:00pm). Contact [Donna](#).

For information about **Freestyle Training Group**

Contact [Training Secretary](#)

Thinking of joining CDTC as a Member?

Active membership in the Capital Dog Training Club (CDTC) is available to an individual who:

- has completed no less than three (3) months as a training member paying the prescribed fees/dues, and
- whose dog has passed a Proficiency Test as prescribed by the Club with a dog that she or he has trained **or** has obtained a qualifying score toward an AKC title in any “dog companion sport” trial (Obedience, Agility, or Rally).

Active membership includes the right to attend meetings, vote, access to the Members Only section of CDTC’s website, access to seminars, events, announcements of the Club, the right to hold an elective office in the Club, and all other privileges and benefits of the Club (including 2 free classes per quarter). Visit

cdtc.org/membership.

Email [Training Secretary](#) with questions.

Next Membership Meeting: June 10th at 8:00pm

Do you have an idea for an article? Perhaps a message for dog-people is taking up space in your brain and you need to put pen to paper? Submit your articles for the Obichaff [here](#)!



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