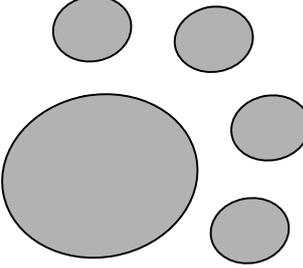


Titahi Bay Canine
*** Obedience Club ***




February 2005 NEWSLETTER

Committee Stuff.....	2
Up and coming dates:	2
Ways of increasing instructors and membership	2
Life Members Board	2
Club maintenance	2
Working Bee	3
Instructors Meeting.....	3
Ribbon Trial – Tuesday 18 January	3
Upper Hutt – Beginners Night	3
Up and coming shows.....	4
HOW COULD YOU? – If you don't like sad stories don't read this one.	4
Obituary	5
Picture Gallery.....	6

Due to commitments the next TBCOC newsletter will not be until April 05.

Committee Stuff

Up and coming dates:

Instructors' meeting – Tuesday 22 February, 8:30 pm (after classes)
Working Bee – Sunday 10 March, 10:30 am
Our March Championship – Sunday 13 March (at TBCOC grounds)
Graduation – Tuesday 29 March*
Enrolment for Term 2 – Tuesday 5 April*
Start of Term 2 - Tuesday 12 April*
AGM – May (date to be advised)
Our June Ribbon Trial – Sunday 26 June (at NZKC)
Nationals – 23, 24, 25 September
Our October Championship – Saturday 15 October (at NZKC)
NDTA – Taupo – Labour Weekend

*not taking into account any cancelled weeks

Ways of increasing instructors and membership

Our instructors are all volunteers and offer their time and knowledge term after term with usually no more than a \$5 petrol reimbursement each night. In order to keep the classes as small as possible we need more instructors. The more instructors we have means that instructors that have been taken class after class can have a break before they burn out completely which often happens.

If you are interested in becoming an instructor please ring Lianne Hodges on 232 8057.

Remember you do not have to be competing or even coming along that long to start thinking that you would like to learn how to take a class. We offer full instruction and you would be expected to understudy with a current experienced instructor before we would let you loose on your own class. Once we have enough interested instructors we will be definitely looking at running the Instructors Seminar like we did last year. That was really good and everyone regardless of their experience got something out of the seminar.

There are also things like puppy class or the Canine Good Citizen Award classes to consider. It is a lot of fun and you get all sorts of bonus like; free class fees (if you take more than two classes a year), end of year instructors/committee dinner plus Instructors Meetings where we provide supper and sit around and discuss methods, problems and the latest gossip.

Life Members Board

We are making progress on this and hope to have something to show for this before the end of the financial year. Only a couple of months to go before the end of the financial year - keep an eye on this space (and the clubrooms)!

Club maintenance

We have compiled a list of things that need to be done around the club. If you feel anything else needs to be looked at please put a note on the blackboard inside the club – NOW.

Working Bee

We have organised a club working bee. We had an awful turnout for our last working bee so please come and help if you can. The club, as always, will provide the workers with lunch etc.

Date: Sunday 6 March

Time: 10.30 am

Place: TBCOC grounds

Absolutely ALL WELCOME. On these occasions we don't mind if you are not club members or even attend any of our classes. This is just prior to our Championship show on 13 March. We want to have our grounds looking the best they can before that.

Instructors Meeting

An instructors meeting will be held on Tuesday 22 Feb at 8.30 after the completion of classes. Everyone welcome. There will be supper for those attending. I am also hoping I will be able to bring along the almost completed "Instructors Booklet".

Ribbon Trial – Tuesday 18 January

Our ribbon trial was held on Tuesday 18 January 05. I think it went well and everyone seemed to be having a good time. Luckily the weather held out (not like last year).

We had a very good turnout in the elementary classes – well done all you new people that gave it a go. I have included the elementary places. TBCOC members in bold:

Elementary 1

- 1st **Martin & Trouble**
- 2nd **Tamara & Lochie**
- 3rd **Sharnene & Becks**
- 4th **Janine & Nero**
- 5th Elizabeth Beatson & Kara

Elementary 2

- 1st **Tamara & Lochie**
- 2nd **Martin & Trouble**
- 3rd Dave Cochrane & Tyler
- 4th **Sharnene & Becks**
- 5th **Janine & Nero**

These placings were from an entry of approximately 12 in each class.

Upper Hutt – Beginners Night

This was a great night and there was a good turn out. In total about 23 people turned up. We had five people from TBCOC. Well done Kim and Deefa who were placed 5th in Elementary II (after winning the run off). This is the biggest Elementary class I have seen for a long time.

Up and coming shows

This is a new section to the newsletter but will give you all the Shows that are coming up.

The next ribbon trial that is coming up is Central Allbreeds on 8 March. This is a Tuesday evening. They are in Holloway Road, which is off Aro Street in Wellington.

Don't forget to enter our Championship Event on 13 March 2005.

HOW COULD YOU? – If you don't like sad stories don't read this one.

When I was a puppy, I entertained you with my antics and made you laugh. You called me your child, and despite a number of chewed shoes and a couple of murdered throw pillows, I became your best friend.

Whenever I was "bad", you'd shake your finger at me and ask "How could you?" – but then you'd relent and roll me over for a belly rub.

My housebreaking took a little longer than expected, because you were terribly busy, but we worked on that together. I remember those nights of nuzzling you in bed and listening to your confidences and secret dreams, and I believed that life could not be any more perfect.

We went for long walks and runs in the park, car rides, stops for ice cream (I only got the cone because "ice cream is bad for dogs" you said), and I took long naps in the sun waiting for you to come home at the end of the day.

Gradually, you began spending more time at work and on your career, and more time searching for a human mate. I waited for you patiently, comforted you through heartbreaks and disappointments, never chided you about bad decisions, and romped with glee at your homecomings, and when you fell in love.

She, now your wife, is not a "dog person" – still I welcomed her into our home, tried to show her affection, and obeyed her. I was happy because you were happy.

Then the human babies came along and I shared your excitement. I was fascinated by their pinkness, how they smelled, and I want to mother them too. Only she and you worried that I might hurt them, and I spent most of my time banished to another room, or to a dog crate. Oh, how I want to love them, but I became a prisoner of love.

As they began to grow, I became their friend. They cling to my fur and pulled themselves up on wobbly legs, poked fingers in my eyes, investigated my ears, and gave me kisses on my nose. I loved everything about them and their touch – because your touch was now so infrequent – and I would've defended them with my life if need be. I would sneak into their beds and listen to their worries and secret dreams, and together we waited for the sound of your car in the driveway.

There had been a time, when others asked you if you had a dog, that you produced a photo of me from your wallet and told them stories about me. These past few years, you just answered "yes" and changed the subject. I had gone from being "your dog" to "just a dog," and you resent every expenditure on my behalf.

Now, you have a new career opportunity in another city, and you and they will be moving to an apartment that does not allow pets. You've made the right decision for your "family," but there was a time when I was your only family.

I was excited about the car ride until we arrived at the animal shelter. It smelled of dogs and cats, of fear, of hopelessness. You filled out the paperwork and said "I know you will find a good home for her." They shrugged and gave you a pained look. They understand the realities facing a middle-aged dog, even one with "papers."

You had to pry your son's fingers loose from my collar as he screamed, "No Daddy! Please don't let them take my dog!" And I worried for him, and what lessons you had just taught him about friendship and loyalty, about love and responsibility, and about respect for all life. You gave me a good-bye pat on the head, avoided my eyes, and politely refused to take my collar and leash with you. You had a deadline to meet and now I have one, too.

After you left, the two nice ladies said you probably know about your upcoming move months ago and made no attempt to find me another good home. They shook their heads and asked "How could you?" They are as attentive to us here in the shelter as their busy schedules allow. They feed us, of course, but I lost my appetite days ago.

At first, whenever anyone passed my pen, I rushed to the front, hoping it was you that you had changed your mind – that this was all a bad dream . . . or I hoped it would at least be someone who cared, anyone who might save me. When I realised I could not compete with the frolicking for attention of happy puppies, oblivious to their own fate, I retreated to a far corner and waited.

I heard her footsteps as she came for me at the end of the day, and I padded along the aisle after her to a separate room. A blissfully quiet room. She placed me on the table and rubbed my ears, and told me not to worry. My heart pounded in anticipation of what was to come, but there was also a sense of relief. The prisoner of love had run out of days.

As is my nature, I was more concerned about her. The burden which she bears weighs heavily on her, and I know that, the same way I knew your every mood. She gently placed a tourniquet around my foreleg as a tear ran down her cheek. I licked her hand in the same way I used to comfort you so many years ago.

She expertly slid the hypodermic needle into my vein. As I felt the sting and the cool liquid coursing through my body, I lay down sleepily, I looked into her kind eyes and murmured "How could you?"

Perhaps because she understood my dogspeak, she said "I'm so sorry". She hugged me, and hurriedly explained it was her job to make sure I went to a better place, where I wouldn't be ignored or abused or abandoned, or have to fend for myself – a place of love and light so very different from this earthly place. And with my last bit of energy, I tried to convey to her with a thump of my tail that my "How could you?" was not directed at her. It was directed at you, My Beloved Master, I was thinking of you. I will think of you and wait for you forever. May everyone in your life continue to show you so much loyalty.

A Note from the Author:

If "How Could You?" brought tears to your eyes as you read it, as it did to mine as I wrote it, it is because it is the composite story of the millions of formerly "owned" pets who die each year in animal shelters. Anyone is welcome to distribute the essay for a non-commercial purpose, as long as it is properly attributed with the copyright notice. Please use it to help educate, on your websites, in newsletters, on animal shelter and vet office bulletin boards. Tell the public that the decision to add a pet to the family is an important one for life, that animals deserve our love and sensible care, that finding another appropriate home for your animal is your responsibility and any local humane society or animal welfare league can offer you good advice, and that all life is precious. Please do your part to stop the killing, and encourage all spay and neuter campaigns in order to prevent unwanted animals.

Jim Willis

Obituary

We are very sad to hear of the passing of Peter Wright, husband of one of Titahi Bay Canine Obedience Club's life members Brenda Wright. Brenda was one of our clubs founding members and our best wishes go out to her at this sad time. The funeral will possibly be this Friday, 18 February.

Picture Gallery



Jenny Rutherford's Bounce doing the scent exercise at the Kapiti show.



Some of us do agility too! Cheryl Dickson and Shadow at Kapiti.