



# THE SCOOP

Citizen Canine Dog Owners' Association Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 3 Summer 2005

## Summer Dangers for Dogs

*A vet gives advice about two of the major summer concerns for dog owners.*

by Dr. Eva Dudzic

**A**h summertime and the living is easy. It's a wonderful time to take the dog out for a nice long walk through a sunny field. But beware of the dangerous speargrass that lies in that field...and take care that your dog doesn't get overheated in the sun. Summer weather brings with it the need for dog owners to be diligent in protecting dogs from these two seasonal dangers.

### Speargrass

Speargrass is the term used for any wild grass that has barbed seeds. In fields where grass isn't mowed, the seed heads ripen and dry out, ready to attach themselves to anything that moves through the area. Speargrass is most often a problem from early summer through to the fall. As a veterinarian I see most cases in late summer because that is when the dry tips break most easily as the dogs move through the grass. Dogs that root around in the grass tend to get the speargrass in their ears, while those that romp through grass can have problems with their feet.

You will usually know if your dog has speargrass in his ear because he will start shaking his head violently and or suddenly start scratching at his ears. Some dogs will even vocalize intensely. They generally do not stop these behaviours until the speargrass tip is removed. Removing speargrass from a dog's ear can be an expensive procedure. The tips of these grasses are cylindrical with barbs all aligned in one direction. When the tip goes into the ear, the shaking action of the dog's head drives them further down the ear canal.



By the time the dog is brought into the vet's office, the tip is usually wedged in next to the eardrum, which causes pain if the vet even takes a look down the ear canal. General anesthetics are needed in order to remove the speargrass tips without causing pain and harm to the eardrum.

When the speargrass is between the dogs' toes it can be more easily missed as the tips will migrate inward if they get lodged in the skin between toes. The spears can stay under the skin for some time before they come out again. Often they need to be surgically removed. If your dog is constantly licking a paw and there is a red area, get it examined. Soaking the paw in lukewarm water with Epsom salts helps to ease the swelling until you get to your vet. (continued on page 3)

*In this issue...*

**Sharing your  
Special Dog**

**plus**

**How to Choose a  
Trainer**

**Stanley Coren**

**Citizen Canine  
Calendar**

# July 2005

## President's Message

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Please send letters to the editor and submissions to Citizen Canine at Cook St RO, PO Box 23078, BC V8V 4Z8 or by email to [newsletter@citizencanine.org](mailto:newsletter@citizencanine.org)

Letters and submissions must be signed by the author and may be edited for style and length. You can also comment on any of these articles at Citizen Canine's online forum at [www.citizencanine.org](http://www.citizencanine.org)

Citizen Canine Dog Owners Association is a registered society in British Columbia. Our goals are to promote and protect the interests of dog owners in the greater Victoria region through advocacy, education and community building. To join Citizen Canine, complete a membership form from this publication or join on-line.

**Citizen Canine Dog Owners Association**  
Cook Street RO,  
PO Box 23078,  
Victoria, BC. V8V 4Z8

A few weeks ago, Citizen Canine held its second Annual General Meeting. The 25 or so members who attended heard about our work and progress around core objectives: advocacy, education, and community building. One of our hard working executive members, Kathy Mitten, stepped down as secretary. We appreciate her work over the past year and are happy to announce the election of Sam Medley to the secretary position.

### Dog Days and Dog Parks of Summer

Spring included the start of a much-anticipated evaluative phase of the City of Victoria's Paws In Parks Program. Starting June 1, six Victoria parks have been opened for limited hours of off-leash recreational activity: Topaz, Arbutus, Oswald, Vic West, Alexander and Redfern Parks. We are pleased that the City is moving ahead with this initiative intended to better balance park policy with the realities of dog ownership and activities.

Still concern remains that the limited hours and the lack of access in central regions of the City and James Bay may hamper the real success of the program 'out of the blocks.' It's important that Victoria dog owners give feedback to the City during this evaluative phase. With more parks slated to come online next year, **feedback from dog owners is critical.** Contact the City and let them know how the new access has benefited or not benefited you. Your responses are crucial at this time, and can be sent by e-mail to [dogfeedback@city.victoria.bc.ca](mailto:dogfeedback@city.victoria.bc.ca)  
More information about the Paws in

Parks program can be found at [www.city.victoria.bc.ca/dogs](http://www.city.victoria.bc.ca/dogs)

Spring also included our Second Annual Everybody and Their Dog Walk. Thanks to everyone who participated. Lots of dogs, lots of fun! Sometimes a picture is worth a 1000 words.



### CRD Parks, Dogs, and Big Policy Documents

Citizen Canine recently participated in a day-long workshop session with CRD Parks and a range of park user groups aimed at gathering feedback for development of the 2006-2010 CRD Parks Master Plan. Big thanks to Mark Hawkes for representing Citizen Canine and continuing to convey the perspectives of regional dog owners to the CRD. We are very pleased that the CRD is now including dog owners in its park planning.

### A Dog's-eye View

As part of our ongoing focus on education, Citizen Canine is proud to sponsor Dr. Stanley Coren presenting "A Dog's-eye View of the World", September 17 at UVic. Make sure to come out and learn more about your pooch from this lively and talented speaker and author.

Have a happy, safe summer!

Colin Carson

(continued from cover page)

Sometimes they can come out on their own if they are between the toes, but this takes some time and there is pain and infection associated with this migration.

To prevent problems, avoid walking with your dog in long grasses, especially during the summer months. Clip the hair between the dog's toes so that it cannot trap the grass. Check the underside of your dogs' feet after each walk in a field as the tips can be trapped between the hair of the paws and the dog may not notice. A little vigilance will prevent problems from developing.

### Heatstroke

The other major summer concern



is heatstroke and it can happen very quickly. I once pulled up to a store while traveling in the interior and noticed a large dog tied in the back of the

pickup truck. The dog was pacing and seemed somewhat anxious even though the owners were nearby. As I walked up to the dog it suddenly panicked and proceeded to throw itself out of the truck and hang itself by the leash. Luckily I was there to catch it and unhook it. The dog had been in the back of the truck for 5 minutes—but it was in the middle of the afternoon in full sun.

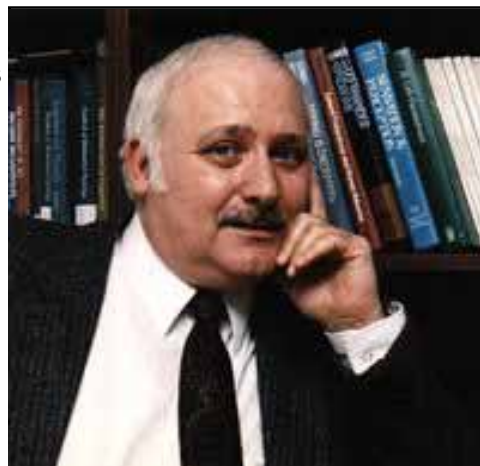
Circumstances vary in cases of heatstroke but common scenarios include dogs left alone in the heat. Dogs left in cars (even with windows down and in shady spots), and dogs tied up or left in yards where there is

no shade are vulnerable. Anxiety can play a role because often these dogs are left alone and the pacing from the anxiety causes their body temperature to soar. Another factor is sustained exercise (even in the morning or evening if your dog is overweight, large, older or has long hair) such as dogs chasing balls for their owners on the beach.

A dog with heatstroke will show specific signs. The dog will have a very large red tongue and dark red gums, be panting hard (usually with a very wide open muzzle and lots of noise), pacing, and breathing rapidly. If you notice any of these signs, pay attention to them early. Stop whatever activity you are doing, get your dog to a cool, shady, breezy spot, and offer small amounts of cool water. Relax him with relaxing long petting strokes and do everything you can to bring his body temperature down. Pour cool water on his fur or place wet towels on his body. If the dog is losing consciousness, make sure his tongue is pulled out so he can still breathe, place him on his side and hose him down with cool water. The dog will be going into shock at this point so you must get him to a vet for IV fluids as soon as possible.

The main way to prevent heatstroke is by using common sense in hot weather and being aware of your dog at all times. And please, just do not leave your dog in your car at all during the summer months. Heatstroke can happen so quickly and even if it doesn't seem that hot outside, the inside of a car heats up to fatal temperatures in minutes.

So enjoy the summer weather but do take precautions so that you and your dog can have many more summer days together.



## Stanley Coren to speak in Victoria this fall

How do dogs view the world?

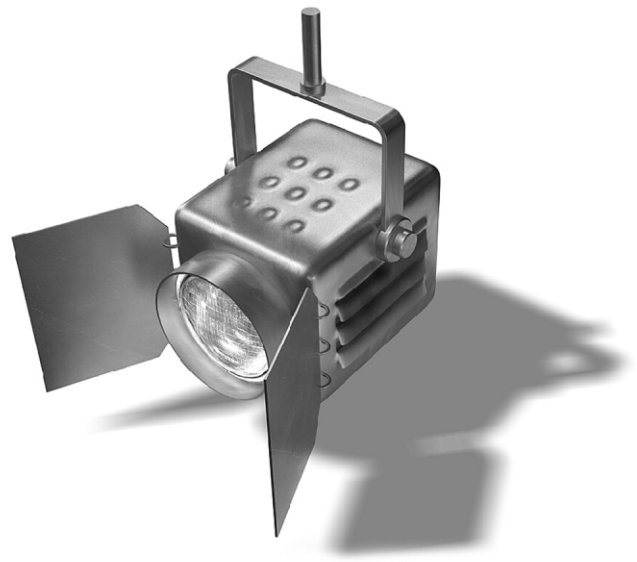
Psychologist and dog expert Stanley Coren will address this question when he speaks at the University of Victoria in September. Stanley Coren is a professor of Psychology at UBC and the author of many books. He is best known for his books and articles about dogs and their behaviour and as the host of a weekly television show "Good Dog!"

As part of our ongoing educational work, Citizen Canine is pleased to sponsor Dr. Coren's lecture titled "A Dog's Eye View of the World" at the David Lam Auditorium on Saturday, September 17.

Tickets go on sale soon at several pet stores around town. Cost for tickets is \$15 before September 10 and \$20 after that date. For more information visit our website at [www.citizencanine.org](http://www.citizencanine.org)

# Spotlight On...

## Sharing your Special Dog



By Jane Beauchamp

*A personal account of starting out as a volunteer in pet therapy.*

Have you ever thought of doing pet therapy with your dog? If your dog has some basic obedience and a calm, friendly temperament and if you like meeting new people this might be just the thing for you. Pet Therapy volunteers take their pets to visit at retirement homes, hospitals and other facilities where residents benefit from interaction with pets. I've been doing it for a few years now—both in Ontario and here in Victoria and it's a wonderful experience both for my dogs and for me.

When I began with my Rhodesian Ridgeback, Teiga, I was looking for something new to do with her. She had an obedience title and was doing agility and lure coursing and I felt that pet therapy was one more thing I could achieve with my versatile dog. How unprepared I was for what pet therapy is really all about!

I began in Ontario through a society that tested my dog's suitability for this type of work and helped find me a place to volunteer. Teiga was three years old at the time and was judged suitable so I began taking her to a rehabilitation hospital for children. I was quite unprepared

for just how disabled these children would be. Many had brain injuries from accidents and could not communicate verbally or in some cases even breathe on their own. Teiga truly helped me through this difficult beginning, since I often felt very emotional but she just took it all in stride. She didn't look at these children as different or disabled—just as people. I realized just how special this work is when one of the nurses told me the smile on a particular child's face was the first they had seen since she had been there!

Soon after arriving on Vancouver Island I discovered Pacific Animal Therapy Society (PATS). By then I had a second Ridgeback, Gemma, so I joined PATS with both dogs and began visiting the pediatric ward at the local hospital and a senior's residence. At the hospital I sat with one young boy who was able to smile as he stroked and talked to Teiga the entire time he was receiving chemotherapy.

At the senior's residence I visit people suffering from dementia. Often they'll recall the dogs they had, maybe not even remembering their

names, but with their eyes shining from the warmth of the memory. One veteran had a picture of a beautiful German shepherd dog in his room and I discovered that he used to train dogs for the army and had this special dog with him overseas. I also visit an elderly woman who is bright and but suffering from a progressive disease that affects her balance so she can no longer even sit up. She loves to have Gemma up on the bed with her and we have the most amazing conversations while she pats the dog and gives her way too many dog biscuits.

I recently read an article called "Volunteer Your Dog and Your Heart" and I think that this best sums up pet therapy for me. It is so easy to get attached to people you visit on a regular basis. With pet therapy you give of your time and you work with your dog to experience the bitter-sweet task of bringing a few moments of joy to someone who can no longer have a pet of their own. It is like nothing else we do with our dogs and they love it!

*To find out more about doing pet therapy with your dog, contact PATS at 656-4283 or [patspets@shaw.ca](mailto:patspets@shaw.ca)*



# Ask a Dog Expert

Citizen Canine is fortunate to have an advisory committee of dog experts who offer their expertise from time to time. If you have a question related to dog health, behaviour or training, just send it to us by e-mail at [newsletter@citizencanine.org](mailto:newsletter@citizencanine.org)

## **Do pets grieve too?**

We understand that it is normal for people to grieve at the loss of a pet, but often we forget that other pets in our home will also grieve for the loss of their companion. It can be difficult as you will be in the midst of your own grief, but be aware that your pets also need to receive some support. Often having the needs of your other pet to focus on can be helpful for you as well.

If there is opportunity for your pets to approach the body of the deceased pet, this can be of benefit. But remember that your pet may not act normally or have the reaction you might expect. Some may act very sombre and quietly investigate the body of their friend, whereas others may traipse around, stepping over or on the deceased pet. Some animals get more agitated; others completely ignore the body. Whatever the response, accept it for what it is. Try to avoid putting your own views onto them. Each animal has his or her own way of reacting to the loss. We don't want to reinforce agitation though, and if your pets get anxious, keep the visit brief.

To help our pets cope with the loss, the goal is to minimize our attention to their anxiety, and redirect their focus on positive activities. Playing together, going for walks, and teaching new tricks can help return

them to a positive focus. The duration of their sadness may vary, but is generally much shorter than that which we experience.

Some pets become more clingy and needy without their companion. It is easy for us in our sorrow to cling back and hover together in our grief. Unfortunately, this is not very healthy as it only serves to reinforce that anxiety. It is our role to be the strong ones, acting positive and cheery, and giving attention for calm, responsive behaviours. Again the goal is to change our pets' focus to activities and fun behaviours.

Take heart that you will see your pets become animated and happy once again. This is a beneficial part of your own healing from the loss. Remember the blessing of having been chosen as the one to share in the life of a very special being. Each one has a place in your heart for a lifetime.

*Dr. Shelley Breadner, is a veterinarian with Breadner Veterinary Services in Saanichton*

*The Pacific Animal Therapy Society's Pet Loss Support Line offers telephone support to anyone who has experienced or is anticipating the loss of a pet. Trained volunteers provide caring emotional support and information about grief issues and local resources. Call 389-8047 between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m., seven days a week.*

## **How safe are cleaners, deodorisers, and air freshener products for my dog?**

Just like people, animals can be affected by exposure to toxins contained in common household products like these. Dogs absorb them through their skin, paws, mouths and lungs. Many of these toxins are cleansed from the bloodstream by the liver—and an overworked liver can make for an unhappy and unwell pet. Some of signs of liver toxicity in pets can include lethargy, aggression, skin rashes, weepy eyes, vomiting and hot spots.

To avoid exposure to these toxins, look for environmentally safe, non-toxic household products. They are readily available in your local health food stores and more and more grocery stores are beginning to carry them as well.

For 12 years now, I have been using only non-toxic products in my home – on myself and for all of my pets. During this time my health and theirs has improved dramatically. Going non-toxic might be hard to do overnight. Instead, how about the next time you need to replace a product you've used up, try a greener alternative? A happier, healthier household and greater peace of mind await you!

*Michelle Wonnacott is a Holistic Health Practitioner and dog trainer with Connective Training in Victoria.*



# How to Choose a Trainer

We often get asked for recommendations for dog trainers and while we have contacts with lots of great trainers in this area, we don't want to overlook anyone in the process. So here are some suggestions for selecting a good dog trainer. These have been adapted from the guidelines published by the American Humane Association.

Look for trainers who rely on teaching methods that use positive reinforcement for good behaviour rather than punishment for unacceptable behaviour.

Observe an obedience class without your dog. Are the dogs and people having a good time? Talk with a few participants and see if they are comfortable with the trainer's methods. In someone won't let you sit in, don't enroll.

Don't allow trainers to work your dog unless they tell you first exactly what they plan to do.

Don't be afraid to tell a trainer to stop if he or she is doing something to your dog that you don't like.

If a trainer tells you do something that you don't feel good about, don't do it! Do not be intimidated, bullied or shamed into doing something that you believe is not in your dog's best interest.

Avoid trainers who offer guarantees about results. These trainers are either ignoring or don't understand the complexity of animal behaviour.

Avoid trainers who object to using food as a training reward. Food is a beneficial and acceptable positive reinforcement training tool.

Citizen Canine's dogs give a tail wag to the following groups and individuals:

! The City of Victoria for responding quickly to dog owners concerns about spear grass at the Dallas Road off-leash area. City crews moved in quickly to mow the grass when dog owners expressed concern.

! To the Capital Region District for inviting a Citizen Canine representative to their June 18<sup>th</sup> meeting on revising the CRD Parks Master Plan...and for mentioning dog walker as a user group of CRD parks in the plan.

! Victoria Adoptables for completing more than 100 adoptions of pets (mainly dogs) through their website since February. This shows how much can be achieved through the dedication and hard work of volunteers.

! To all those people who take the time to volunteer as dog walkers and trainers at the various shelters around the region. They are truly offering a gift to the canine community.

! Alannah Watt, a grade seven student at Gordon Head Elementary School, who spent several hours one June evening looking for her neighbour's lost dog. Alannah handed out posters and stayed on task till the dog was found. In appreciation, Citizen Canine has awarded her with a certificate of merit for her outstanding contribution to canine welfare.



**Edith Roslee from Citizen Canine poses with Alannah Watt holding her award for contributing to canine welfare.**

Avoid trainers who won't let you use any training collar other than a choke chain or pinch collar. Head collars are humane alternatives to choke and pinch collars.

Look for trainers who treat both people and dogs with respect, rather than an "I'm the boss" attitude.

And last, but certainly not least, have fun while training your dog!



*Although we don't make recommendations, we would like to thank the following instructors who regularly donate their time in support of Citizen Canine's CGN Fun Tests by sharing their expert insights on training and dog behaviour as volunteer evaluators.*

*Sherry Antonishen (893-2275)*  
[www.smartdogtraining.ca](http://www.smartdogtraining.ca)

*Michele Jarvis Wonnacott (388-9179)*  
[www.connectivetraining.com](http://www.connectivetraining.com)

*Darcie Jennings (652-6362)*  
[dogslife79@hotmail.com](mailto:dogslife79@hotmail.com)

*CommuniCanine Training & Behavioural Counselling*

*Monique Anstee (642-0869)*  
[www.naughtydogge.com](http://www.naughtydogge.com)

*Julie Carter (652-4132)*  
*Sociable Dogs*

## Grab Your Pets 'n Go!

by Diana Gault

In exactly twenty minutes you must evacuate your home; it is directly in the path of a roiling torrent of filthy water threatening to obliterate the entire area. No time to debate the wisdom of building on a hillside in the first place, no time for anything but rounding up the pets, the grab 'n go bags, and getting the heck out.

If you're very lucky – or highly organized – you already have a grab 'n go bag for yourself. Maybe even one for each human in the household. But do you have a grab 'n go bag for each pet?

What is a grab 'n go bag? It's an easy-to-carry emergency kit (backpacks are ideal) packed with food, water and other necessities sufficient for at least the first 72 hours after a disaster. Ideally, each human and each pet should have their own bag, but even one bag for all your pets would be better than nothing.

Depending on the scope and nature of a disaster, reception centres may or may not be opened to assist evacuees. In your municipality a reception centre may include pet services; more likely it will not. And even if pet services are up and running, they will be located outside the designated building – only humans are allowed inside reception centres. Which pretty much means that planning ahead for your pets is essential.

Overwhelmed? Don't be. Start developing your plan by asking yourself these three basic questions:

1. How am I going to safely and securely transport my pets during a disaster?(Learn pets' hiding places and favourite spots, so you can find them quickly in an emergency.)
2. Where can my pets stay while I am an evacuee? You also need a

backup plan . . . just in case. . . so ask yourself one extra question:

3. If I'm not home when a disaster strikes, who could I entrust with a key to go inside and rescue my pets? (If that person has pets, offer to reciprocate.)

Answering these three questions – and making the necessary arrangements – is the hardest part. Now you're ready to begin putting together the grab 'n go kits. For each pet you will need:

- ♦sufficient food and water for one week (replace every 3 months)
  - ♦can opener and plastic lid for unused canned pet food
  - ♦spoon and unbreakable dishes
  - ♦scoopable litter, small litter pan and plastic bags for waste
  - ♦paper towels, dish soap, disinfectant and disposable gloves
  - ♦photo of pet and yourself together
  - ♦written description of pet, including name and contact information
  - ♦2-week supply of pet's medication
  - ♦up-to-date copy of pet's medical records, including veterinarian contact info
  - ♦harness/extra collar and leash for dogs and cats (accustom your cat to a harness in advance)
  - ♦extra ID tags for temporary identification
  - ♦favourite toy
  - ♦plastic/wire/cardboard crate with a secure locking device to confine pets who cannot be leashed
  - ♦grooming supplies
  - first aid kit – including towel, bandages, muzzle, sterile pads, small scissors, antiseptic solution, etc.
- Well done! You've planned ahead, assembled your kits (experts suggest adding one or two items each week rather than trying to acquire everything at once) and stored them in an easily accessible spot.
- Thanks to the Canadian Disaster Animal Response Team (CDART) for the use of their Emergency Preparedness for Pets material.*

# Citizen Canine's Summer Calendar

## Dog Events and Seminars

**Before July 31 – Donations needed for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Rescue Garage Sale.** Donations of household goods of all kinds are needed. All proceeds go to support the spay neuter program or to help abused/abandoned dogs and cats. Call 920-9135 or visit [www.victoriaadoptables.com/events.htm](http://www.victoriaadoptables.com/events.htm)

**August 6 – Second Annual Rescue Garage Sale** from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at 4735 Rosehill Road (Royal Oak). Sponsored by three rescue organizations with all proceeds going to support their work.

**September 10 – Canine Good Neighbour Fun Test** at the View Royal Discovery Day, Centennial Park in View Royal. (near Helmcken Road). Come out with your dog and try the 12 CGN test situations for fun and for free. 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.

**September 17 – A Dog's Eye View of the World.** Citizen Canine is sponsoring this evening lecture by Dr. Stanley Coren at UVic's David Lam Auditorium. Tickets available at several pet stores around Victoria. More information available at [www.citizencanine.org](http://www.citizencanine.org)

**September 17 and 18 – Comet Storm Flyball Tournament** sponsored by Capital Comets and Pawsific Storm Flyball clubs. Come out to watch the flyball racing all day long at the Saanich Fairgrounds. More information at [www.capitalcomets.org](http://www.capitalcomets.org)

**September 25** — Cowichan SPCA Paws for a Cause Fundraiser at Bright Angel Park in Duncan. Citizen Canine is offering a CGN Fun Test from 11am to 2 pm.



## Dog Training and Classes

**Smart Dog Training Classes**  
August Puppy Class and Adolescent beginner dog class. September classes include Beginner, Puppy, Urban Dog 1 and 2 and Growly Gus, as well as a Tricks Class and a Primer Class for the CGN program. Classes run Saturdays, Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, mostly at Fairfield United Church Hall. [www.smartdogtraining.ca](http://www.smartdogtraining.ca)

**Puppy Classes, Pet Manners 1 and 2, and Growl Classes** (for fearful or dog-aggressive dogs) Six week evening sessions beginning in September. All skills taught using positive reinforcement. Also **Competition Obedience and Rally-O classes** — Monique Anstee, Langford, 642-0869 or [naughtydogge@shaw.ca](mailto:naughtydogge@shaw.ca)

**Puppy Socialization and Canine Manners Classes**  
Reward based training classes in a new facility in Saanichton. Also private lessons and behaviour counselling. Dara Ashton, Breadner Veterinary Services, 652-9700

**Puppy Class at K9HQ** August 22, 7 week session using positive reinforcement for puppies under 6 months. Classes are held at K9HQ Doggy DayCare plus in Langford. Cost is \$119. For more information, visit: [www.K9HQ.ca](http://www.K9HQ.ca) or call 478-CARE

**Basic Family Manners and Puppy Kindergarten Classes**  
Using a positive and motivational approach, learn how to train and maintain the results you are looking for while maintaining a solid trusting relationship between you and your dog. Classes are ongoing. Communicanine Training and Behavioral Counseling, 216-2416 or [communicanine@hotmail.com](mailto:communicanine@hotmail.com)

## Send us your Calendar Listings

If you would like us to list an upcoming dog-related event in **The Scoop**, give us the details and we'll include it free of charge. Send the information to [newsletter@citizencanine.org](mailto:newsletter@citizencanine.org) or to our postal address. Make sure you include the dates and contact information.

**Please note: This is the last time we will be able to include listings for dog training classes in The Scoop. Because there are so many training opportunities we don't have room to list them all. Therefore we will be limiting our calendar listings to dog-related events or seminars.**