FERRETPALOOZA 2015

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015   **THEME: FUN & GAMES**

Time	Format	Session	Session	Session
9:00-9:30	**Lecture**	Welcome Orientation		
9:30 - 9:45	Break			
9:45-11:15	**Lab 1**	Foundation Games Hannah Branigan	Shaping Sue Ailsby	Secondary Reinforcers Deb Jones
11:15-11:30	Break			
11:30-1:00	**Lab 2**	Foundation Games Hannah Branigan	Shaping Sue Ailsby	Secondary Reinforcers Deb Jones
1:00-2:00	Lunch			
2:00-2:30	**Lecture**	Play & Relationship Denise Fenzi		
2:30-2:45	Break			
2:45-4:15	**Lab 3**	Personal Play Denise Fenzi	Energy Games Nancy G. Little	Toy Play Shade Whitesel
4:15-4:30	Break			
4:30-6:00	**Lab 4**	Personal Play Denise Fenzi	Energy Games Nancy G. Little	Toy Play Shade Whitesel
7:00-9:00	**Pizza Party**	At Host Hotel		

Friday Notes: Handlers with working spots will select one lab in the morning session (Lab 1 or Lab 2) plus one spot in an afternoon session (Lab 3 or Lab 4). There will be a maximum of 10 working dogs in each lab. Handlers will audit the other sessions where they are not working dogs.

Foundation Games: Great Foundations for Great Futures!
with Hannah Branigan
9:45am - 11:15 (Lab 1) or 11:30 – 1:00 (Lab 2)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: Zen bowl, target, treats, toys
Description: This lab will teach multi-purpose foundation games for many exercises. These games will help build focus, develop confidence for distance work, and give you tools to teach advanced behavior. We will then discuss how to use these games as powerful distraction proofing tools.

Shaping: Get Your Shaping in Shape
with Sue Ailsby
9:45am - 11:15 (Lab 1) or 11:30 – 1:00 (Lab 2)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: Lots of small soft treats, clicker (optional)
Description: This introduction to shaping will help you understand what shaping is, how it works, and when it's best used. Then, we will practice shaping with some fun behaviors with your dog! More experienced teams will work on more complex behaviors. Troubleshooting for common problems will be discussed.

Secondary Reinforcers: Reinforcement in the Ring
with Deb Jones
9:45am - 11:15 (Lab 1) or 11:30 – 1:00 (Lab 2)
Level of experience: All
Equipment: High value treats
Description: No reinforcers in the ring, right? Wrong! With the use of secondary reinforcers, you can effectively reinforce your dog in a competition ring. We'll discuss what secondary reinforcers are and when you should use them, then start creating powerful secondary reinforcers that you can use to let your dog know when he or she is doing a great job in the ring.

Play and Relationship
with Denise Fenzi
2:00 - 2:30pm (General Lecture – All Attend)
Description: Learning to interact with your dog on many levels is so important, and play is a great way to become more familiar with your dog as both a companion and a working partner. This lecture will provide an overview of why we play, and introduce the idea of play as personal interaction in addition to toy play. We hope to inspire each team to go home and make great use of their time together!

Personal Play: Enhance Your Relationship
with Denise Fenzi
2:45 - 4:15 (Lab 3) OR 4:30 – 6:00 (Lab 4)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: Food and/or toys (optional)
Description: Join this lab for hands on practice at personal play with your dog! Playing without food or toys will help reduce stress during the learning process and relieve tension when in novel environments - plus, it's just plain fun! During this lab, you will receive individual attention to help you figure out how your dog wants to play with you, and which behaviors might be perceived as threatening or overwhelming to your dog.

Energy Games
with Nancy Gagliardi Little
2:45 - 4:15 (Lab 3) OR 4:30 – 6:00 (Lab 4)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: Food, toys, clicker (optional)
Description: Training and competing with your dog is demanding and can deplete energy and focus from many dogs - even dogs with lots of energy. It's important to be able to balance the precision and focus your dog gives you in training with games that keep them excited and energetic. In this lab, we'll look at various games that you can add to your training toolbox to help keep the energy level and focus at optimal levels in your dog.

Toy Play and Cooperation
with Shade Whitesel
2:45 - 4:15 (Lab 3) OR 4:30 – 6:00 (Lab 4)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: Toys of your (or your dog's) choice
Description: Play is an important part of relationships, but it can also be a source of great conflict. This lab will give you hands on time with Shade to figure out how to fine tune and problem solve your toy game with your dog. If you have a dog who loves toys (and brings them back and drops them), then we'll work on how to add that game as a reward into skill training. If you're just starting your toy play, Shade will give ideas to get off the ground and on your way!

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 2015   **THEME: SKILL BUILDING**

Time	Format	Session	Session	Session	Session
9:00-9:30	**Lecture**	Clear Criteria Hannah Branigan			
9:30 - 9:45	Break				
9:45-1:00	**Lab 1&2**	Heeling Hannah Branigan	Heeling Shade Whitesel	Heeling Denise Fenzi	
1:00-2:00	Lunch				
2:00-2:30	**Lecture**	Focus: An Invisible Skill Deb Jones			
2:30-2:45	Break				
2:45-4:15	**Lab 3**	Scent Articles Hannah Branigan	Stays Deb Jones	Jumping Skills Nancy G. Little	Recalls Sue Ailsby
4:15-4:30	Break				
4:30-6:00	**Lab 4**	Retrieves Shade Whitesel	Handler Choice Denise Fenzi	Signals Nancy G. Little	Rally Skills Sue Ailsby
6:00-7:00		On Your Own Obedience	On Your Own Rally	On Your Own Obedience	

Saturday Notes: All handlers with working spots will participate in a morning heeling group. Group spots will be assigned based on the experience level of dog and handler as identified during registration. There will be 20 dogs in each heeling group but the session is double time (3 hours).   Working spots will also select one lab in an afternoon session (Lab 3 or Lab 4). There will be a maximum of 8 working dogs in each afternoon lab. Handlers will audit the other sessions where they are not working dogs.

Clear Criteria: A Trainer's Best Friend
with Hannah Branigan
9am - 9:30 (General Lecture – All Attend)
Description: Criteria is all about knowing what you want and recognizing when you get it! So why is it so hard? We will discuss how to select appropriate criteria, recognizing criteria when it occurs, selecting appropriate increases over time, and making appropriate choices when a behavior starts to drift.

Heeling (All Attend) - Working groups will be allocated based on registration information.
with Hannah Branigan or Shade Whitesel or Denise Fenzi
9:45am - 1:00pm (Lab 1 and 2 combined)

Focus: The Invisible Skill
with Deb Jones
2:00 - 2:30 (General Lecture – all attend)
Description: Everybody wants their dogs to be focused, but many trainers have no idea how to accomplish this or what it really means!   While some dogs are born "focused," this skill can and should be trained to maximize your dog's potential. Whether you're dealing with a dog who won't pay attention to you or a dog who looks at your face but isn't really engaged, this session will help explain what focus is and how develop it.

Find Mine! All About Scent Articles
with Hannah Branigan
2:45 - 4:15 pm (Lab 3)
Level of Experience: All. Experience with shaping and targeting will be helpful; a formal retrieve is not required.
Equipment: Treats, toys, 5-6 identical objects - need not be "official" articles. Flat canning lids preferred for beginning dogs.
Description: This lab will discuss the different components of the scent discrimination exercise. Beginning students will learn to introduce the idea of searching for scent to their dogs, while more advanced students will work on improving performance under varying levels of distraction. We will also discuss motivational games to build drive and focus, and as time permits, we will work on the non-scent components of the exercise, including the set-up, send and some beginning chaining. We will not teach pivots from scratch, but we will discuss incorporating them into the games for dogs who already know how to complete a pivot turn.

Solid Stays
with Deb Jones
2:45 - 4:15 pm (Lab 3)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: Treats, toys, clicker (optional)
Description: Stays are often a dreaded part of competition, but they don't have to be. This lab will start with the self-control games that are a foundation for solid competition stays, move on to consider the importance of clear criteria of duration, distance, and distraction, and finally, troubleshoot some common stay problems.

Jump Start Your Jumping!
with Nancy Gagliardi Little
2:45 - 4:15pm (Lab 3)
Level of Experience: Intermediate: your dog should have been introduced to at least one of the jump exercises, although he or she does not need to be jumping full height or have learned the complete exercise.
Equipment: Treats, toys, clicker (optional), dumbbell (optional)
Description: This lab will be driven by the needs of the working teams, and we will work on the skill that each dog needs most in order to move towards a ring ready performance. Options include improving the dog's jumping technique, fun proofing games, or performance issues with either the high jump or the broad jump. We will not address retrieve issues or fronts and finishes.

Trouble Free Recalls
with Sue Ailsby
2:45 - 4:15pm (Lab 3)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: High value treats
Description: Does your dog need several cues to come when you call? Have you heard that you can't teach your dog to drop until you've finished novice? Are you having trouble getting consistent results? Then this lab is for you! It will be driven by the needs of the working teams. Some potential topics will include straight recalls, the drop on recall, or fronts and finishes. We will troubleshoot issues for more experienced dogs and introduce any aspect of the recall or the drop for more novice teams.

Retrieves: From Basic to Advanced
with Shade Whitesel
4:30 - 6:00 pm (Lab 4)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: An object for your dog to hold, and food or toy rewards
Description: Retrieving is a complex chain of behaviors, and if the dog isn't clear on each step, the result can be slow and lackluster performances. This lab will be driven by the levels of experience of the working teams, whether you need to introduce early holding skills or to problem solve a retrieve that's breaking down, we will discuss how to create clear expectations so that your dog will blossom into a fast, enthusiastic retriever!

Signalling Success
with Nancy Gagliardi Little
4:30 - 6:00 pm (Lab 4)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: Treats, toys, clicker (optional)
Description: This lab will cover the stand, sit, down, and recall signals from Utility, and will be driven by the needs of the working teams. Beginning teams will start learning signals while more advanced teams will address how to make your signals clearer and eliminate common problems in the signal exercise.

Rally Skills
with Sue Ailsby
4:30 - 6:00pm (Lab 4)
Level of Experience: Intermediate: you and your dog should have a basic understanding of various rally signs.
Equipment: Treats, toys, clicker (optional)
Description: Rally is known to be lots of fun, but did you know it can also be just as precise as obedience? This lab will work on those exercises and stations that are giving you difficulty, such as call fronts or backing while heeling. This lab will be driven by the needs of the working teams, and we will review any signs that you would like some help with.

Handler's Choice
with Denise Fenzi
4:30 - 6:00 pm (Lab 4)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: High value rewards
Description: This session will be handler's choice. Pick what you want to work on most and you'll have about 10 minutes of personal attention!

Time	Format	Session	Session	Session
9:00-9:30	**Lecture**	Understanding Trial Prep Denise Fenzi		
9:30 - 9:45	Break			
9:45-11:15	**Lab 1**	Ring Prep Denise Fenzi	Stimulus Control Hannah Branigan	Fluency Sue Ailsby
11:15-11:30	Break			
11:30-1:00	**Lab 2**	Ring Prep Denise Fenzi	Stimulus Control Hannah Branigan	Fluency Sue Ailsby
1:00-2:00	Lunch			
2:00-2:30	**Lecture**	The Judge's Perspective Nancy Gagliardi Little		
2:30-2:45	Break			
2:45-4:15	**Lab 3**	Focus Skills Deb Jones	Reducing Reinforcement Shade Whitesel	Handling Skills Nancy G. Little
4:15-4:30	Break			
4:30-6:00	**Lab 4**	Focus Skills Deb Jones	Reducing Reinforcement Shade Whitesel	Handling Skills Nancy G. Little
6:00-7:00		On Your Own Obedience	On Your Own Rally	On Your Own Obedience

Sunday Notes: Handlers with working spots will select one lab in the morning session (Lab 1 or Lab 2) plus one spot in an afternoon session (Lab 3 or Lab 4). There will be a maximum of 10 working dogs in each lab. Handlers will also audit the other sessions where they are not working dogs.

Preparing to Compete: How, When, and Why - Oh My!
with Denise Fenzi
9am - 9:30 (General Lecture - all attend)
Description: The most challenging part of creating a competition-ready team is not teaching the skills specific to your sport, it's the entire package of preparing for competition. Some things you will need to consider include a strategy for a reduced schedule of reinforcement, generalization to new environments and stressors, and intentionally proofing your dog's training to a level that makes success within competition likely. This lecture will provide the framework for the rest of the day!

Ring Prep: Hi Ho, Hi Ho, It's Off to the Ring We Go!
with Denise Fenzi
9:45 - 11:15 (Lab 1) and 11:30 – 1:00 (Lab 2)
Level of Experience: All
Description: Did you know that your dog needs to be taught to enjoy the competition ring? It's true! This lab is designed to help your dog look forward to the ring in spite of the normal stressors that exist at a dog show! By emphasizing a positive association between the traditional ring entrance found in trials and your ability to produce a fabulous party, we can classically condition our dogs to love the competition ring.

All About Stimulus Control: Right on Cue!
with Hannah Branigan
9:45 - 11:15 (Lab 1) and 11:30 – 1:00 (Lab 2)
Level of Experience: All
Description: Teaching your dog when you do NOT want a behavior is just as important as teaching him how to perform a the correct time. In this lab, we will discuss the procedures for putting behaviors on cue, testing for stimulus control, and developing a plan for improving any weak elements.   Develop your stimulus control and watch your accuracy skyrocket!

Fluency in Performance: Distraction? What Distraction?
with Sue Ailsby
9:45 - 11:15 (Lab 1) and 11:30 – 1:00 (Lab 2)
Level of Experience: Intermediate: you should have a behavior/behavior chain that can be performed without struggle.
Equipment: Whatever equipment is needed to perform the behavior or chain.
Description: In this lab, we will be taking a specific behavior or behavior chain for each team and helping the dog understand how to perform under distraction. By introducing distractions with a specific plan for both success and failure, we can build confidence in both the dog and handler! Develop your fluency and watch your behaviors become ring ready.

The Judge's Perspective
with Nancy Gagliardi Little
2:00 - 2:30 (General Lecture – all attend)
Description: Obedience is a complicated sport to judge, which makes it difficult for the exhibitors to understand how the judge goes about the process. This lecture will help you understand the ring from the judge's perspective. Join "Judge" Nancy and learn how judges score your performance, learn specific scoring for some common exercises, and pick up some tips for specific things you can do to prevent losing extra points. If time permits, we'll have Q and A available.

Focus Skills
with Deb Jones
2:45 - 4:15pm (Lab 3) and 4:30 – 6:00 (Lab 4)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: Treats, toys, clicker (optional)
Description: A strong foundation in focus is just as critical as foundation skills to teach behaviors - start at the beginning and watch your training flourish! In this lab, focus exercises will be introduced in a systematic and logical order to help your dog understand the concept. These exercises are quick and easy, but they require lots of generalization in order to be useful, so we will also discuss how to accomplish that.

Reducing Reinforcement: The Dreaded Diet
with Shade Whitesel
2:45 - 4:15pm (Lab 3) and 4:30 – 6:00 (Lab 4)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: Rewards
Description: Do you have a dog who knows enough behaviors to get into the ring but you are terrified to go in without food or a toy? Are you loving positive reinforcement training, but unsure of how to compete successfully without access to primary reinforcers? Join Shade as she shows you how to begin sequencing behaviors in a way that makes sense to your dog instead of making them feel cheated or tricked. Start thinking of reinforcement in terms of effort rather than quantity of behaviors performed and get yourself into competition!

Healing Your Handling
with Nancy Gagliardi Little
2:45 - 4:15pm (Lab 3) and 4:30 – 6:00 (Lab 4)
Level of Experience: All
Equipment: None
Description: Dogs make mistakes when handlers do not properly cue them with smooth and clean handling. This lab will help you identify the areas of potential confusion in your handling and also help you develop good habits. Much of the time will be spent working without the dogs to ensure that your handling is ready to insert the dog. Clean up your handling and watch your dog improve!

MONDAY, JUNE 1, 2015   **THEME: HANDLER CHOICE (Six Rings)**

Time	Format	Session One/Two	Session Three/Four	Session Five/Six
9:00-11:30	Lab	Problem Solving All Instructors	Problem Solving All Instructors	Problem Solving All Instructors
11:30-12:00	**Closing session**			

Monday Notes: This is your chance to work with an instructor one-on-one for fifteen minutes- on whatever issue is most pressing for you! You might want to demonstrate a problem and ask for possible solutions or feedback, or ask for a bit of assistance moving forward with a training challenge, or even request a formal evaluation of where you are in terms of readiness to trial! Effectively, you'll have a private lesson - except that others will watch and learn from your experience. When your lesson is over, you can relax and learn from the challenges that your classmates are experiencing!