



# Spirit Ridge

K9 Training & Rescue

"... because sit happens "



## RUFF STUFF

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[www.spiritridge.net](http://www.spiritridge.net)

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### From the Editor's Paw ...

Since our Holiday/Winter 2008 Newsletter, *Spirit Ridge K9 Training & Rescue* has become deeply immersed in our new community initiative

.... 'Paws for Literacy<sup>®</sup>'. This is a volunteer and not-for-profit community based initiative where we bring specifically pre-screened and selected dogs and handlers into contact with school-aged children for the purpose of improving literacy, has been a resounding success! Our inaugural date on January 24, 2009 was a resounding success with 21 children visiting the Hillsburgh branch library to spend 20 minutes reading with their favourite 'Paws' pal. In fact, many of the children expressed their disappointment when their time was up and they could not pick a different dog to continue reading! One of the parents also reported that her son, who rarely picks up a book to read in his spare time, had been practicing for the week leading up to this event to make sure he was well prepared to read to his new furry friend. This, is music to our ears and we are thrilled to continue this programme over the next year in an effort to not only give literacy a second chance with our children but also show many parents what dogs can achieve if properly raised and worked. In fact, half of our *Literacy Assistance Dogs* were previously 'throwaway' and 'disposable' dogs rescued by the current handlers and are now giving back to our community. We are thrilled to give both these dogs and literacy a second chance – especially when it comes to helping the children in our community. This is what *Spirit Ridge K9 Training & Rescue* is all about and this is just one of the reasons why we established our sanctuary to help humans and dogs-in-need. Stay tuned for more successes as we endeavour to expand our programme to other jurisdictions! Also, for more information on how you and your dog might join our programme or enroll your child in the reading dates, please visit our website and click on the 'Paws for Literacy' link. Our next 'Paws for Literacy<sup>®</sup>' dates are scheduled for April 25<sup>th</sup> and July 11<sup>th</sup>. Come out and meet us and our wonderful *Literacy Assistance Dogs*.

*Spirit Ridge K9 Training & Rescue* will, once again, be having a booth at the Erin Spring Home & Lifestyle Show on May 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Centre 2000 Arena in the village of Erin. Come meet us, some of our working K9 friends and ask your questions.

Mayor Rod Finnie reading to his 'Paws' pals and handlers at our inaugural January 25, 2009 'Paws for Literacy<sup>®</sup>' date



### 'GOING ONs'

#### Community Events:

- 'Paws for Literacy<sup>®</sup>' dates – April 25<sup>th</sup> & July 11<sup>th</sup>
- Erin Spring Home & Lifestyle Show – May 2<sup>nd</sup>

#### SPRING Group Classes in:

- Obedience – Beginner obedience classes every month
- Rally Obedience - Beginner classes
- Agility – Beginner, Novice, Advanced
- Tracking - Beginner & Advanced
- Puppy Classes & Puppy Agility classes

#### Other sessions:

- Private 'starter' puppy behavioural sessions (designed to get you started on the right foot with your new puppy!)
- Private sessions designed to help humans better deal with emerging or existing behavioural problems (such as lunging, jumping, barking, pulling on walks, aggression with dogs or humans etc)



### Our Next Competitors in the Agility Ring!

(l to r) Helen and 'Cooper', Shirley and 'Stryder' and Suzanne with Spirit Ridge's 'Jesse', will be competing on May 10<sup>th</sup> in an AAC Agility trial hosted at TAMSU training center. Good luck to all the handlers and their wonderful dogs!



## Why Are Leash Walks So Important?

**Proper** exercise is a key factor in the health and well-being of your dog. Most handlers view throwing a stick or a ball for their dog as 'proper' exercise. However, this only addresses the physical fitness of your dog and does almost nothing to 'exercise' your dog's brain. To achieve 'mental fitness', you need to 'work' your dogs in a 'structured' manner. Endurance exercise (such as proper leash walks, obedience work, agility, treadmill exercise or biking with your dog when it is next to you - and **not** leading you) will help not only create a more fit dog but also drain your dog's energy so that they sleep better, are more content and don't display the behavioural issues that drives so many 'owners' crazy! Not only do such dogs develop fewer socialization problems but they also form a bond with their handlers leading to a long lasting, unforgettable relationship. These are the dogs that many of us remember fondly long after they have left us. A half hour proper leash walk twice a day (*before dogs have eaten*) should be sufficient for most dogs. In most municipalities on leash walks are the law and for good reason - there are dangers to other people and to your dog. An off-leash dog is susceptible to injuries from cars, can wander into another dog's territory which could provoke a dog-fight, or your dog could knock over and injure (or bite) a child or an elderly person. Dogs off-leash are also a nuisance to neighbours, getting into gardens and flowerbeds. Responsible dog handlers care about the safety and well being of both their dogs and their community.



## HELPING MULTIPLE DOGS GET ALONG IN THE SAME HOUSEHOLD

As increasingly more people adopt or buy multiple dogs, we come across a common problem of inter dog aggression developing within the same household. Most of the time, this is caused by the dogs not yet forming a tangible pack order or the humans displaying weak leadership within the home.

In the first case, the dogs simply can't figure out who's higher in pack order between them. The best way to correct this is to help them establish a stable order. A lot of times when a new dog is brought into the house the older dog doesn't want to give up its place. It is the "owner's" responsibility to help the animals establish their pack order as fast as possible. For this to happen it is important to show the weaker and younger dog that the older member of the pack is higher. If two dogs are fighting each other then correct the younger dog even if the fight was started by the older dog. Feed, walk, and play with the younger dog after you have done so with the older dog. Give older dog more attention, bones, and toys.

In the second case it is extremely important to get dogs to respect you. The moment you become a leader the dogs will start to respond to you (and each other) in a completely different manner. Since the leadership of the pack won't be up for grabs, the dogs should easily be able to re-order their own position in the K9 pack. One way of doing this is to 'work' your dogs in obedience, either alone or in a class setting.

## PUPPY TRAINING TIPS

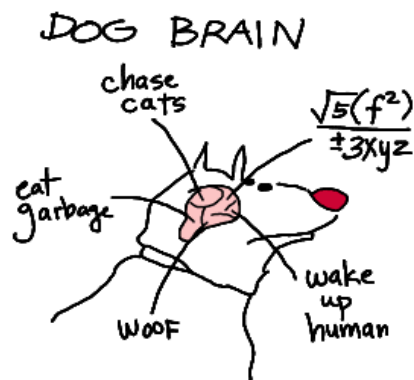
This is traditionally the time of the year when many go out and get themselves a new puppy addition to their family. Invariably, this is also the time when many new handlers contact us and ask questions on why their puppies are behaving in a certain manner. Some are curious, some are downright panicking. The good news is that many of the behavioural 'issues' puppies show are temporary and are extinguished with the passage of time provided the humans don't inadvertently nurture these bad habits. Here are some quick tips on what you must do or avoid doing with your new puppy:

1. **Do NOT** delude yourselves into thinking puppy 'needs' to be off leash. Teach puppy to follow you on-leash in a fun, playful manner and reward with lavish praise and attention when it does.
2. **Do NOT** try and train puppy off leash. This will only teach it that it has 'options' when it comes to listening to you since you have no way of enforcing your cues.
3. **Do NOT** permit puppy to nip, or in any way put his/her mouth around your hands/limbs. This is the beginning of a very slippery slope and a habit that can lead to serious bites later on. At *Spirit Ridge* we firmly believe in continuing to apply the lessons the mother-bitch has imprinted on her puppy in the den to deal with unwanted behaviour.
4. **DO** make sure everyone in the family handles puppy AND puppy's food while it is eating to ensure no future food or resource guarding.
5. **Do NOT** allow puppy to sleep on your bed; instead, teach puppy to love his/her crate from the start and **NEVER** abandon using the crate after puppy has been housebroken! Crates will become a safe haven throughout puppy's life if they are hurt, ill, traveling or being kenneled.

Please contact us for more info on our unique puppy classes.



*Practicing the principles of reward-based training and how to apply it by creating puppy artwork in our Puppy Agility Class.*



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