



Your quarterly dog club update: all the latest on the dogs, people, events and happenings at Titahi Bay Canine Obedience Club.

Cyclone Gabrielle

Our hearts and minds are with all of the people and their animals – canine and otherwise – who have been so tragically affected by the devastation of the recent cyclones. There have been so many very sad stories but some wonderful ones as well, when animals have been rescued and returned to their families. We take our hats off to [Animal Evac](#), [HUHA](#), [SPCA](#) and Dogs NZ who are getting behind the rescue efforts and doing a sterling job.



It has been a busy quarter at TBCOC...

New sprinkler system – why would we need one of those with the current weather? Well, it has not always been this wet over summer and in fact, only about 7 years ago we had the worst drought the Porirua basin has ever had. That year we had to close the grounds and re-sow the grass at a cost of around \$10,000 and about 1,000 volunteer hours to get our grounds to one of the best in the country. For 3 months we cut the grass with catchers and since then a dedicated group of members have spent their summer evenings watering the grass so it doesn't die off; hauling out heavy hoses the length of the grounds, connecting multiple sprinklers and always getting soaked when a gust of wind got you! This year we invested in an automated watering system, like those on golf courses. No longer do we have to visit the club 5 or 6 nights a week. We can control the watering so it is done at the most efficient time of the day, saving on water and saving on water bills.

We had our annual *Obedience Championship Show* on 14,15 January. The weather was just perfect. For those who haven't been part of a show, here is a taste of what is involved: months before, we begin organising the Judges and Stewards and advertising the show in the Dogs NZ magazine. Officials come from all over NZ

and for the competitors (including our famous baked goods). And finally, the grounds preparation - we pride ourselves on the quality of our grounds and attract many competitors because of it. The grass is cut several times to make it the right length for the event. On the day, our wonderful volunteers arrive early to set up the competition rings, gazebos, BBQs and all the catering, arrange the prizes and trophies, put out competitor entry lists, and hand out competitor packs and entry numbers. They feed, water, photograph, document, compete, and tidy up. Whew, it's a good thing we only do it once a year! Enormous thanks to Cheryl Dickson, our show secretary and all the volunteers who help her - committee and club members and people from other clubs. With their help we had a fabulous show and lots of happy competitors.

Thanks to those who came down for our *Working Bee* on 26th February. We got loads of work done and the new grass is now going great guns! Our gates should now be squeak-free, the fences are looking a lot more solid and, in case you haven't yet noticed, we have a new garden outside the main gate with flowers in blue and yellow - our club colours - to welcome you to the club.

Kat Thorstrand Mitchell is leaving the committee – I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Kat for all the work she has done for the club. Firstly, as class coordinator at the time when we brought in our first on line booking



system run by Dogs NZ. Back then our class selection process required a lot of manual intervention and was quite a job. Kat has done a huge amount of work and been instrumental in making our grade out systems more consistent and is always coming up with new ideas on how we could improve our class content. Kat then went on to be our secretary and has done an excellent job of that. One of her strong interests is in Canine Good Citizen. Kat has applied to be a CGC assessor which is great as we never have enough. I think she will be very consistent in her rulings, which will make her a great assessor. We aren't losing Kat though - she will still be instructing and will now be able to spend more time on CGC which she is very passionate about it. Thanks heaps Kat for all the work you have done for the club, we really appreciate it.

And last, but definitely not least, we are pleased to announce that, in early December, at the Domestic Dog Training Conference, *TBCOC was awarded the Domestic Dog Training Club of the year!* Some of the key points for the Judges were: club culture, strong education in the community, support to other groups who use our facilities, indoor options for good continuity, the use of technology to make operations faster and more efficient, trainer and client retention throughout COVID 19, trainer education and development, great social media and website resources, and strong financial growth.

Well done everyone - committee, instructors and all of you lovely members and handlers.

Craig Prattley
President, TBCOC

Titahi Bay Canine Obedience Club AGM - 29 March

Our Annual General Meeting will be held at our clubrooms, Ngatitoa Domain at 6.30pm on 29th March.



2022 Committee members

Craig Prattley - President

Geoff Collins - Vice-President

Claudia Samitz - Treasurer

Kat Thorstrand Mitchell - Secretary

Cheryl Dickson - Show Secretary

Lianne Davies - Class Coordinator

Antonia Allum - Comms and Web

Bronwyn Weir

Jacqui Austin

Iain Clarke

Glen Robinson

Erin McKenzie

We are sorry to lose Hamish Blank from the Committee, who has resigned to pursue a better life balance (he will continue on as an instructor).



Every newsletter we will dig deep and publish a profile of one or more of our members and their lovely dogs...



Geoff Collins and Shimmer

I have been involved in Dog Obedience since 2000 when I joined the Titahi Bay Canine Obedience Club with our first dog, Frenzy, a Flatcoated Retriever. I joined the club committee a year later and have remained on this since, taking the positions of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Show Secretary and Zone/Region Delegate in addition to training Domestic Obedience, CGC, Rally-O and Competition Obedience classes for the club.

I live in Wellington and work as an electrical engineer in the TV broadcast and business data services industry. In my spare time not used up by dog-related activities, I am a keen tennis player and amateur photographer.

Flatcoated Retrievers are a very friendly breed and are sometimes called the Peter Pan of dogs as they never seem to grow up! This can make them a lot of fun but also a challenge at times. Since Frenzy we have had several other Flatcoated Retrievers and currently have two: Juno (4 years old)

As well as competing in Obedience, Rally-O and Agility, I have also dabbled in breed showing. However, Obedience remains my main dog-related interest. I have been a Competition Obedience Steward for 18 years. Competition Obedience requires some precision training, especially for the heelwork, and it is very satisfying to see your dog improving as their on-going training progresses. I am also a CGC assessor.

I have held a number of administrative positions within Dogs New Zealand including Deputy Region Representative and Region Representative for the Central Dog Obedience Region, Dog Obedience Committee Chairperson, Dogs New Zealand Executive Councillor, North Island Vice President and Senior Vice President. I have recently been reappointed as the Dogs NZ Dog Training Committee Chairperson and Executive Councillor, positions I had previously held for six years.



- Graduation for Term 1 is on Mon 27th and Tues 28th March.
- **Enrolment** for Term 2, 2023 opens at 8pm 12th April.
- **Term 2**, 2023 begins on 1st and 2nd May (Puppy classes begin 24th/25th April).
- All Term 2 classes will be held at either our [Club grounds, Ngatitoa Domain](#), or at [Kākāriki Stables](#) near Battle Hill.
- King's Birthday weekend, 5th/6th June there may be no classes – check with your instructor.
- Our next **Canine Good Citizen assessment** is Sunday 7th May – all levels.
- Annual **Rally Obedience Championship Show & Competition Obedience Ribbon Trial**: 28th May.
- Don't forget, all enrolment, start, and graduation dates can be found on the [Important Dates](#) page of our website.

Here are some of our successes during the last few months. It's great to see the newbies coming through so well!

Maybe it's time for you to take your training to the next level and join our competitors at one of the shows....



Obedience Champ Shows

Obedience Champ shows have 5 levels starting at Beginners and going through Novice, Test A, Test B to Test C, the highest level. Many shows also have an Elementary class which is a lead-in to Beginners.

Hawera Show 1 (late November, 22)

Sherrie McIntyre and Ditto: 1st Test A

Hawera Show 2

Angelique Aamodt and Orix: 1st Novice

Sherrie McIntyre and Ditto: 3rd Test A

Sherrie McIntyre and Sizzle: 5th Test A

Hawera Show 3

Sherrie McIntyre and Ditto: 1st Test A

Alannah Knapp and Skye-Skye: 2nd Test B

Wellington Canine Obedience Ribbon Trial (January 23)

Erin McKenzie and Harley: 1st Beginners

Lynette Bell and Charlie: Judges Ribbon, Beginners

Geoff Collins and Inka: 1st Novice

Lynette Bell and Charlie: 4th Novice

Erin McKenzie and Harley: 5th Novice

Cheryl Dickson and Juno: 1st Test A

TBCOC Show 1 (January 23)

Lynette Bell and Charlie: 4th Beginners

Erin McKenzie and Harley: 5th Beginners

Jenny Rutherford and Bob: 1st Novice

Geoff Collins and Inka: 3rd Novice

Sue Paterson and Marlu: 2nd Test B

Irene Kilford and Robbie: 3rd Test C

TBCOC Show 2

Alison Chapman and Rosa: 2nd Elementary 2

Craig Prattley and Abby: 4th Elementary 1

Lynette Bell and Charlie: 3rd Beginners

Cheryl Dickson and Juno: 2nd Test A

Sarah Elliot and Saoirse: 1st Test B

Irene Kilford and Robbie: 2nd Test C with Challenge

Kapiti Show 1 (February 23)

Lynette Bell and Charlie: 4th in Beginners

Irene Kilford and Macy: 3rd in Novice

Irene Kilford and Robbie: 2nd in Test C

Kapiti Show 2

Lynette Bell and Charlie: 2nd in Beginners

Irene Kilford and Macy: 1st in Novice

Sherrie McIntyre and Ditto: 1st in Test B

Alannah Knapp and Skye-Skye: 5th in Test B

Rosemary Mortimer and Hector: 1st in Test C

Irene Kilford and Robbie: 4th in Test C

Horowhenua Show 1 (25 and 26 February)

Jenny Rutherford and Bob-Bob: 3rd in Novice

Irene Kilford and Macy: 4th in Novice

Alannah Knapp and Skye-Skye: 5th in Test B

Angelique Aamodt and Turbo: 2nd in Test C with Challenge

Horowhenua Show 2

Lynette Bell and Charlie: 4th in Beginners

Irene Kilford and Macy: 1st in Novice

Sherrie McIntyre and Sizzle: 5th in Test A

Alannah Knapp and Skye-Skye: 1st in Test B and top Test B dog for the weekend!!



Scent Sports Association of NZ (SSANZ) Novice, Intermediate & Advanced Nose Work Trials

TBCOC was represented by 5 dogs and 3 handlers at the SSANZ Scentwork trial, held over 2 days and 3 locations at Waitangi Weekend. The results were mixed but each of the dogs gave their all and there was some really lovely work from our 5 representatives:

Kim Paice and Indi gained a Qualifying Certificate in Buried Hide Sand and had the fastest search; and **Kim and Bolt** had a successful External Search at Intermediate level but missed the other searches at the next location (8 minutes' drive away) because 'mum' had car dramas.

Claudia Samitz and Layla, working at the Advanced level completed the Vehicle, Container and Exterior searches but found only one of the hides in the Interior Search. However, Layla was awarded the Judges Choice for the Exterior Search!

Jan McKenzie and Geordie ran in his first Novice trial where he had successful Container, Vehicle and Exterior Searches but just missed the Interior search. **Jan and Poppy** ran in her first Intermediate trial with mixed results – she did a nice speedy Vehicle Search and would have had a successful search in the tricky exterior search but for handler error. Yes, that happens!! Well done to all of the dogs and handlers who really enjoyed the day(s).





The science behind training your dog: 'Operant Conditioning'.

Dog Training can be full of technical terms, and sometimes these can be hurdles in trying to understand how to get the most from your dog. So let's demystify one of the most commonly used terms - **Operant Conditioning**.

Operant Conditioning is a method of learning that uses rewards and 'punishment' to modify our dog's behaviour. Sadly, it is often a term that is misunderstood and this can cause confusion and misuse. Understanding it correctly can help you make *good* choices for your dog and get the most out of your training. Let's break it down...

Positive* - is when something is *added* to a situation, e.g. treats (positive reinforcement), or a verbal interruption (positive punishment).

Negative* - is when something is *taken away*, e.g. attention is withdrawn to discourage play-biting (negative punishment), or allowing a fearful dog to leave a scary situation once it does a 'look' at its handler (negative reinforcement).

**Note: in Operant Conditioning, positive or negative do NOT mean that something is 'good' or 'bad'.*

Reinforcement - something that *increases a behaviour*, e.g. if a dog is treated when they sit on command, they are likely to repeat the sit when given the command.

Punishment - something that *decreases a behaviour*, e.g. if attention is taken away from a dog when it is jumping, it is likely to discontinue jumping.

Together these make up four types of training:

Positive Reinforcement – the addition of a reward

This is when you give your dog a reward that they like for co-operating with you – for doing something that you would like your dog to continue doing. For example, when you ask your dog to sit and then you treat or play with a toy, these are *Positive Reinforcers*.

Positive Reinforcement is preferred and used by most trainers because it is gentle, kind, and easy for trainers (you) to use. *The Instructors at TBCOC all base their training primarily on Positive Reinforcement techniques.*

Negative Reinforcement – the removal of something the dog does not like

This is where something is introduced that the dog considers 'aversive' (something to be avoided) when they are behaving in an unwanted way, but is *removed* when the unwanted behaviour decreases. For example, if a dog pulls while walking on lead, the owner might say 'no pull' and rattle

However, *Negative Reinforcement is rarely effective by itself* – the dog must be taught, firstly, what walking nicely is, otherwise negative reinforcement won't change behaviour.

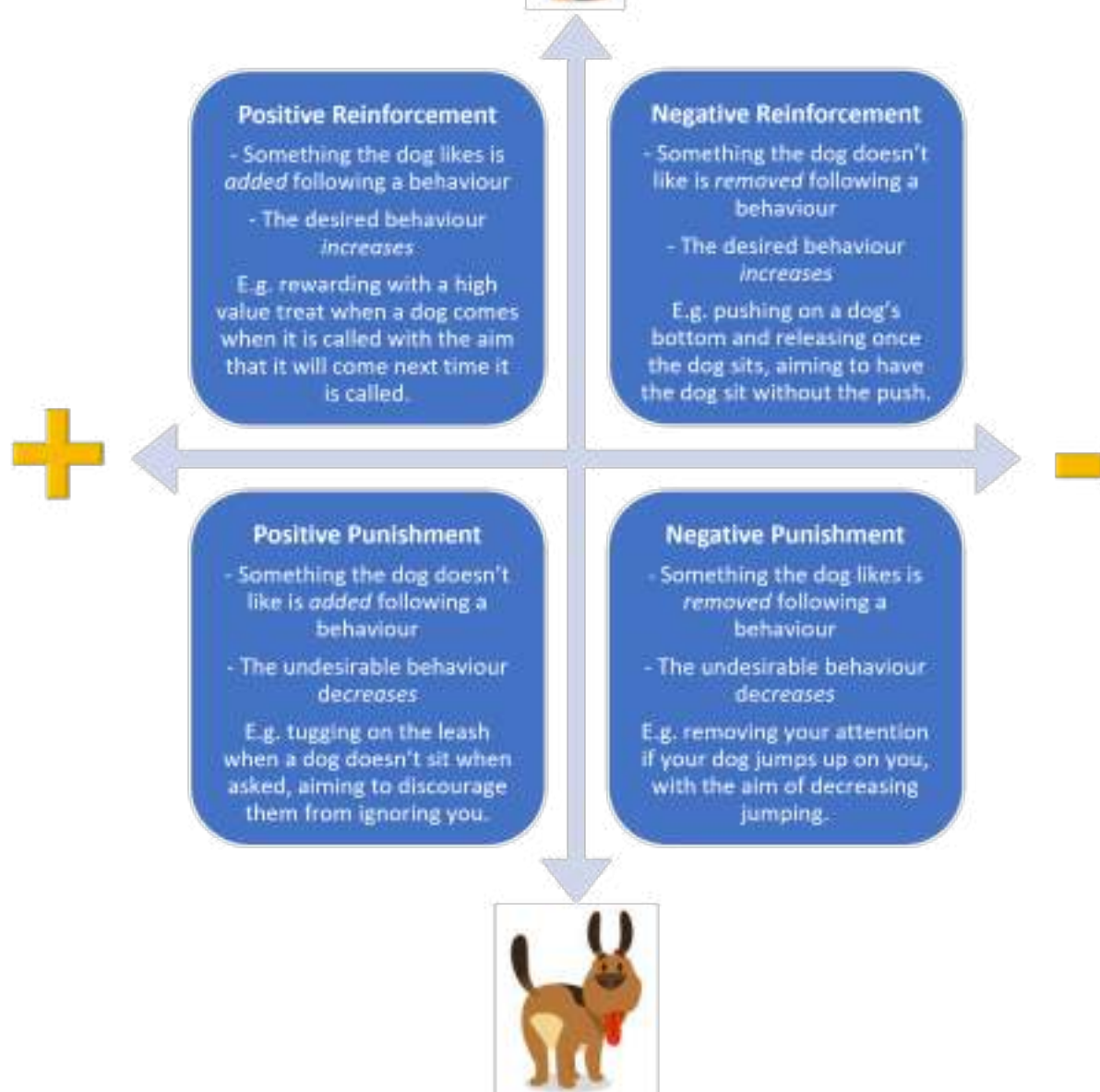
Negative Punishment – the removal of a reward

Something that your dog likes is removed or taken away. For example – if you have a treat in your hand and ask your dog to sit but it jumps up or does something else, remove the treat and with no fuss or harsh words – then try again. When you try again and ask your dog to sit, it is more likely to sit rather than jump etc.

Positive Punishment – the addition of something the dog does not like

Here, something that a dog dislikes or is averse to, is *added*, to decrease the frequency of its behaviour.

For example, if the dog jumps up and you knee them in the chest, and next time you see them the dog does not jump up, you have positively punished the dog jumping. Positive punishment may be associated with things like shock collars, yelling, abuse or other harsh training techniques, and while these methods don't always seem severe, the dog's lack of control over these aversive measures can be a source of stress – *which should be avoided. At TBCOC we do not encourage this type of*



Conclusion

It is important to understand the methods in all 4 quadrants and when to use them, so that you can combine them for the best outcome:

- **Positive Reinforcement** - use a lot
- **Negative Reinforcement** - use sparingly
- **Negative Punishment** - use as required
- **Positive Punishment** - use rarely (if at all!)

Scientific research shows **Positive Reinforcement** (reward-based training techniques), as well as supporting animal welfare goals, is more effective than Positive Punishment (aversive training techniques).

Luckily, there is a lot of support available on the subject, both from your instructors, and online. There are many tools available now, such as clickers, no-pull harnesses and automatic treat dispensers, for

Some other things to note:

- Alpha/dominance training has been popular in the past, but has been scientifically debunked as unfounded, problematic, and dangerous.
- Most professional trainers have shifted to positive training techniques, which are supported by science and build a better bond with your pup.



Neolithic Dogs

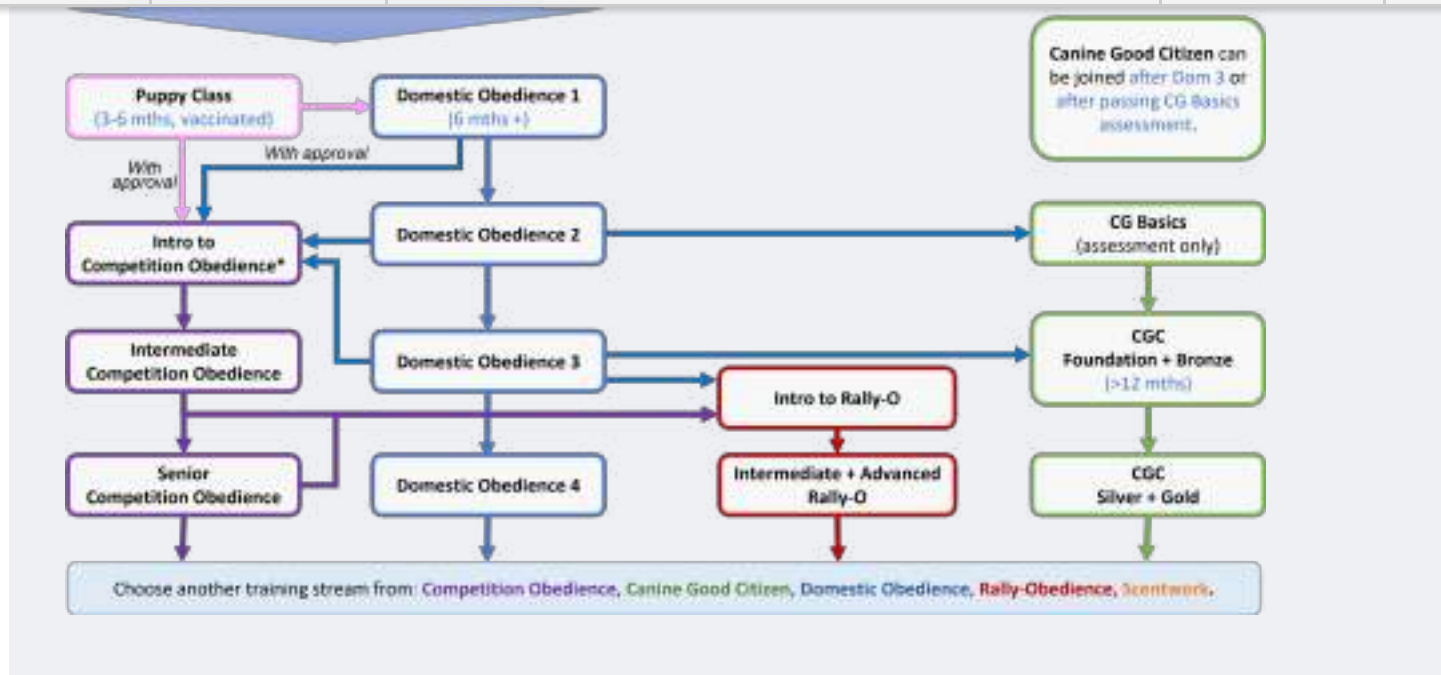
Ever wondered how long our canine friends have been part of the family? Well, Historic Environment Scotland have just reconstructed the face of a 4,000 year old dog unearthed from a tomb in Orkney where it was placed alongside some of our Neolithic ancestors. "Just as they're treasured pets today, dogs clearly had an important place in Neolithic Orkney, as they were kept and trained as pets and guards and perhaps used by farmers to help tend sheep." Check out the full article [here](#).



Thinking about which class to take next?

- Puppy classes – join after 2nd vaccination, from 3-6mths.
- Domestic Obedience – from Domestic 1 through to Domestic 4.
- Canine Good Citizen – from Foundation through Bronze and Silver to Gold.
- Competition Obedience – from Introduction through Intermediate to Senior.
- Rally Obedience - from Novice through Advanced to Excellent.

Have a look at your next training path and which pre-requisites you'll need by clicking on our Quick Reference Guide:



www.tbcc.org.nz

We hope you have enjoyed our new newsletter!

Please email titahibayobedience@gmail.com if there is something in particular you would like to see in our next edition.

See you next quarter,
The Lamppost Editorial Team



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