

Atherton Acres

Training and Boarding Kennels

www.athertonacres.com

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We offer

The Effective Alternative

To unreliable bribing with treats

To bullying or tricking your dog into compliance

To the constant battle of wills

Schooling with Drive

- Modern Methods of Applied Animal Behavioral Science
 - Learn To Use Your Dog's Inborn Talent
 - No Prolonged Battle of Wills
 - Reliable Control Off-Leash
 - Fun for Owner and Dog

Your Dog Can Learn the Rocket Recall

(and other skills)

Imagine yourself, taking a relaxing stroll in the park with your dog. “Fido” gambols freely and chases butterflies and squirrels. A family with four small children, an angrily yapping small dog and an open food basket are having their picnic lunch. “Fido” gallops over to join the festivities. You call him, and without a backwards glance “Fido” streaks towards you at top speed.

A little farther down the path a flock of joggers comes huffing your way. While “Fido” is still deciding which jogger needs a little friendly incentive to run faster, you command, Down! and “Fido” instantly drops to the ground and lies motionless while the relieved joggers toil past you.

Reaching your destination makes it necessary to traverse a busy parking lot and a road. You tell “Fido” to stay with you, and together you cross the danger zone, “Fido” by your side and your leash dangling nonchalantly from a pocket in your jeans..

Finally you arrive at the “dog field”. Quite a few dogs are already in full swing, tumbling, wrestling and running circles. “Fido” romps to his heart’s content. It is beginning to rain, and a strong wind is coming up. Turning up your collar you head for your car and whistle for “Fido”, who leaves his playmates immediately and happily races back to you. Unable to suppress a grin, you observe through the flapping windshield wipers several dogs still cavorting while their exasperated owners are trying to catch them.

Later at home, after you have fed him his dinner, a contented and tired “Fido” curls up in his favorite spot near you and settles in for a cozy evening of snoozing.

Wouldn’t you like to have this much fun with your dog? Now you can!

“He doesn’t come reliably when he is called,” is probably the complaint we hear most from frustrated owners. “He sits really well on leash and lies down, but off leash, well, he just doesn’t listen if there is any distraction, not even when I have treats.” There is ample evidence that the **traditional method of on-leash (punishment-based) obedience training, as well as simple bribery with food fail to produce reliable results when the dogs are off leash** or more than a few feet from their owners, particularly under heavy distraction.

Prolonged training on leash, training in small confined areas, and bribery with treats do **not** provide a foundation on which to build **fail-proof off-leash control**. Unlike most trainers and dog training organizations, we do not bribe by means of external reward, nor do we bully dogs into reluctant compliance. The dogs learn through play, using their natural talents, and obedience becomes a Game With Rules. The dogs’ own inborn behavior patterns, as well as the obedience skills themselves eventually become the internal reward. The goal is simple: to prepare dogs for a lifetime of self-actuated, *reliable and joyful* cooperation. Through proven methods we help dogs develop the essential foundation habits, attitudes and obedience skills.

Advancement of and respect for individual talents and abilities of each unique dog is one of the most valuable and permanent benefits of our training approach. Our special proven system guides dogs toward a love of learning and the development of successful, reliable and cheerful obedience. No battle of wills, only happy compliance with reasonable demands and a strong bond between humans and their dogs.

Puppy Playschool

(from 8 weeks to 6 months of age)

The first few months are crucial to the proper development of young dogs. This is a period during which learning takes place at an accelerated speed. Our approach lets them enjoy their “childhood” and provides a sense of security with loving, patient leadership that puppies need to thrive during this stage of intense learning. For our puppies, learning is an exciting process of discovery leading to motivation and a love of co-operation with their humans. The quality of this early care for the young dogs makes all the difference to their future experience and ultimately their lives.

We think it particularly important to treat puppies as individuals. Because young dogs are easily distracted and mature at significantly different rates, it is nearly impossible to provide a constructive learning environment in a group setting.

We meet 5 times; the first session lasts about one and a half hours and the subsequent ones approximately 45 minutes. Puppies learn at their own speed, therefore the lessons are spaced accordingly, once a week or once every other week. Socialization with other dogs and people (as needed) is part of the program. The work is done on our large fenced training field.

Homework assignments are given each lesson. Generally, a young dog who has successfully completed our Puppy Playschool will need only minimal “refresher training” as an adult.

Fee: \$ 540 — 5 private sessions. (1st lesson = 90 minutes, subsequent ones 45 min.)

Private Obedience Course

“Fido” in our opening story could be your dog! Most dogs have an almost insatiable need to be aerobically active. **It is a fact that lack of sufficient exercise tends to make dogs deeply neurotic**, not to mention overweight. It is nearly impossible to provide a healthy dog with enough aerobic activity and mental stimulation when he is always fenced in or kept on a leash. Yet in our urban and suburban society an uncontrolled animal is not only a nuisance, but also a danger to himself and others.

In this program you learn to condition your dog to be instantly responsive to you, even at a distance and under heavy distraction. Training is intense, so dog and owner must be in good physical condition.

Fee \$ 960 for 7 private lessons (1st lesson = 90 minutes, subsequent ones 45 min.)

Refresher Training for graduates of our Puppy Playschool: \$ 90 (45 minutes) per session.

Behavioral Consultation

For some behavioral problems, a single session may suffice to allow the owner to work on solutions at home.

Fee: \$ 240 (90 minutes)

Board-and-Train

On-Leash Training (prior evaluation/consultation required)

Dogs will learn to sit, lie down, come, stay, walk on leash without pulling and minimize jumping. For this they need to stay at Atherton Acres for 4 weeks. There will be 4 transfer sessions, in which we will instruct you in the proper use of commands, rewards and equipment so that you are confident and effective in handling your dog.

Fee: \$ 2980 for 4 weeks boarding and training, including 4 transfer lessons.

Off-Leash Training

Only for dogs who have completed Atherton Acres on-leash training and whose owners have maintained the training successfully. The dogs will learn to obey with voice control alone, to come instantly when called, or to lie down quickly even under heavy distraction. Unconditional obedience to these two commands gives the owner absolute control over his or her dog. Dogs stay at Atherton Acres 4 weeks. There will be four transfer lessons at the end of the training period.

Fee: \$ 2980 for 4 weeks of boarding and training, including 4 transfer lessons.

Refresher Training for "Forgetful" Dogs

Fee: \$ 745 per week of boarding and training, including one transfer lesson.

Daily rate for boarding and training: \$ 135

Service (Assistance) Dog Training

Service dogs provide a wide variety of functions for slightly disabled persons. They can provide balance, give speed by pulling a person along or upstairs, help somebody up from a low sitting position, carry light burdens, retrieve various items, or alert hearing impaired persons to certain sounds and situations. Dogs have to be able to perform some or all of these tasks in public, around traffic and loud noises and under stress as well as to remain impartial with strangers and animals. The dogs' appropriate genetic predisposition for these tasks is therefore of the essence.

We can evaluate your own dog if he or she is up to the task of being schooled as your service dog or help you find the right candidate and train him or her to make life easier for you.

Fee: Depending on service.

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A Canine Bill of Rights

*Only with well-founded knowledge can you protect the dog
from his undeserved role as lightning rod for emotions,
from his role as commercial object,
from his role as compensator of complexes,
from his role as soulless exhibition piece.*

— Eberhard Trumler

- Every dog has the right to be guided by a knowledgeable and compassionate human.
- No training methods shall be employed that weaken the dog's trust in his human. Neither shall the dog be bribed, tricked or bullied into compliance. Every dog *needs* a strong, but benevolent, *leader* whom he respects and follows unquestioningly and joyfully. The right to be the dog's leader is not God-given and must be *earned*.
- The human shall respect the dog's inalienable right to communicate in his own inborn language, **which includes jumping at his human** (but not at complete strangers). As dogs don't have hands, they use their *mouths* and bodies to play and communicate; this must be guided but not forbidden.
- All games dogs play are in their nature hunting or fighting games. The right to play these games – also with family members – must be guided but not denied.
- The human shall make no attempt to change the dog's basic character. Healthy, vigorous, vivacious dogs need to be guided by healthy, vigorous, vivacious humans. Soft, overly sensitive or physically weak humans should not guide boisterous, strong dogs.
- No dog's primary purpose shall be to serve as entertainment or an educational tool for children. No dog should ever be left unsupervised with children below the age of 12 years. All dogs need an adult human to be their principal connection. Large dogs will occasionally push over or scratch small children. The human must not manage such situations by becoming hysterical and punish the dog but temporarily separate dog and child.
- The dog's need for daily companionable aerobic, off-leash exercise shall not be abridged. Two hours daily is the required minimum. In order to

accomplish this safely, all dogs must be taught an unequivocal and immediate recall.

If the dog needs to be exercised on leash for reasons of safety, a Flexi or other long line should be used whenever possible. The walk is a gait rarely used by the healthy, vigorous dog. (The trot is the most comfortable gait.) Therefore, no dog should be condemned to heel for extended periods of time.

- All dogs have the right to be properly socialized. This does not simply mean exposure to various situations, but to teach the dog to act appropriately in a variety of social circumstances.
- All dogs have the right to be kept as healthy as possible. As the dog's body structure is that of a long distance runner, no dog should be condemned to overweight or obesity.
- Puppies have the right not to be left alone for extended periods of time. Adult dogs must not be separated from their "pack" for prolonged times. Sequestering a single dog in a yard all day long, more than occasionally, is not humane. A full-time job away from home and care for a dog often do not mix well. Excessive use of crates must be avoided.

ABOUT THE TRAINERS

Vera Reeves

Vera Reeves has been working with dogs for over 35 years and in the course of this time has trained close to four thousand dogs. For about ten years she worked under the leadership of German master trainers in Police and Working Dog schools assisting other dog handlers and training her own dogs through Schutzhund progressive degrees. After emigrating to the U.S., Vera operated her own dog training school in the South Bay Area for over twelve years. She assumed co-ownership of Atherton Acres Kennels in Novato in 1989 and is in charge of the training program. She is the author of "Barking Up The Right Tree: Tales Out of Dog School" and "Bark & Bite: Applied Ethology in Dog Training." With her own dogs, Vera has stayed active in the Sport of Versatility and Schutzhund and in Search and Rescue Training.

In addition, Vera has been a consultant to attorneys in legal matters concerning dogs, and is certified as an expert witness about dog behavior in Federal Court

Elizabeth Evans, Ph.D.

Betty Evans has over 25 years experience in training and handling dogs through AKC and Versatility progressive degrees, as well as handling and showing dogs in AKC and international conformation rings. She continues to compete and train in Versatility sport with her German Shepherd Dog, and she is a member of the United Schutzhund Clubs of America (USA) and of the California-Swiss Search Dog Association (CASSDA). As a geneticist, her special field of interest is the genetic basis for behavior in dogs.

Chantal Philipona Young

Chantal grew up with Bernese Mountain Dogs in Switzerland. Under the watchful eyes of Swiss master coaches, she very successfully trained them through obedience degrees. In the US, she continued her hobby with her Boxer, Spock, in Obedience and Agility. After Spock's retirement, Chantal entered the highly challenging and competitive field of Versatility Sport for Working Dogs (formerly Schutzhund) with her Riesenschnauzer, Guinan, whom she titled to the highest level possible. For over four years now, she has assisted Vera and Betty in the competitive training of their own dogs as well as in training dogs for the general public. Chantal is on the Board of Directors of the Working Riesenschnauzer Federation and a member of the United Schutzhund Clubs of America.