



Courteous Canine, Inc.



3414 Melissa Country Way  
Lutz, FL 33559  
Phone: 813-949-1465

info@courteouscanine.com

**COURTEOUS CANINE, Inc.**  
Dog School and Doggie Gym!

## March/April 2008 Newsletter

1. Congratulations Jacque & Jazzmanda!
2. Delta Society Pet Partners Evaluation Day
3. What's Up In Tarpon Springs
4. Courteous Canine's Recommended Reading
5. Open Call for Dog and Cat Actors and Models
6. Agility Run Thrus—Sunday, March 30
7. Discovery of Gene for Black Coat Color in Dogs Has Broad Implications



### 1. Congratulations Jacque & Jazzmanda!

Congratulations to Courteous Canine, Inc. instructor Jacque Munera and her cat Jazzmanda for passing the Kay Laurence Competency Assessment Programme (CAP) Level 2! CAP 2 is an evaluation of the clicker trainer's ability to secure a solid foundation in achieving a consistent quality and reliability to cue and develop more complex behaviors in free shaping.

Jazzmanda is the *first cat in the world* to pass the CAP 2 evaluation and the first feline registered Delta Society Pet Partner in the Tampa area! She is also in training as a service cat and is working hard to let people know cats can do great things too!



*Jazzy in her Delta Society Service Vest*



Jazzmanda is about 3 years old and was adopted last year from the Humane Society of Tampa Bay. Her name was chosen in honor of shelter manager and great friend to animals Mandy, who passed away not long after Jazzmanda's adoption. Jazzmanda had very severe food guarding problems when she was first adopted, but through clicker training has surpassed all expectations, becoming an avid trainee and advocate for all cats.

If you would like to do fun stuff with your cat, or just get them to stop scratching the furniture, call Jacque at 813-760-9541 or e-mail [Jacque@CourteousCanine.com](mailto:Jacque@CourteousCanine.com). Don't forget to check the Courteous Canine, Inc. cat page at [www.courteouscanine.com/services/cat-training/](http://www.courteouscanine.com/services/cat-training/).

## 2. Delta Society Pet Partners Evaluation Day

The next free Delta Society Pet Partners Evaluation Day has been set for Sunday, April 27 at 9:30 a.m. at Courteous Canine, Inc. Delta Society evaluates animals that want to visit people in places like nursing homes, hospitals and schools to make them feel happy!

If you think your cat, dog, pocket pet or other critter would like to do this, e-mail [Jacque@CourteousCanine.com](mailto:Jacque@CourteousCanine.com) to register.

If you want to read more about the Delta program, check out their website at [www.DeltaSociety.org](http://www.DeltaSociety.org).

## 3. What's Up in Tarpon Springs

- ◆ Now those of you in North Pinellas and South Pasco are closer to a Courteous Canine satellite location. Ann Farmer holds classes in Tarpon Spring at A Place for Pups Doggie Daycare. Ann offers puppy kindergarten, basic obedience, canine good citizen class and test, clicks for tricks and private sessions. Coming soon CONTROL UNLEASHED.

Call Ann at (727) 415-1567 if you want to find out more about classes or need a private session!

- ◆ Bark at the Ball Park is Sunday April 13th at 1:00 p.m. and Friday, July 11th at 7:00 p.m. This is a fun event that benefits the Humane Society of Pinellas. You can bring your dog to a baseball game at Bright House Field in Clearwater. For tickets call 727-467-4457.

## 4. Courteous Canine's Recommended Reading *By Ann Farmer*

This month's doggie reading suggestion: The BARK

Usually I feature a book that highlights the dog and human bond. This quarterly magazine has a wide variety of great dog reading.

In the April issue there is an informative article on behavior by Patricia McConnell, Ph.D. In "Walking the Talk: What Dogs Understand and How Do They Understand It?" McConnell begins with the story of Alex, the famous African Grey parrot who taught researcher Irene Pepperberg, Ph.D., so much about how animals think. McConnell goes on to explain the importance of this information for our dogs and our understanding of them.

In "Who Knew? Revisiting the Pet Food Recall's Mystery Ingredient" Marion Nestle, Ph.D., M.P.H. and Malden Nesheim, Ph.D., educate us on



melamine, the substance responsible for kidney failure in pets who ate foods that contained wheat gluten. It is used to enhance the protein in wheat gluten.

Another wonderful article is “Kids and Dogs: Turning Promises Into Practice” by Amy Robinson, C.P.D.T. All kids beg and plead for a dog and promise to care for them. As time passes, sometimes the novelty wears off and children lose their fascination with their new friend. This feature will help parents encourage and keep everyone involved with their canine family member. Robinson suggests having kids involved in training and making decisions for food, leashes and toys. Time and energy are required to make the kid and dog relationship a happy and safe one, but the return on the investment is HUGE for all involved.

“Literary Dogs: Writers Imagine the World From a Canine Point of View: by D.L. Pughe is another enjoyable article.

In “Tasty, Disgusting Edible or Not—Everything’s Fair Game” Nick Trout, M.A., Vet M.B.,D.A.C.V.S., E.C.V.S., shares stories of things ingested by dogs and what it takes to remove them. A must read for humans sharing their life with a Labrador.

An interview with Ladybird the animated dog from the television show “The King of the Hill,” explains the real dogs behind the character. John Althuler, executive producer, helps out in the interview.

Bark magazine is a must for any dog lover. There are a wide variety of articles and the photography and illustrations are wonderful. A very enjoyable read with one or many dogs curled up next to you. Bark magazine—the modern dog culture magazine is available at book stores, such as, Barnes and Noble or at [www.TheBark.com](http://www.TheBark.com).

## 5. Open Call for Dog and Cat Actors and Models



Courteous Canine, Inc. is adding an animal acting page to our Web site. We have been providing dogs for print and commercial filming, as well as movies. We are organizing a portfolio of potential stars.

If you want your dog or cat to be considered for acting roles or modeling, please e-mail a picture of your pet’s face to [Info@CourteousCanine.com](mailto:Info@CourteousCanine.com)

## 6. Agility Run Thrus—Sunday, March 30

Cool Critters Dog Training School is having agility run thrus this Sunday, March 30 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. There will be Standard, Jumpers, Tunnelers and Hoopers courses set up.

\$5.00 first run (per dog) & \$2.00 second run (per dog)  
\$10.00 Unlimited runs & dinner (hot dogs, burgers, chips & drinks)

Cool Critters is located at: 3136 Oak Tree Place in Valrico, FL. (813) 653-1494

From Hwy 60: Go south on Miller Rd, to Oaklane Road, go right on Oaklane and then left on Oak Tree Place.

From Bloomingdale: Go north on Lithia Pinecrest, right on Oaklane and right on Oak Tree Place.

## 7. **Discovery of Gene for Black Coat Color in Dogs Has Broad Implications**

*University of California, Santa Cruz Press Release*

*November 27, 2007*

The discovery of a gene responsible for black coat color in dogs may help researchers understand fundamental processes in humans, including the regulation of body weight and stress hormones.

The gene produces a type of protein previously thought to play an important role in the immune system. However, the new findings suggest that these proteins, known as defensins, may be involved in regulating other important processes in the body, including pigmentation, energy balance, and production of glucocorticoid hormones.



"This study has uncovered a new level of regulation in the body. We don't know yet, but it could have implications for understanding genetic factors involved in obesity, diabetes, and related diseases," said Glenn Millhauser, professor of chemistry and biochemistry at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Millhauser and three graduate students in his laboratory--Matthew Nix, Darren Thompson, and Bin Yu--are coauthors of the paper describing the new findings, published online November 2 in the journal *Science*. The study was led by a team of geneticists at Stanford University.

The determination of coat color in dogs has long been a mystery. While most mammals share the same genetic mechanism to determine coat color, dogs seemed to be an exception. The Stanford researchers, led by geneticist Greg Barsh, identified a new gene in dogs that acts in addition to the two main coat-color genes recognized in other mammals. To their surprise, the new gene makes a beta-defensin protein belonging to the large and variable family of proteins called defensins, thought to play a role in fighting infections.

To find out how the beta-defensin operates in the determination of coat color, the researchers needed purified samples of the active protein. But defensins are notoriously difficult to work with in the laboratory. So Barsh turned to Millhauser, a longtime collaborator, to produce a supply of properly structured beta-defensin for laboratory studies.

The researchers found that the protein engages the melanocortin pathway, a circuit of molecular interactions that controls the type of melanin and amount of cortisol produced by the body. Barsh and Millhauser have been interested in this pathway because it determines not only skin and hair color, but also stress adaptation and weight regulation.

"This gives us a new way of viewing the processes controlled by the melanocortin system. We suspect that defensins will turn out to have a role in all aspects of melanocortin signalling, not just coat color," Millhauser said.

The discovery of a new participant in this pathway opens up additional areas for drug research, said the article's co-first author, Sophie Candille, a former graduate student in Barsh's lab.



Candille visited five Bay Area dog shows over six months to gather hundreds of samples by gently swabbing the inside of the dogs' cheeks with a brush. The project began a few years ago with boxers and Great Danes of different colors. Candille identified a region of the genome that differed between them. Then she moved on to 36 other breeds, ranging from Large Munsterlanders to miniature schnauzers.

"Looking within one breed rapidly identifies the general region, but looking at different breeds allows you to home in on the gene that's responsible," Barsh said.

Candille's work narrowed the genome region to a gene that makes a beta-defensin protein. One version of the beta-defensin gene produces yellow dogs, a mutant version of the gene produces black. Co-first author Chris Kaelin went on to prove it. When he inserted the dog gene in transgenic mice, their fur grew out black.

But the finding's relevance extends far beyond fur color. The beta-defensin gene is a member of the unusually large and variable defensin family of genes. A human can have between 40 and 50 different defensin genes; dogs can have up to 46.

Though researchers had assumed the defensin proteins were microbe fighters, Barsh isn't so sure. "We really have very little evidence that defensins do much in terms of defending," he said. "The genetic approach is more agnostic, and suggests that defensins have additional or alternative functions outside the immune system."

Barsh and Millhauser's immediate plans are to learn more about what human defensins do. A longer-term application is to discover whether defensins will serve as templates for drugs.

Other collaborators in the study were former Stanford graduate student Julie Kerns, who verified that typical mammalian coat color genetics were not operative in dogs; mouse geneticist Bruce Cattanaach, who also breeds boxers and helped recruit many samples; and Sheila Schmutz, a dog geneticist at the University of Saskatchewan and a Large Munsterlander breeder.

The research was funded by grants from the National Institutes of Health.



If you have ideas for newsletter content or pictures you would like to contribute please email

[Info@CourteousCanine.com](mailto:Info@CourteousCanine.com)

**Happy Clicker Training,**

***The Staff of Courteous Canine, Inc.***