

The Greater Saint Louis Training Club



The Greater St. Louis Training Club is the oldest AKC club in St. Louis and the only club in the Metro St. Louis area to use force-free training methods.

Inside you will find information about our mission, history and current activities. You will also find video links for live demonstrations of our classes and clicker training.

Mission Statement:

The Greater St. Louis Training Club advocates and delivers innovative force-free canine training, sponsors events, and provides education for dog enthusiasts to advance the human-canine bond. We are non-profit and community centered.

Our history:

The GSLTC was founded in 1940, making it the oldest obedience club in the Saint Louis area. GSLTC has proudly offered over 60 years of training and over 50 years of obedience trials. We are also the only **AKC-member** obedience club in the St. Louis area.

Our members:

Our organization includes a wide variety of members, from pet owners to trainers who are active in every branch of dog sports and obedience. Those interested in becoming volunteer trainers for the club may apply to our unique six-month Assistant Trainers Course, in which students acquire hands-on learning and direct experience working with shelter dogs, apprentice with experienced trainers, and eventually become assistants and head trainers for the club. Students interested in taking the Assistant Trainers Course can contact us for more information. Members also enjoy social events, a quarterly newsletter, class discounts, and the chance to connect with other people who love working and playing with their dogs.

Our Training:

Our trainers include graduates of the Karen Pryor Academy (KPA) as well as many Certified Professional Dog Trainers (CPDT) with the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT). Our primary method of training is clicker training along with various force-free techniques. We offer classes in puppy, basic, intermediate and advanced adult, competition, Canine Good Citizen prep and testing, as well as seminars and classes for dogs with shy, reactive or aggressive behavior. In addition, we conduct weekly lectures on ethology and canine behavior for the general public and students starting classes. For more information on training classes, please visit: http://www.gsltc.org/class_OurClasses.html, and for live video demonstrations of clicker training, visit these links:

Community Awareness and Events:

We are very active in the community at-large and participate in adoption events, public seminars, community service programs, festivals and events. In recent years, we've hosted guest speakers such as Nicole Wilde, Hannah Branigan, Sue Alisby, Dr. Roger Abrantes, and Dr. Patricia McConnell. Every May we host our annual American Kennel Club Obedience Trial as well. Please check our website for a current list of events. <http://www.gsltc.org/>

Current Board Officers:

Bill Geise	President
Barb Kohner	Vice President
Sandi Antalick	2 nd Vice President
Fran Beezley	Secretary
Martin Schnitker	Treasurer

Community Relations Committee:

Amy Mitchell, Chair

Education & Training Committee:

Barb Kohner, Director

Marketing Sub-Committee:

Amy Mitchell, Chair

Barb Hurley, Events

Business Committee:

Abbey Spencer, Chair

People Committee:

Diane Goebel, Chair

Shelter Outreach Sub-Committee:

Lisa Ellis, Chair

For more information, please contact:

<http://www.gsltc.org/>

314-832-DOGS (3647) or questions@gsltc.org

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non profit community centered

www.gsltc.org

Bill Giese
Acting President,
Board of Directors
Greater St. Louis Training Club

Bill joined GSLTC in 2009 and completed the trainer's class the same year. Since then, Bill has taught Puppy, Adult, Dogs With Issues, and Behavior and Training 101 classes. He also served on the Board of Directors as both an officer and the Chair of the People Committee until 2012, when he was nominated as President of the Board of Directors.

Bill became interested in training after adopting a Dachshund puppy-mill rescue named Sam and mixed-breed Libby, who came off the street and straight into his heart and home. Living with Sam and Libby, and learning clicker training, has opened Bill's eyes to the special relationships we can have with our companion animals when that relationship is built on respect, patience, kindness, and fun learning opportunities. Bill loves helping others learn to live in harmony with their dogs and watching relationships that develop and grow.

Currently, he is working towards his CPDT certification. Bill and his wife, Linda, have previously been involved with a Dachshund breed rescue group and volunteered at a local shelter.

Barb Kohner
Acting Vice-President
Board of Directors
Chair, Training Committee
Greater St. Louis Training Club

Barb Kohner has loved animals her whole life and grew up with many cats and dogs. They rescued their first dog, a Brittany/Beagle mix named Sam, seven years ago and their second, a Brittany named Gage, four months ago. Gage achieved his Canine Good Citizen certification in 2007, and Sam was accredited in 2010. They enjoy walking the neighborhood, hiking local trails, meeting new people and being petted by whomever they meet.

Barb became involved with GSLTC when she enrolled in the Family Dog series with Sam in 2007. Since then, she has become immersed in the Club. In addition to her duties on the Board of Directors, Barb is also the Director of Training, co-teaches the Assistant Trainers Course and assists with group classes.

As a psychologist, Barb works with children who have learning and adjustment problems. While taking classes with the GSLTC, Barb was delighted to find that the Club employed the same

learning methods she often used in her professional work. Additionally, she was impressed with the positive attitudes of trainers, and how they communicated effectively with dogs. Barb says:

“In my work with children, I often find that despite the best of intentions, parents and teachers tend to misinterpret negative behavior as a "motivation" problem or "stubbornness" instead of what it usually is - a reaction to stress and lack of confidence or a skill deficit of some sort. Adults then fall into the trap of using negative consequences to try to "motivate" the child. These approaches not only fail to produce the desired effects, but often result in even greater frustration for everyone. When I took classes with the GSLTC, I met trainers who understood the underlying causes of negative behavior and taught the kinds of responses I believe in and try to promote in my work. I greatly admired and respected their knowledge and wanted to be a part of this group.”

Barb holds a Ph.D in Clinical Psychology from Washington University in St. Louis, Mo.

Sandi Antalick
Acting 2nd Vice-President
Board of Directors
Greater St. Louis Training

Whether Sandi is training in class with her Beagle, Lou, or watching from the sidelines as a Registrar, she’s continually impressed with how the GSLTC trainers interact with their students. She knows from personal experience that their one-on-one instruction is always positive, helpful and supportive, and these experiences inspired her to join the Club and learn more about training.

Sandi joined the GSLTC in January of 2010. With her trusty sidekick Lou, she has taken classes since early 2009, and has taken all levels of training. A member of Dog Scout Troop 149 since 2008, Lou became an official Dog Scout the following year. And although Lou has not earned a title yet, he and Sandi enjoy competing in Rally, as well as hiking, taking long walks and investigating exciting new places. Recently, Lou earned his Dog Scout hiking badge and has started to learn Tracking.

Additionally, Sandi has served the GSLTC Inventory committee since 2011 and as a Registrar for classes and events since 2012. In July of 2012, she was appointed 2nd Vice President on the GSLTC Board and is serving her first term successfully. Sandi aspires to take the Assistant Trainers Course soon and start her journey as a trainer. She shares her home with 3 Beagles: Lou, Snickers and Angel.



The Greater St. Louis Training Club FAQs

What is the mission of the GSLTC?

The Greater St. Louis Training Club advocates and delivers innovative force-free canine training, sponsors events, and provides education for dog enthusiasts to advance the human-canine bond. We are non-profit and community centered.

Where do you hold classes?

Currently we operate out of the Shrewsbury Community Center, located in Shrewsbury, Missouri, with an additional small schedule of classes at the main branch of the Humane Society of Missouri, located on Macklind Avenue.

What training methods do you use in your classes?

We're focused on getting quick results with humane methods, therefore we use reward-based techniques and clicker training to maximize results and accelerate your dog's learning at every class level. Our goal is to work with your dog's unique personality and build a bond based on trust and respect.

What is positive reinforcement training?

You may have heard a lot about "positive reinforcement" training lately. Positive reinforcement is terminology used in Operant Conditioning, which was pioneered by B.F. Skinner. Operant Conditioning is one style of learning theory which breaks learning into 4 quadrants: positive reinforcement, negative reinforcement, positive punishment and negative punishment.

Positive and negative in this sense, are used mathematically – positive means to add, negative means to take away. Positive reinforcement is the optimal means of learning, as you are reinforcing desirable behavior. Positive punishment means you are adding something unpleasant in order to stop a behavior, such as pushing on a dog's hips to make them sit, or using an electronic collar to get a response. Positive reinforcement does not mean trainers and owners allow or coddle unwanted or undesirable behavior! It means we do not use force, fear, or intimidation to get our dogs to comply.

The training community is split into 2 groups – those who use positive punishment and those who train primarily with positive reinforcement. Positive punishment comes with a high price and can often cause more damage to your dog, than good. Because most behavior issues – even simple ones such as jumping up – are the result of stress, fear, over arousal (a form of anxiety), or miscommunication on the part of the owner, using something undesirable (positive punishment) does not address the structural issues of your dog's behavior, and can therefore backfire. Adding the stress of something fearful or unpleasant to a dog who is already stressed, only teaches them to be more stressed and act out from that stress. And what is unpleasant to you is not the same for your neighbor down the street, or your dog sleeping at the foot of your bed.

The term “positive reinforcement” has been misused, misaligned and in general, misunderstood by positive punishment-based trainers and the general public. At the GSLTC, we strive to help people better understand these ideas and how to train effectively and quickly without damage to their dogs.

Why is important for my trainers to be certified?

Choosing the right trainer or training organization is important however. Because the dog training industry is currently unregulated, there are many types of trainers working today. That can make it hard when choosing which trainer is right for you and your dog. Certifications and educational backgrounds show that a trainer takes his or her profession seriously, and is dedicated to being the best for their clients. However, not all certifications are the same. At the GSLTC, all of our classes are taught by qualified trainers who are highly knowledgeable and certified. We pride ourselves on our deep knowledge base and highly educated team of professionals.

What classes do you offer for dogs with special needs?

Not all dogs are ready for group classes. Some dogs have issues, which need to be addressed before they join group class.

- Excessive barking

- Excessive fearfulness

- Uncontrollable behavior

- Unfriendliness

Our innovative Dogs With Issues series is designed to help dogs that struggle with behavior issues ranging from barking and lunging, to cowering and hiding. Our goal is to help your dog feel safe, relaxed, and in control while out-and-about in the world. The program begins with the Dogs With Issues seminar, which is a 2-part class just for owners; followed by classes tailored specifically to your dog’s special needs, and that provide hands-on class instruction and personal attention.

Are children allowed in class?

We encourage families to attend class together and welcome children who like training their dogs! However, because of their quick movements and louder voices, children can sometimes startle dogs. For safety reasons, children younger than 5 are not allowed in class. Adults must accompany students younger than 18.

Please see our website for a full list of class expectations for children.

COMMENTS FROM OUR TRAINING CLASS STUDENTS:

Trainers were so kind to us and our dog

Instructors attentive and personal, good control of dogs in class.

I did my puppy class somewhere else and I learned more (and saw more improvement in my dog) in one class at GSLTC than the 8 classes there! I recommend often.

Personal attention by knowledgeable trainers

I was really impressed with all the one-on-one attention we received. The trainers were great!

Patient and expert trainers!

I loved the individual attention given to my puppy (10 mos) by the trainers. We got her at 5 mos old from a shelter and she can be very shy around people. The trainers in my Foundation class went above and beyond to help socialize her and give her special attention. I really appreciated that.

I always recommend GSLTC puppy classes to everyone I know with a puppy.

Everyone was aware of what I wanted to accomplish with my dog and helped me achieve it, and gave me lots of help and encouragement!

The trainers are just excellent, and the entire approach to dog teaching/training is very positive.

The instructors were all very well qualified and very helpful with any of the commands that we were learning on a particular evening.

We felt that is the strong point of the training, good instructors and very nice people.

I felt that there was fantastic teacher to student ratio so we could always had the help and attention we needed! I also love that you can miss a class and not fall behind.

My dog got to play with other dogs, which is a huge deal to us!



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