

MATT

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page, have proven highly successful. From puppy training to dealing with aggressive dogs, Luchsinger states on NW Balanced Dog Training's website: "There's no dog that we can't handle," but reminds owners that, "...it's up to you to make the change!"

Luchsinger hasn't been a full-time dog trainer for long, but he's owned and been around since he was a kid growing up in the hilly region of Central New York. His wife, Sarah Breeze, also works with animals as a certified vet technician at the All Animal Care Clinic in Hood River and the Tanasbourne Veterinary Emergency clinic in Beaverton.

"I grew up on a large farm in Tully, (N.Y.) so we always had a dog, if not two, and horses and cows, so I kind of grew up with them," he says.

After graduating Tully High School in 2003, Luchsinger moved out to Hood River to ski, although he grew up playing lacrosse and passed up opportunities to play at the collegiate level. Lacrosse, he notes, is a lifestyle back east, where "kids are literally raised with a stick in their hand." (Side note: while dog training is his full-time job, Luchsinger also serves as the head coach for the Hood River Valley High School boys lacrosse team, who saw success this year with the team's first-ever Cascade Cup championship win.)

Luchsinger spent his time skiing and working at various board shops around town such as Second Wind and Big Winds. His path to dog training began, however, in 2010, when he went to the Hukari Animal Shelter and adopted Buck, a 7-month-old pit bull/American bulldog mix.

"I started getting into training with him right away because I wanted him to be a good ambassador for the breed and I knew with that breed being so powerful that I had to train him," he says.

But Luchsinger needed help, as he says Buck "missed a prime age in his socialization," and had issues with aggression and getting along with other dogs. Luchsinger went through multiple trainers and while their instruction helped some, Luchsinger felt

he "never got the results I wanted," and didn't agree with their methods. Instead, Luchsinger did his own research, reviewing trainers from all different parts of the country, found trainers he liked, and took classes from them to help learn how to train Buck.

For Luchsinger, he felt the problem was the improper focus on treats.

"A lot of trainers, they want to use treats to get the dogs really excited and away from the situation, where I focus on a state of mind," he explains. "Especially when a dog is aggressive or dog-reactive, we want to get that dog to get calmed down, we don't want to get that dog jacked up. I felt like a lot of the training was, 'Oh, we have to give them treats! Give them treats! Give them treats!' And what I found was that every time we were doing that, we were rewarding a bad behavior, even if that dog turned away from that other dog, we're still rewarding that state of mind where they're excited and adrenalized, where I wanted him to be calm and relaxed."

Luchsinger found success with Buck, able to resolve or ameliorate many of his issues, and began helping friends with their dogs as well. Eventually, he felt like he could train dogs full time and "took a leap" by deciding to open his own business, noting that he felt like "there were enough people who wanted help... and there were certainly enough dogs" in the Gorge. The business has grown by leaps and bounds, with clients coming from as far away as Eugene, he says.

Luchsinger employs a variety of methods to train his animals — far too many to go into here — but notes that you "have to find what motivates the dog to be successful," whether its toys or food or something else. He only has to teach a few styles of commands (down, sit, place, recall) and stresses the importance of leaving emotion out of training, noting that a "calm dog is a great dog." When teaching a new command, Luchsinger says he doesn't use his voice at all, but rather body language or pressure, appealing to dogs' natural communication methods. When a dog begins to learn a command, Luchsinger will then gradually add more and more distractions, simulating real-world scenarios, and teaching the dog to stay calm



Photo by Ben Mitchell

DOGPILE: Three of Matt Luchsinger's students play together at the conclusion of a training session. From bottom to top are Daisy, a 15-week-old bloodhound, Jack, a 15-week-old Australian shepherd, and Capone, a year-and-a-half-old Belgian Malinois.

amidst chaos. Oftentimes, you can see Luchsinger around town, doing his training right in public areas so that the dogs can get used to the distractions.

Most of his classes are boot-camp style, where the animals live with Luchsinger 24/7 from anywhere from two weeks to five weeks if it's a special case. And when the dog is reunited with its owner (after the owner gets some instruction from Luchsinger as well), and both animal and human are able to have a happy life together... well, for Luchsinger, it doesn't get much better than that.

"Being able to transform their dog from wanting to take off and run away nervous, fearful, to walking great on a leash and improving not just the dog's life, but the human's life — the reward out of that is just amazing," he says. "It's an awesome, awesome feeling."

Check out videos of Luchsinger's training in action on NW Balanced Dog Training's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/nwdogtraining.

HOOD RIVER NEWS (ISSN 07465823) is published twice weekly, every Wednesday and Saturday. Subscription rates: \$42 per year prepaid (\$36 for senior citizens, 65 and over) in Hood River County and western Wasco County, Oregon; and Klickitat and Skamania counties, Washington. Elsewhere, \$68 prepaid per year. Known office of publication, 419 State Ave., Hood River, OR 97031-2031. Periodicals postage paid at Hood River, Oregon. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to HOOD RIVER NEWS, P.O. Box 390, Hood River, OR 97031-0103.

FAIR

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night the 2043th Army Band will perform.

For full schedule details, the best resource is the Fair Book, available at businesses throughout the Gorge.

Also new this year: not one but two golf carts to transport those who need mobility assistance. Griffith Motors and Les Schwab Tires donated the vehicles to the Fair, and they will make the rounds between the fair office and parking and animal barns and other far-flung areas of the fair.

New to the fair is the first 50 Plus Expo on July 23, an opportunity to learn about a variety of services and programs for older adults in the Gorge. Thursday is Senior Citizens' Day — seniors pay \$5 to get in.

Expo vendors and participants will include massage and acupuncture services, senior and assistand living centers, home care providers, health and rehabilitation services, exercise and recreation outlets, realtors, dentists, and more.

Columbia Cascade Housing Coporation is working with Mid-Columbia Senior Center, Falstone Living, and Mid-Columbia Medical Center to put on the event.

Oregon State University Extension, Providence Hospice of the Gorge, Mid Columbia Fire and Rescue and Hood River Fire Department, and the Veterans Services offices of Hood River and Wasco counties will be on hand.

Learn about housing, life planning, weight control, services for disabled adults, health diagnoses, caregiver stress and other topics surrounding aging.

Regular general admission prices to the fair are \$7 per adult Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, and \$10 on Saturday. Admission for children aged 6-12 is \$2. Children

under 6 admitted free. Season tickets are available (\$24 adults, \$5 ages 6-12 inclusive).

The fair opens each day at noon; carnival rides begin at 1 p.m. Check the schedule, as FFA and 4-H events begin earlier. Many favorite displays have moved to the blue gym this year from the gold. Musical performances are free with paid admission.

Friday evening, beginning at 4:30 p.m., is the 4-H/FFA Livestock Auction in the livestock arena — the all-important culmination of a year's work for the 4-H and FFA livestock exhibitors. Check the schedule for all the 4-H and FFA competitions and activities.

Country music star trio Gloriana performs Saturday evening, July 25. Hood River's Ben Bonham will open.

Musical entertainment begins Wednesday evening on the park stage at 8 p.m., with a Patsy Cline impersonator. On Thursday at 7:30 p.m., the 204th Army Band performs on the main stage. On Friday, it's a full evening of Hispanic music on the main stage, with Oregon bands playing from 7-9 p.m., and California's Banda La Movida beginning at 9 p.m. Hood River Supply, Juanita's Fine Foods, and Hood River Taqueria are sponsors.

Gloriana debuted at No. 2 on the Billboard Country Albums chart, becoming the best-selling debut country act of 2009. They performed as Taylor Swift's opening act during her Fearless Tour, and have also opened for Jason Aldean, Alan Jackson, Brooks & Dunn, and the Zac Brown Band. Awards have continued to be come to the group, and in June 2015 they released their latest album — Gloriana THREE — which bolsters their signature harmonies with new musical styles. Brothers Tom and Mike Gossen and Rachel Reinert make up the trio.

Also free with fair admission are many other great attractions — many found in

SCHEDULE DETAILS

For additional information about the Hood River County Fair, call the fair office at 541/354-2865, or check the website at hoodriverfair.org.

Entry schedule for Adult baked goods, clothing food preservation, fruits and vegetables, textiles and youth baked goods (in Community Building) — 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday and 8 to 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

For Commercial exhibits, art, hobbies and handicrafts, photography and ceramics (Blue Gym) — 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday and 8 to 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday.

Open Class exhibits judging will be Tuesday from 1-7 p.m. and for Flowers, Wednesday noon to 4:30 p.m.

the park area, or around the fairgrounds. Kidz Dental is sponsoring many of the park activities.

In the park, the "Walk on the Wild Side" exotic animal show displays a wide range of exotic animals and reptiles in a jungle atmosphere, and Godfrey the Magician serves up award-winning comedy and levitation tricks. Professor Bamboozle's Road Show brings laughs and fun — and balloons — to the park and fairgrounds. And look for Dr. Solar's Good Time, Traveling Medicine Show's unique magical and educational family-friendly entertainment.

"Wool Busting!" is back. Kids up to 55 pounds and younger than 12 can try their hand at riding sheep. It's a start for the next generation of rodeo stars. Shows daily! There's fun for bigger kids, too, including the Buck-A-Ewe mechanical sheep, and "Just for Fun" Roping Clinics. Kids can also enjoy more sedate pony rides in the park.

LILA

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p.m. and running until 8 p.m.

The Halls are planning a party that will be part birthday, part prom, part Cinderella ball, part wedding day.

People are encouraged to show up in ball gowns and formal wear. Lila wants this to be the best princess ball ever," Lorenzen said. (Kids must be present with a parent.)

Lila will arrive in a horse and carriage and walk down a red carpet.

"It will be an event not to miss with food, games, real princesses, music, dancing, photo booths and more," said family friend Jenny Lorenzen, who is organizing the party.

Third Street (between

State and Oak) will be closed off for food, games, and more.

People are welcome to bring gifts, although gift cards are a highly recommended idea. A donation jar will be available as well.

Blake Hall, Lila's stepfather, said his friends and fellow Marines made her an honorary Marine. "She's so proud of that," he said in a segment aired on KOIN-TV this week.

"We want to make number 5 her wedding, her prom, her Prince Charming, everything she won't get," Heidi told KOIN.

If you cannot make the party you may send cards: Lila May, PO Box 125, Hood River, OR 97031

Parking will be available at Hood River News, located three blocks away at 6th and State streets.

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