

Dog whispering at Gilpin Community Center



Dave Gibson
Gilpin County

In his play *Hamlet* written over four centuries ago, William Shakespeare popularized the adage, “Every dog has its day.” In the case of some local canines, that day is every other Sunday at the Gilpin Community Center, 250 Norton Drive, Black Hawk, during obedience training classes.

As much as we adore them, peoples’ pooches would quickly become unmanageable without a few simple rules for them to follow; bad manners needn’t be part of the arrangement. Training is essential to foster a long-lasting, healthy, and happy relationship between owner and pet. At Gilpin’s dog obedience classes, the basics are covered starting with learning how to walk on leash, heel, sit, stay, and come. Later on, the canines might perfect shaking hands, rolling over, or negotiating obstacles on the dog agility course.

Involved in dog training for 33 years and teaching at Gilpin Community Center since it was built 20 years ago, instructor Casey Newman emphasizes positive reinforcement

PHOTO BY DAVE GIBSON

It’s a dog’s life

People from left to right; Sue Graham, Gaylyn Graham, Blakely Parton, and Casey Newman. Dogs from left to right; Finn, Hobbit, Charlie, and E2.

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Fiat Fest; 5K, food trucks and more
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Shopping 4th Fridays at Caribou Village



PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER KELLEY

Showcasing local artists and artisans at 4th Fridays

Local jewelry designer Evi3lution (Evelyn Blodgett) offered her custom made earrings, bracelets, and necklaces. See story page 12.

- QUOTE OF THE WEEK -

Dogs and philosophers do the greatest good and get the fewest rewards.
— Diogenes

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PHOTOS BY DAVE GIBSON

During the dog days of summer
 Top, left; A lifelong bond has developed between Blakely and her dog Charlie. Top, right; A well-trained E2 is eager to please. Bottom, right; Kibbles 'n Bits speeds the process. Bottom, middle; A fairgrounds tractor makes a convenient obstacle. Bottom, left; Hobbit is an accomplished barrel-roller.

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including verbal praise, a treat, or a scratch behind the ears when the animal does well. You may think of her as “the dog whisperer,” and in fact, she used to train horses with a similar approach. Scolding a dog when it doesn’t perform isn’t part of the curriculum. Someone once said, “You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar.” Colonel Potter of the television show *M*A*S*H* knew that, “If you pull the reins too tight, the horse will buck.” The same holds true in dog training.

At the core of it all is having fun and developing a close bond with your animal. Once that unwavering love and trust is achieved, they will

go to the ends of the earth for you. The dogs are eager to please and try new things. Attempting to balance on a 2x4 that they’ve never seen before is an interesting game to them that they know will result in a reward. Even being taught how not to rush past people on stairs is an enjoyable exercise. Perhaps not achieving a perfect outcome the first time, Newman relates that, “There are no wrong results.” Over time as the dog builds confidence, it will likely do anything asked of it, culminating in a well-behaved companion and satisfaction for dog and owner for a job well done.

For more information about the classes, you’re welcome to contact Casey Newman at 303-258-3329.

The cover for "The Mountain Ear Podcast" features a vintage-style microphone icon against a background of a sunset and mountains. Below the title, it says "Everybody's Listening" and features a photo of Reeder John Goldman playing a guitar.

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