

*This is the Life! Langley Times celebrates Seniors Week***'PAWS' Loose & Fancy Free...**

Canine Musical Freestyle is a choreographed set of moves to music by both handler and dog performed to music.

In 2000, a group of Lower Mainland dog handlers decided to start a local freestyle club. The club held its first competition in 2000 as a World Canine Freestyle Organization. Since then, under the guidance of trainer and choreographer Ray Underwood, the club has branched out on its own, holding at least one Lower Mainland competition each year and supporting affiliate clubs (one in Washington and two on Vancouver Island) with annual competitions.

By far, the greatest energies of the club are directed toward demonstrations. When Paws 2 Dance first became a club, word soon circulated that they put on a unique and engaging show. Soon, organizations such as the SPCA, WAG (in Whistler) and Critter Care Wildlife Rescue were calling on them for demonstrations at their fund raisers.

The Lower Mainland Dog Fancier's Association invited Paws 2 Dance to provide noon-hour entertainment at their huge dog show held at the TradeX in Abbotsford. The TradeX performances were a hit with the public and they have been invited back each year since. In 2007 they raised enough money to acquire portable matting,

which enables them to perform at Seniors' Centres and Care facilities. Over the past few years they have performed at the Cloverdale Rodeo as well as other town fairs.

Three years ago, the club felt ready to tackle a new challenge – a theatrical performance that told a dramatic story and showcased the dogs.

Ray Underwood agreed to lead the group and thus was born *Escape the Darkness*, a theatrical production staged at the Bell Performing Arts Centre in Surrey last November. What a crazy couple of years the club had, raising money to stage such an elaborate performance, building two sets, sewing costumes, and rehearsing with dogs and indoor kites (another element in the production). The production went off amazingly well and the 800+ audience gave Paws 2 Dance a standing ovation. This was certainly a first in the dog world.

Because Paws 2 Dance is a non-profit organization, they were able to make generous donations to Langley's Critter Care and the Brookwood Senior Centre.

In 2012, the group plans to stage a second production, this one entitled: *Shadows of Eternity*. The set is ancient Egypt and the story promises to be even more exciting and rehearsals have already started.

**HERE IS A LIST OF UP-COMING EVENTS:**

June 4, 5: Island Fling (a Paws 2 Dance Competition in Courtenay)
June 6: Langley Seniors Resources Open House
June 11: Anacortes, Washington; Fairhaven, Burnaby
June 16: Whiterock Come Share
June 18: Garage Sale at Brookwood Seniors Centre

June 20: Demo, Crofton Manor, Vancouver
June 26: Delta Animal Expo, Ladner
July 9, 10: Critter Care
July 20: Fairhaven, Burnaby
July 26: Fairhaven, Burnaby
August 20: Tapestry, UBC

To book a demonstration, contact the Demo Chair, Jan Hodge, at janken62@telus.net.

