



The Wag

Paws 2 Dance Newsletter
Volume 11
February 2012

Coach's Corner With Ray Underwood

The Power Warm up.

Not all dogs are always bursting with enthusiasm – many need to be cranked up a little while others are anxious and need to be reassured. This is true not only for performances but also for training.

For a fast, effective warm-up that energizes and reassures, try these tips:

- For each move, use an excitement-building voice while delaying the cue: e.g. "Ready . . . steady . . . heel!"
- Ensure success by cueing your dog as much as is required
- Ask for only one move at a time
- The instant the movement is complete, reward and praise enthusiastically
- Include mostly easy moves but put in one or two difficult moves from routine
- Repeat the same move two or three times

Dogs gain confidence because they can easily do the moves. Dogs are happy because the handler is clearly happy with them.

Example warm-up:

- power starts 2x
- single weave 2x
- circle 2x
- back heel start 2x
- difficult move from routine 2x
- 2nd difficult move from routine 2x
- spin 2x
- dog's favorite move 2x



Harta and Dansa demonstrate what Heather calls the "Around - Under."

Calendar of Events

Competitions

WCFO: Arlington, March 3 & 4

P2D Prancing Paws: Cloverdale, April 28

P2D Island Fling: Victoria, July TBA

P2D BSB: Sequim, September 29/30

Fun Matches

Emerald City: February 25, Arlington

Lower Mainland: March 11, Church, Langley

New Classes

Mutley Crew: Beginners Freestyle, Jan. 15

Level II Freestyle, starts March 4

Dressage Class to start in May

Seminars

Vickie Phillips, Dog First Aid, Langley, TBA

M. Pouliot, Kathy Sdao, Sumner, April 14/15

Ray Underwood, Langley, April 29

Nancy VonKoehnen, Lynnwood, July 21/22

Michele Pouliot, New Westminster, Aug. 11/12

Demos

Brookwood Open House: February 25

Seattle Kennel Club: March 10 and 11

Whistler: April 21

Cloverdale Rodeo: May 19 and 20

Anacortes Bark in the Park: June 9

Critter Care, Langley: July 14, 15

Hurricane Ridge: July 28 and 29

TradeX LMDF: October 28

Surrey Bell Performing Arts Centre: *Shadows of Eternity:* November 3rd (evening) 4th (matinee)

Welcome New Members

Joann Guhlke
from Yakima

Lori McKenna
from Enumclaw

Eric Stenbom
from Poulsbo

John Sipila
from Silverdale



Washington
Snowfall

How To Develop Paw Tricks

Getting Started – Heather Somers

So many different ways to teaching this and for most dogs it is probably one of the easiest to teach.

Modeling: As you pick up a paw, give the cue you want to use and treat.

Have a treat close to the dog's nose and using the treat as a magnet, turn his head so he's thrown slightly off balance and, when the paw opposite the head turn lifts ever so slightly, click and treat.

Capturing:

When pup is playing and pawing at a toy, click and treat, 'capturing' the behavior every time you see it. No cue given on this one until he's starting to lift a paw for you on his own . . . then add the cue.

As he's walking, click when you see the paw closest to you off the ground. This is true capturing and works really well if your timing is quick. No cue on this one either until the paw is being held up longer and you can see that the dog definitely knows what gets him the c/t.

Put a treat in your closed hand and wait until he gets frustrated enough to 'paw' your hand in an effort to get the treat. c/t.

If he rubs his eyes, c/t as the paw is coming up. I captured the eye rub that Harta did as a puppy when he came out of his bed (like rubbing the sleep from his eyes). The head bob that he did with it he kind of did himself and I captured that as well. Then we practiced our timing . . . he did it as I did it. Sometimes it was more successful than others – like most moves. It's awesome what behaviors come out of clicker training.

No matter how you get the paw up in the first place, it takes patience and persistence to get it properly on cue. Best to have a different cue for the right and left paw . . . and remember that his are different from yours if he's facing you, so don't get upset with him if he lifts what you think is the wrong 'paw' - he's probably right and doing exactly what you asked of him!

More Tips from Ray's Dressage Class

Whether you "model" the move or "capture" the move, there are many drills you can use to refine the skill and many variations of the move to which you and your dog can progress.

Progressions/Variations

- once you have the move, be sure to name it. If you plan to use "left" and "right," start right away using "left" for the dog's left paw and "right" for the dog's right paw since you will soon be beside your dog, not in front.
- Sitting in Front: Start in front of your sitting dog, giving a target (hand). Once the dog consistently puts the paw in your hand, lay your hand on your leg. Eventually remove the hand so that the leg is the target. That way, you won't always have to bend over.
- Standing in Front: Have the dog stand and repeat the hand and leg targeting while standing in front of the dog.
- Sitting at Side: Move to the side of the dog. Have the dog sit. Give a target – first the hand. Hold the hand high but not far in front if you want the dog to reach high. The goal is to have the dog place the paw in the hand, not just reach for it. Replace hand target with a cane or other prop useful in the routine. Eventually eliminate the target cue and use just a voice command.
- Standing at Side: Have dog stand. Cue "left" and have dog hold left paw up. You probably will have to hold your hand under the dog's paw to keep it up. Tap the pads if the dog wants to drop the paw. Start with short holds and gradually increase. Repeat several times. Repeat process with right paw. At first, keep the two separate. Eventually have dog do left-hold, right-hold. *Gradually* increase to 4, then 6, then 8 repetitions. Gradually move your hand away and stand upright.
- Hopping: Introduce left-hop (as a single command) and reward immediately. Introduce right-hop. For a repeated hop, or limp, keep reward or cue hand over the dog's shoulders. Eventually, remove the cue hand. For left-hop; right-hop: keep it slow, start with just two, gradually increasing.
- Paw-work behind the handler: Dogs like targets. Sit dog and stand in front of dog, facing away from dog. Extend your left leg toward dog and cue "left." Repeat several times. Do the same with the right. Do left, right, left, right. Ask the dog to stand and do the same move. Eventually start moving forward. Depending on the dog's size, dog may put paw on your foot, calf, or thigh.

Refining the moves

- vary training: sometimes work on long holds, sometimes work on immediate lifts. Reward accordingly.
- Be sure *you* control the move. Reward dog only when it has held the position as long as you want it to.
- Teach the move on both right and left heel position.
- Do a transition move into the paw work. Ie. spin or circle into paw-work move – depending on your routine.

Now, the only drawback to teaching paw tricks is that at home the dog will be "giving you the paw" when you're trying to watch your favorite TV show.



Duck Under Dog (while his front paws are on your back)

When Lydia asked me (Lenore) to write an article about how I taught that trick . . . "What do you call it?" she asked. I was thinking – what do I call it? "Duck under dog while his front paws are on my back?" That is a very long name, but the trick took a very long time to teach. Lance is a very fast little dog and teaching him anything can take a while because he finds it hard to settle down long enough to think about what he is doing. He offers so many things so fast. I find that getting the exact right timing is hard.



The first thing that I had to teach Lance was that it is okay to jump up on me – this part was easy as he thought it was lots of fun to do that! He was jumping up on me every time he got a chance after that. But then I had to teach him to jump up from behind. This proved to be a little more complicated and required the help of a training buddy. You see, he needed to understand that the reward would come from behind me if he was back there. So my training buddy would guide him up with a lure and let him have it when he was in position. As he became aware that he would get a reward for being up in the back it became easy for me to administer the reward either from the top of my head or from over my shoulders. I also realized that he needed to be rewarded from both shoulders or he would start to lean or move towards the left because this was the shoulder that he was mostly rewarded from.

This was all good. But the hardest part was still to come. When Lance jumped up to put his front paws on my back, he would wrap them around my hips for an easy hold. You cannot duck around under his front legs when he has them wrapped around your hips! I needed him to jump up and put his paws in the center of my lower back and keep them there. This was difficult. After many attempts, the thing that worked the best was to do it while he was on a bed. This way it was not so hard for him to keep his weight on his hind legs while his front paws were on my back. I also had to physically put his paws in the center of my back and tell him "good boy, good feet", then reward if he kept them there for a second. Then after two seconds.... remember he is always offering different things very fast, so I had to get what I could.

When this was accomplished, we could move off the bed and on to the floor. It transferred fairly well when I physically put his feet in the right position and told him "good boy, good feet". So "feet" became the cue word for the position. Then slowly we started to move. Step by step. He didn't like the moving part so well. So he got great rewards and praise when he did move. He then realized that moving was great! And the whole trick is wonderful! When I added the ducking around under his legs, I had to move very quickly before he realized that it was happening. He thought this was the funniest thing and we were on our way!

Because I often had to put my hands around to my back to help him with his feet, the cue simply became my hands on my hips.

The whole thing took about 2 months to perfect. He loves this move, and I see him trying it on other people when they are least expecting it! This was a move that I was shown in a seminar with Gina Pink from Britain. She said that Lance and I had the perfect body size ratio for this to look good. I can't image doing it with my Great Dane!

Note from Lyd: When Lenore sent me this, I had to try with Ali. She did the first part already, but it was the staying up while I tucked under I didn't know how to teach. I tried a couple times but she kept falling off. My husband was watching and told me my elbow was knocking her off. So, I kept my arms straight, close to my body and she stayed on! Variation: duck under during a "twist." (Twist is when the dog is resting its paws on the handler's waist area and the handler spins, giving the illusion that the dog is spinning the handler)

Ya Gotta Laugh!

Lin creating a group-routine prop the hard way - Lin MacDonald

One thing that had been in the back of my mind was our umbrella centerpiece. I had been wracking my brain on how to build a stand to support them. It needed to hold the umbrellas at just the right angle (yes, but how would I determine that angle?). It should be light weight (filling it with sand or a brick was right out! I carry enough crap to Demos)

I bought a couple of plastic cleaning totes at the dollar store. Thought I could saw them apart and use them to hold the handles. Then, I tried to mount them in cork - had to look up how to divide a circle evenly in 3, and cut the right ellipse for the tubes on an angle. (that alone took several tries) It 'kinda' worked, but the cork circle was too big so then I tried to cut 'darts' in it. BTW, that does not work!

As I was heading back to my workroom for yet another try, a tiny light bulb went on.

I cut 3 holes out of the side of the plastic wastebasket I was using to mount all this stuff in and voila! It is light, holds them all at the right angle and one person can carry it out, assembled, and place it before we start. Needs a little fabric decor, but that's coming.

Why do something the easy way when you can do it the hard way over and over again! Sheesh!



Freestylers Adapt to *Anything!* - Karen Eskilson (Clown)

My Clown, Alley, was invited again to participate in the Roger's Santa Parade in Downtown Vancouver on Dec 4. We were asked if 'that amazing little dog' (Beezuzu, my Boston Terrier) would be coming with us again. It was a month away and I collected up my Christmas clown gear: wig, nose, makeup, skirts and new clown shoes and put them in a box specifically for the parade.

We have been planning to move so, in order to 'stage' my house, I had ordered a pod and loaded boxes and furniture into it. Along came the parade weekend but when I went to pull my clown clothes out to iron, lo and behold – the box had been packed into the pod and was currently being stored in a warehouse. I had no wig, no skirt, no shoes for the parade. I still had my crinoline and Christmas jacket in the closet but nothing else.

I ran to Walmart to buy some fabric to whip up a clown skirt and discovered they don't sell fabric anymore other than quilting quarters. In a panic I headed to the exit and as I passed the Christmas section I saw a red tree skirt with gold sparkly trim. I bought it and headed out to find a wig. I dug up an old pair of clown shoes and had a costume.

We arrived at the parade the next day. Within minutes, my feet were numb but Beezuzu, wearing her sweater, and lying on a mat in her wagon with heating pads to keep her warm, was toasty. While we waited, I warmed Beezuzu up with some weaves and blew bubbles for her. My treat pouch was attached to my 'tree' skirt and as we were warming up, I realized my felt skirt was stretching because of the pouch. Luckily, I had some emergency duct tape in the wagon so I wrapped it around my waist to keep the skirt from falling off during the parade. The parade went well and Beezuzu chased bubbles most of the route with a few weaves & spins in between.

When we were finished, she hopped into the wagon (while waiting for our ride) allowing photo ops and interaction of the passing crowds.

And the Award goes to . . .

All of our dogs have a little "ham" in them, but none more than Ann Reiland's border collie, Sonic. Sonic looks at everyone with that "My parents don't feed me and I don't have any toys" look; and before you know it, people are giving her whatever she wants.

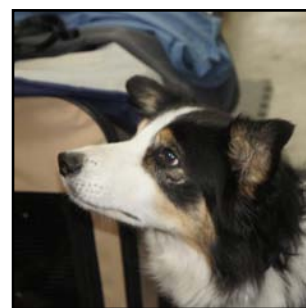
Best Performances:

Cloverdale: Anne G. hands over a stuffed toy.

Christmas Party: Joan gives her a bell collar; Annette gives her a bagful of treats.

Gala Rehearsal: Pretending she was afraid of the kites, she was given treats, pats, massages and water from numerous members till Ann set us straight. "She's milking the situation and she's definitely not afraid of kites!"

Turns out Ann is the only one who isn't fooled. Even Charlie hasn't figured it out. "No wonder I have trouble keeping her weight down," says Ann.



AN "OH NO!" MOMENT - Gail Walsh

Late Saturday evening I knew I had to exercise Panda, my ten-month-old puppy or he would be wild in class the next day. But . . . I was tired after a busy day and I could hear the rain pounding outside. "Oh, I know!" I thought. "I'll put him on our treadmill." Panda had been on it before and appeared to enjoy it.

I leashed him up on the treadmill, and once he was trotting along, I pulled up a chair and settled in to read a book. Every once and awhile I would look up at Panda and talk to him. He was moving at a good clip and appeared to be enjoying himself.

One of the times I looked up, he was hopping from one foot to the other. I didn't know what he was doing. I stood up quickly and saw a couple of lumps on the carpet near the end of the treadmill. At the same time I noticed small piles on the rubber mat of the treadmill itself. The poor little guy had had an accident. I quickly stopped the treadmill and got Panda off. He was lifting up his paw that had stepped in the mess. I cleaned him up and took him upstairs to his X-pen.

Back down stairs I went, armed with rubber gloves, paper towels, cleaner and plastic bag. The room was now filled with an unbearable odor. I opened the window and shut the door to the upstairs so not to contaminate the rest of the house. I had to get this mess cleaned up before my husband found out what I had done to his precious treadmill!

I cleaned up the visible mess on the rug and on the treadmill's rubber mat. "Hm, I wonder if I got it all," I thought. So I turned on the treadmill. As the mat rotated

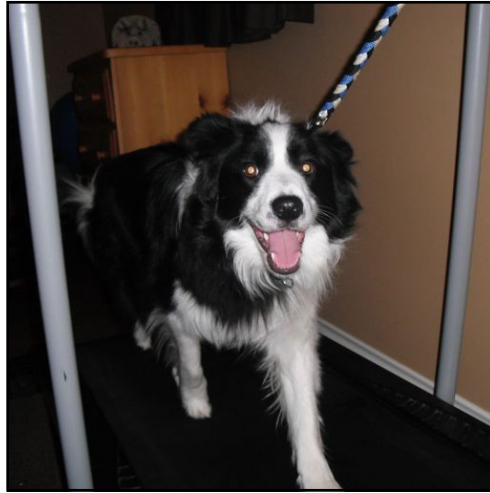
I found more and more goodies flying up as it went round.

After spending some time cleaning everything, I thought I should check underneath the poop-eating machine. I managed to pull the heavy monster over on its side. Sure enough the beast had more tidbits hidden on some of the mechanisms in its under belly.

After that was cleaned up, I was almost certain I had it all, but the odor wasn't gone and there was a metal plate underneath that covered the motor. "Perhaps I should put it back upright and turn on it high," I thought. That would surely get rid of it all. So with one big pull I managed to get it back upright and turned it on high.

Yes, just as I suspected, more morsels appeared on the rubber mat. Out came more paper towels and cleaner. I

thought that must be all of it by now but the smell wasn't getting any better. There had to be more under that metal plate that covered the motor that I wasn't able to reach.



There was only one thing left to do. I had to go tell my husband who would probably throw up if he ever had to deal with anything that remotely looked or smelled like a bowel movement. He is Mr. clean around the house, and helps with housework and dishes. However, picking up dog poo in the backyard or changing a grandchild's diaper is out of the question.

As I made my way up stairs Nick yelled down to me, "How did the treadmill go with Panda?"

"Well," I said, "not so good."

Thank goodness Nick has a lot of patience. (He has to have, living with me.) He didn't even get mad. I am certain he was thinking, "She done something stupid again," but the dear man didn't say it. He spent the next 15 minutes on hands and knees cleaning the splattered insides of the motor.

Moral of the story, before putting a dog on a treadmill make sure he has been taken outside and totally emptied. **And above all . . . If an accident happens, do not under any circumstances turn the treadmill on high.**



In Edmonton, Reehana's husband shows her a move he thinks she should try with her Kelpie, Kira. He's working on some freestyle moves with his bigger dog but maybe not this one!

Dog First Aid

Paws 2 Dance member **Vickie Phillips** has been hard at work for two years putting together a First Aid program for owners of dogs. It's comprised of four parts:

- a first aid kit
- a first aid manual
- a 5-hour first aid course
- an information web page

The kit has everything you could want: a pen light, thermometer, tape, scissors, suturing needle and gut, bandages, trauma pad, solar blanket, and much more. She's even created a card where you can record important information about your dogs and a pocket to keep it safe. The whole kit folds up neatly and would fit under the seat of most cars.



With the kit comes the 52-page manual – which also fits neatly into the outer bag of the kit. The first half is easy-to-read, step-by-step guidelines for responding to emergencies which reflect Vickie's background as a trauma-room tech. Namely, that under pressure, people need to find things quickly so that they can act quickly and appropriately. The second half of the manual deals with common bites and stings, non-emergency symptoms, and a toxin and poison section. The clear numbering system makes it easy to locate precise information, and the assessment pages provide a place to record information important to relay to the vet.

The kit and manual can be purchased through Vickie or through a number of retail outlets that will soon be carrying the product.

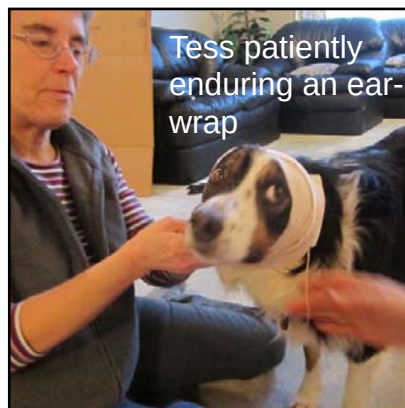
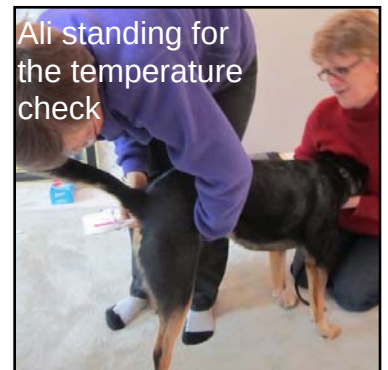
The course will be available to anyone interested and is an important adjunct to the kit and manual. Contact Vickie if you wish to run a clinic in your area. Minimum 6, Maximum 10 participants. PAWS TO DANCE MEMBERS WILL GET A 20% DISCOUNT RATE FOR THE KIT AND CLASS COMBINED, AND ANY MEMBER RUNNING A CLINIC FOR NON-MEMBERS WILL RECEIVE THE 20% DISCOUNT AS A DONATION. THERE IS ALSO AN INCENTIVE PROGRAM FOR REFERRING INDIVIDUALS TO THE COURSE.

Finally, Vickie has a webpage www.k9efakt.com which she is currently building, where you can find more information about the kit, manual, and clinics.

Ann Reiland and I (Lyd), along with Irene, a laboratory-technologist-friend of Vickie's, who knows more about metabolic processes than nurses do, ran through the course with Vickie to see how long it would take, to determine what tips to give attendees, and to fine-tune the manual. Dogs Ali, Tess, and Vickie's two Siberian Huskies, Spirit and Sy volunteered to be guinea pigs.

Tip #1: make sure your dog has had a walk before you start. Sy was so gassy, any time Irene tried to find her femoral artery to take her pulse or palpate her tummy, Irene's eyes would water. That end of the room was pretty raunchy. It came to a head when Irene had to insert the rectal thermometer. We decided that was a good time for a break.

Tip #2: Good advice for anyone: condition your dog to accept being poked and prodded. The four dogs there were pretty used to having hands on them. They all just lay down and let us manhandle them for the most part.



No dogs were injured during the trial clinic.

Although they were tired by the end, they enjoyed the attention.

These photos were ones that didn't make it into the manual.

Janice Hodge

Hi There! My name is Janice Hodge and I've been asked to give you some idea of who I am. Currently I have the privilege of serving as the Lower Mainland Demonstration Chair. This is great because I get to tell people where to go! And what time to be there! Apart from that I'm a daughter, a sister, a mother, a granny, Goddess of the Corn (we have chickens) and to my husband, She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed.

I've also been a hospital admitting clerk, a house magazine writer, a children's travel agency rep., a SuperValu cashier, store detective, psychiatric aide, credit union teller, and care home recreation co-ordinator.

I've since given up all that paid-for work and now am working even harder in "retirement." We live on five acres just back of beyond along with our two wonderful standard poodles, Breeze and Gigolo, Breeze's cat Zephyr, Flicka the Welsh pony, Plenty and Grace the donkeys, and assorted chickens.

The two donkeys came first – a mother with her three-month-old-foal. There's a lovely old saying "Plenty and Grace be with this Place" and I thought the only way of ensuring that was to give those names to the donkeys. The original plan was for me to learn to carriage drive them. Right. So now they are the best pasture ornaments you could ask for and very good compost makers as well. As they weren't willing, we purchased a very sweet Welsh pony also with a foal at foot. She is a great carriage horse and we have lots of fun tootling around our area. Her foal, who of course, the grandkids named CharlieHorse, grew up to be the bane of the donkeys' existence. He chased and bit them and made their lives very uncomfortable so he went to a friend of ours where he has turned into a superb carriage pony himself.

We've had dogs all our married life but were quite content to just enjoy their companionship; in fact we thought ourselves lucky when we accomplished the Sit and Come. It

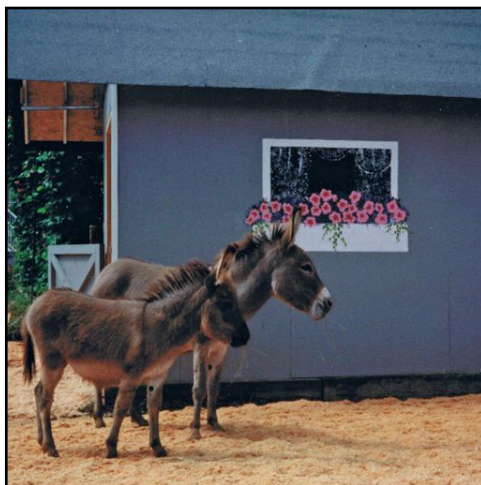


wasn't until we saw Paws 2 Dance perform at TradeX one year that we realized that dogs could do a lot more and have fun while they were doing it. We had just acquired our lovely silver Breeze and decided to give this new sport a try. I have only one regret in my life and that is not finding out about freestyle a lot earlier; never mind, I'm going to cram as much of this into the rest of my life as I can.

Joining Paws 2 Dance didn't just turn out to be something special for me it also marked a turning point in Breeze's life. She was a four-year-old kennel dog when we got her. She came from a kennel in Alberta that was closing down and while she was well kept as she was a show dog, she spent most of her time in a kennel. As a result she was very nervous and had no idea of how to play. I really credit the great people in our club for the difference they helped make in her life. As a freestyle dog she



did what I asked but . . . very slowly. When she does a spin it encompasses most of the room. When it was discovered that she has a serious liver condition we decided to retire her. Fortunately we had fallen so in love with the standard poodle breed that we had gone out and purchased a puppy with the idea of continuing with the dancing. So Gigolo came onto the scene and we are having a great time. He has the most extraordinary personality and is picking up dance moves and looking like he's having a good time while he's doing it. Mind you he also lets us know when he's had enough. Lying on his back on the floor is a pretty fair indication that he's done for the day. He's so good for Breeze as well – he's taught her to play and it's such a joy to watch them wear themselves out. Unfortunately he thinks the cat is his personal squeaky toy, but now she's giving back as good as she gets and the three of them have evolved a most masterful game of catch me if you can.



So now you all know a little bit about me and this forum gives me a chance to plug the demos. I must thank everyone who takes part in them, some of you might not realize how much pleasure you're bringing to the audiences. I've had some lovely comments from so many people and the number of re-bookings tells us something too. So thank you all again for making my position easy to do, and for those of you who haven't yet made the demo rounds, please give it a go; it's a lot of fun and very rewarding. Hope to see you at one soon. Cheers, Jan

10th Anniversary Celebration in Sequim

The ladies of Emerald City (with some help from the guys) pulled out all the stops for their 10th Anniversary celebration in Sequim, Washington, this past fall.

Competitors and guests were greeted by a wall of photos and information commemorating the freestyling dogs who are no longer with us and more pictures and bios of current dogs.

Members who participated in a parade of dogs acknowledging the achievements of dogs and their handlers were presented with gorgeous ribbons.

A colorful and impressive half-time show of hula dancers marked a first for any **Paws 2 Dance** event.



Saturday night, everyone gathered at a Mexican restaurant for a nostalgic evening. To everyone's delight, videos of early events played throughout dinner.

Later, members thanked a number of people for their contributions over the years. Two very special women were acknowledged as the founders of the club and the driving force behind musical freestyle in the Northwest for the past eleven years. Of course, that would be the inimitable **Pat Moore** and **Carolyn Money**. Pat and Carolyn were presented with collages of their years performing with their dogs. Corinne Lawson, in presenting the collage to Pat, pointed out that Pat worked tirelessly behind the scenes to create memorable experiences for all

freestylers. Gail Walsh, who presented Carolyn's collage, talked about Carolyn's ability to keep everyone connected, informed, and excited about this sport for which Carolyn has such a passion. Both Carolyn and Pat indicated that they could not have accomplished what they had without the hard work of many people, in particular Corinne Lawson.



The training division marked another first as a group of female and *male* handlers performed a lively group number.

In keeping with the event's Western theme, at the end of the second day of competition, special awards were presented for such categories as "Longest in the Saddle" and "Quick Draw McGraw."

Those of us who came from the Lower Mainland in Canada developed a new respect for those who live in Sequim and travel to BC for events.

Congratulations, Emerald City! We're all looking forward to another ten years of freestyle fun.

(Due to technical difficulties, photos of the competition were not available at the time of this issue's publication but will be featured in a later edition)

Protect Your Pets

With a rise in pet theft, I've been asked to remind all members to be cautious. If you google "preventing pet theft" you will find many sites giving good tips. Here is a quick summary:

- be sure dog has identification chip or Tattoo and an up-to-date dog tag with address and phone number
- have current photos of dog
- keep backyard gate padlocked
- maintain fencing – check for holes or loose boards
- use a thick leash and don't let dogs off leash when walking
- be wary of people who ask many questions about your dog
- don't reveal value of your dog
- avoid leaving dog unattended in car (even if locked) and never leave a dog in an unlocked car
- if you must leave dog in a car, have it in a covered crate
- never tie a dog outside a restaurant or store

Shadows of Eternity Update

After the success of *Escape the Darkness*, Ray convinced us to stage another show. He quickly roughed out the story – it takes place in ancient Egypt and has all sorts of twists. He then arranged all the music. Immediately, Annette started on the costumes while Lin organized rehearsals, set-production, and all the other minutiae involved in production. Everyone started rehearsing and training . . . and fund-raising. We have now blocked most of the show and are working on choreographic details.

This show will have many more intricate and challenging large-group routines, three completely different sets, and some eye-popping costumes.

Mark November 3rd and 4th on your calendars.

DOG BLOG

- from the couch of Spirit, Vickie's Husky



As I sit here staring out the window at the front sidewalk, I can't help but be a bit annoyed. She took us early for our walk today and it's thrown me right off my schedule now. I don't know if the enemy (Great Dane with a big mouth – both size and sound) has gone by yet.

I'm sorry, but barking and howling at that creature makes my day. If I don't release a bark or two a day I'll explode. He knows who the boss is in this hood. When I bark, believe me, he keeps moving past our house real quick. And now there's no way I can get out to the fir trees to stalk those bird-seed-stealing, beady-eyed, bushy-tailed, can't-find-where-my-nuts-are-stored rats they call squirrels. Again, I'm sorry but I know where every ball, bone, kong, and special stick is at all times. I'm pretty proud of the fact that I can dig up a bone I buried a year ago. So why can't these squirrels remember where their winter's hoard is?

Oh look, it's snowing again. She said it was supposed to snow again – that's why we were walking early. She also told a friend walking huskies in the snow was a real "drag." Now, I have no idea what a "drag" is but if you can't throw it, chew it, or squeak it, who cares? Then she said, "As I was walking I started thinking I was in a rut."

All I know is, if we end up in this thing she calls a "rut" there'd better be treats involved. Well everyone just laughed so I just wagged my tail and pretended to know what they were talking about.

Guess there won't be any training today. Bummer, I have the new move down pretty good. Nets me some pretty frequent treats when I do that "back through" move she likes. I remember the first day she took me to this "freestyle" class almost eight years ago. I was so excited that day cause the leash, water dish, and treats were being packed. Then we got to this place where a bunch of other dogs were all sitting around watching one dog do the oddest things. I'd never seen moves like that. Those weren't normal dog moves. Then when it was our turn, she made me sit, stay, paw, and lie in front of everyone, including some guy with a funny accent. I think he's the alpha in this pack. Dogs and people seem to hang on his every word. Clearly he knows what he's doing because what he says . . . they all try and do.

I know those dogs were all staring at me and thinking "beginner." How embarrassing. The only saving grace for that day was another husky called "Misha". He was gorgeous. I tried to make eyes at him but he played it cool. There was Sultan, Koko, Blitzen, a golden, a Shany and Taffy, and a dobie named Freya.

When the day was finally over and we left, I was thinking that would be the end of it. Boy was I ever wrong. She'd bring me back alright, and it would become my life for the next eight years.

Editor's Note

Apologies for the late WAG. Sometimes technology fails us!

I appreciate all your comments and input and especially welcome the photos and articles from those of you from the island, Washington, or far-flung provinces (Alberta) since I worry that the content of the WAG tends to be Lower-Mainland-oriented.

So, keep those stories, tips, and photos coming in. Let me know if there is something I should cover that I haven't done so yet. Is it time for a contest?

Let me know what you would like to see in the next "How To" feature. Cheers, Lyd (freya9@telus.net)

Paws 2 Dance Website

Over the next few months, the **Paws 2 Dance** website will be undergoing an exciting upgrade; the look and format will be changing. If you have any suggestions or comments regarding content, ease of finding things, etc., please let Lin know at lincoBC@gmail.com

Bookmarks

Fiction: David Wroblewski's *The Story of Edgar Sawtelle* is a sweeping tale that takes place on a dog-breeder's farm. Many unexpected twists and interesting dog-training tips. I loved it. Lyd

Non-Fiction: Jeanne and Ty Taylor's *Stockdog Savvy* contains everything you would ever want to know about stock-dog training. Recommended by Joyce Johnstone.