# The WAG

Paws 2 Dance Newsletter July 2016 Volume 21




## Coach's Corner with Ray Underwood

### Training with Music

*How can you maximize your dog's performance and avoid issues with music?*

1. Once you've selected your music, train with the music, preferably on a loop.
2. Perform without the dog to music as much as possible, stopping to check your lines in a mirror.
3. Don't run through the whole routine with your dog until you are completely confident with your movements and the entire choreography.
4. Vary the volume – you never know what is going to happen at an event.
5. Practice starts. Set your pose and cue the music. Sometimes delay the start to build duration in case the music doesn't start immediately at competition.
6. Play with your dog with the music on.
7. Resist running through the entire routine each time the music is on. Work on segments and make sure you play with your dog in between.
8. If you can, cut the music into segments and put each segment on a loop.

## From the Judges' Handbook

With more people reaching the Advanced levels in **Dressage**, questions have been popping up.

- For Advanced 1, there is an option to the "rolls" element, so that dogs that shouldn't roll, don't have to. Instead, they are to perform **three different transitions within one pass**. Clarification: A **transition** is a movement which changes the dog position from one side of the handler to the other. See *WAG #* for some transition ideas. "**Within one pass**" means that these movements must be performed consecutively – not one at the beginning of the routine, one in the middle and one near the end. "**Pass**" means that between each transition should be at least two steps to show that the dog is solidly in this new position.
- Must a dog wear a collar in the ring? We have no rule stipulating that a dog must wear a collar in the ring. However, outside the ring, the dog must be on leash.

## Calendar of Events

WCFO **Dance the Skies**, Langley, BC, August 6th, 7th

P2D **Boot Scootin' Boogie**, Arlington, WA, September 10th (Saturday)

WCFO **Great Pupkin Ball**, Richland, WA, October 29th and 30th.

**Tellington Touch Workshop:** September 24th & 25th, Langley, BC.




## Bookmarks

Heather Somers recommends three books: ***Rescue Road*** by **Peter Zheutlin** – the extraordinary story of one man who has driven more than one million miles to rescue thousands of dogs from hunger, abuse, and neglect and give them a second chance at life and love. ***A Man of His Own*** by **Susan Wilson** about Pax, a German Shepherd who served in WWII's army canine corp, his owners, and the man with whom he served. ***The Dog Who Saved Me*** also by **Susan Wilson.**

For something completely different, try ***Fifteen Dogs*** by **Andre Alexis**, winner of the 2015 Scotia Bank Giller prize. What would it be like if dogs had human intelligence? This dark satire explores human and canine character and reveals intriguing insights.

**Editor's Note:** I know . . . I'm supposed to keep the newsletter to eight pages, but this is mostly pictures, and you'll enjoy the background stories at the end. *Lydia*

# How-To Tips and ideas for "Between-the-legs" Moves

Dogs appear to like the "between-the-leg" position so much that the challenge may be to stop them from going there! Tips and ideas below. For a video of some of the moves, click https://vimeo.com/173283702/db18b1f3a5

- **standing on all fours** - forward, backwards, sideways, pivot, finding position
  - Experiment with the lure position so that your dog doesn't have to move out of position to take it.
  - Eye-contact isn't necessary, particularly if it means you have to bend forward awkwardly to achieve it
  - Work in front of a mirror to determine how forward the dog should be in order for the position to look natural.
  - Take small steps for sideways or pivot moves
  - Vary the speed of the movement for interesting effects
  - Move in a serpentine or straight lines with sharp corners for more variation
  - Train your dog to the voice command so that your arms are free to contribute to choreography
  - To have the dog find the position from a distance, start slightly in front of or behind the dog and have dog move into the desired position. Gradually increase the starting distance. Find position from circles, figure 8's, a bow.
- **In crawl position** forward, backwards, sideways, pivot, finding position
  - Be sure to have a solid crawl at the side before trying it between the legs
  - Take smaller steps than with standing position – be careful not to trample your dog!
- **In "Reverse" Position** Dog faces opposite direction from handler
  - Hold lure behind you so that dog faces back while you face forward. Give position a specific name
  - Have dog find position by moving backward toward you (you may be stationary or moving)
  - Try this in a crawl



Merlin hits good position though Ray shows no hand cues.



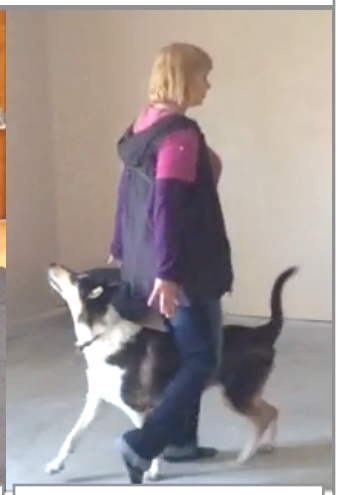
Annette pivots with choreographed hand and body movement.



Ali reverses into position from a short distance



Ali crawls between Lyd's legs, hoping she won't be stepped on.



Sherry and Takara demonstrate the reverse between position

- **Switching from left to between to right while moving**
  - Work on one movement at a time and reinforce each before linking them
  - Work stationary before adding movement so that dog has to move slightly back before finding position
- **Stopping in between position from a weave** – Forwards, backwards, crawl
- Make sure dog has a "stop" command or a "between" command so that the regular weave is not compromised.
- Add your own movements for variations–



Ray has time to extend arms while Merlin is frozen in position



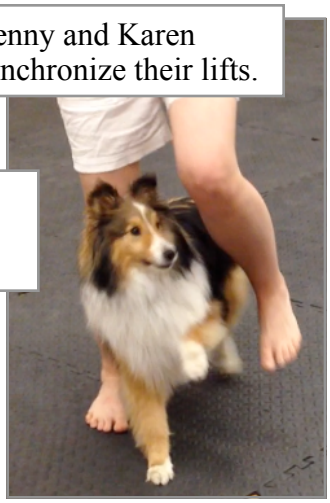
Marty maintains good attention while stopped in a between crawl.

- **Peek-a-boo** From between to behind and back again
  - Start in "between-the-legs" position. Cue dog to move back (behind) and close your knees together.
  - Part your knees and cue dog to the "between-the-legs" position to look up at you.
- **Alternate Paw lifts** with and without handler leg lifts
  - Give the dog whatever support it needs to start (lure, hand signal, foot lift, etc.) then fade to voice command.
  - If your final goal is to have matching foot lifts with your dog, be precise, have dog hold position longer than you eventually will want it, reward while foot is up
- **Handler Hop on one foot – Dog hop one paw up**
  - Train the dog to limp while in heel position. Handler – hop on one foot while pivoting.
  - From the "between-the-legs" position, have dog limp while you hop, lifting the same leg that the dog has up.
  - Gradually increase number of limps – but not too many or you may get dizzy and keel over.
- **dog paws on feet** - forward, back, pivot
  - Wear shoes, especially if you have a big dog!
  - Close your toes together and lure the dog forward so that it must step on your feet. Reward copiously!
  - Gradually move your feet apart
  - Start with stationary steps, gradually add forward and backward movement, try pivoting (small steps)
- **roll-over between the legs** Small dogs only!
  - Ensure dog has a solid roll in each direction
  - Stand with your feet as far apart as possible with one leg close to the dog. Cue the roll.
  - You may need someone to signal the dog first as this would be a foreign position from which to roll.
- **Strike a Pose** Stand, sit, sit pretty, lie down, bow, or stand on hind-legs
  - From "between-the-legs" cue dog to stand, sit, sit pretty, lie down, bow, or stand on its hind legs.
  - With each dog pose, strike a pose of your own.
  - Move back and forth from one to another then try a different two to alternate
- **Add a Prop** Hoops or canes are great.
  - Have dog jump over a hoop as it runs between your legs or pose with its paws on a hoop or cane.



Benny plays peek-a-boo with Karen. See two variations on video

Benny and Karen synchronize their lifts.





Lyd hops in a pivot while Ali pivots with one paw up.



Elaine does Hawaiian arm movements with Barkley standing on her feet.



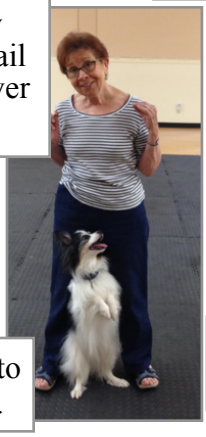
Benny rolls over and back between Karen's legs.



Merlin stands on hind legs from a between position.



Kalia waits in a bow while Gail backs over her.



Juno is small enough to stand on his hind legs.



Casey takes a leap over a hoop

**Prancing Paws** Competitors debuted many new routines for 2016 and revisited old favorites for an appreciative audience and fellow competitors. The first two-day *Prancing Paws* event had a distinctly Mexican flavor – but we'll not make any comments about the Mexican Dinner Buffet. Big THANKS go to the organizers, especially Lin for keeping us all organized, and Sue and Mike for capturing the weekend so that we can share it with friends. (Photos mostly by Mike and Sue Sweeney)




STRONG

**Island Fling** As usual, the Island group hosted a friendly competition with everyone cheering each other on through successes and difficulties and enjoying a great mixture of innovative and exciting routines. Everyone was relieved to see Carol and Hunter back in the saddle after a traumatic incident that left them both injured. The one regret is that no-one took a video of Gail trying to make all the Papillons look up for a picture. Photos by Caryl Darling.




Holland Flings
2016

**Cross-Border Collaboration** – – – – – – – – – – –





Members of Emerald City K9 Freestylers along with Paws 2 Dance put on a great show both days at the Seattle Kennel Club Exhibition in March. Left are Annette with Jake & Kris with Roree – a new puppy. Right is Melanie with Rikko waving hello. Organizers want freestylers back again next year so keep the second weekend in March free.



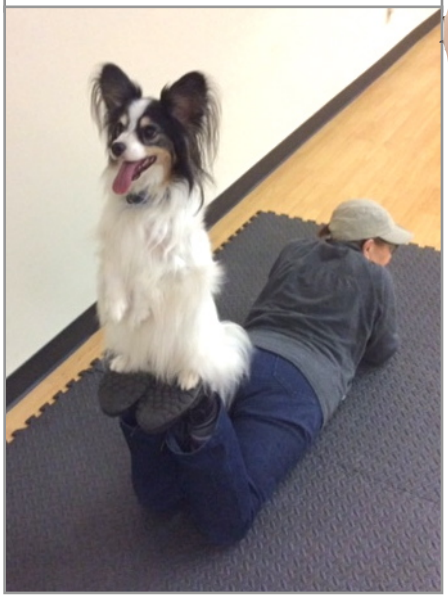
**FUN Time in Nanoose**



The Island K9 freestylers held their annual fun day at Nanoose Place on March 19th.

Carol Toms: Twice a year we try to hold these fun meets, which include practicing our moves or routines and making plans for the Island Fling. From Victoria to Campbell River and all areas in between, we get together and enjoy a day of playing with the dogs, learning from each other and showing off our ideas for future competitions. Diane, Magi, Beth & Willie, Gail & Kalia, Melody & Surfer, Linda & Berni, Carol & Hunter, Sharon & Tucker, Lenore & Lance & Nahli, Heather & Dansa, Anila & Archie, Yvonne & Tweed, Carole & Stella & Rhea, and Val & Crumpit had a great day! Check out the new mats – ready for the Island Fling.

**Photo Challenge – Pose with Dog** Having at least one pose in a routine means you'll probably wind up with at least one memorable photo. Below is Juno doing a "sit-pretty foot-stall" with Jane.






**A Great Day for a Parade!** With Jim Burns behind the wheel and two girls (far left and far right) from Shelley's Grooming holding the banner, six members of Emerald City K9 joined in the 121st Sequim Irrigation Festival Parade – the oldest celebration in Washington. Left to right: Jane with Sparkley and Sprite, Pat with Ricky Bobby, Lydia with Candy, Carolyn with Hunter, Violet with Parker, and Shelley with Shelley 2. Fabulous hats!

# The Story behind the Routine: Michele Pouliot and Listo's 60's TV Medley Routine

Listo and I had a lot of fun with *The Good, Bad, Ugly* routine and I felt quite challenged to come up with something as entertaining. I already had another song choice ready to develop but it had a similar "good against evil" theme and I wanted to do something a bit different before using it. This means I was struggling to select our next music.



I was literally watching TV one day and, when flipping channels, came upon the start of an *I Love Lucy* episode. The theme song immediately struck me as a fun trip down memory lane and I knew Listo could move to the beat very well. Besides the theme song being quite short, I didn't feel like it would stand alone as a very strong routine. That was when I came up with the idea of doing a medley of several old TV shows, songs that everyone would recognize and feel nostalgic about. My first goal was to put a group of familiar theme songs together into a working medley. I got a hold of a great CD with dozens of old TV show theme songs and made my initial list of the ones I wanted to use.



The first problem was that my list was longer than was realistic for a 3-minute routine. To fit them together into a medley, I could only use about 10 seconds of each song which was not at all long enough to effectively use or for the audience to enjoy. It was hard to remove some of those memorable songs out of the medley but I focused on having each song play long enough to be able to effectively interpret each theme. I was pretty happy with the final draft of the medley and the 6 themes I used. Each theme edit was quickly recognizable for the audience and long enough for Listo and me to play with it a bit before another theme started. I had some choreography ideas for a few of the themes but was hesitant to work on the routine until I solved one big problem – how to smoothly connect the songs. I was not at all happy with a few different ways I tried to connect the themes together, it just didn't sound right.

Then I had a great light bulb moment – the sound of changing channels with a TV remote. That was the moment the routine took off. I immediately got a hold of some static sound effects and connected the songs with static. At the same time I envisioned myself using a remote aimed at a TV to simulate changing channels when moving from one theme to another. I was really excited about it but didn't realize how challenging it was going to be for me to effectively time my "channel change" throughout the routine. That took a lot of practice for me to get timed well during performance.

Finding a small, vintage-looking TV prop was easy at Goodwill, as was a remote control. I added a set of rabbit ears on the TV and found the lightweight stand to set the TV on. I quickly added the folding chair to the props as it made sense to be sitting in front of the TV at some point in the routine. The chair turned out to be a good avenue to use a new behavior Listo was learning, as it allowed me to provide him with a stable surface to back up onto. The final goal of the behavior was for Listo to back his hind feet up onto my body, but he was just learning it and still needed a stable surface to do the trick. I added some plywood to the back of the chair so that when I folded it, Listo had a nice ramp to back onto at the end of the routine.

From that point, Listo and I played with each theme song to discover what moves worked well. The only move I had set in my head from the very start of the routine idea was the *Twilight Zone* sequence with Listo following me backwards across the ring. I had envisioned that move to that music from the moment I added the *Twilight Zone* theme to the medley.

When I chose to include the *Lassie* theme, I had not figured out what to do with that section. Once I had the TV prop up to play around with, I thought Listo watching the TV during that song would be really cute. After I had him consistently staring at the TV on cue for several seconds I had the idea of having Listo change the channel to the *Lassie* theme. Funny story about his whining during the *Lassie* theme when Lassie whines . . . I did not teach that, Listo was actually very excited about the next move and anxious for me to give him the cue. His excited anticipation is what created his lifting a front foot and whining at the TV – turned out perfect!

The *Hawaii 5-0* theme allowed us to speed things up a bit and gave me a place to let Listo show off a huge jump over the chair. I loved playing around with the *Adams Family* theme because it's just cute. Listo's vertical jump was a natural fit for the finger snap accents. The chair came into play nicely during the transition from *Hawaii 5-0* to the *Adams Family*, as it allowed Listo to do a cute chin rest to the opening accent of that theme.

The closing theme of *Happy Trails* by Roy Rogers and Dale Evans was simply a nice way to wrap up the routine, as it is basically saying goodbye.

The opening to the routine was one of the very last pieces I figured out. I had been working hard on training Listo's stare at the TV for the *Lassie* sequence but had not yet considered opening the performance with that behavior. It required me to make that behavior quite strong in duration so he could hold the stare after my music cue and until the music started. Another funny story – all that duration stare training paid off when at one performance there was a very long delay after I cued the music before the music started. It felt like 20 seconds of waiting (was probably more like 7 seconds), but the absence of my cue to Listo made him stare even harder at the TV. I was impressed and very proud of how he handled that delay. *Michele*

To see the routine, check out this link.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gT5yAOu8HLc

# The Story behind the Routine: Gail Walsh and Pepsi's Stray Cat Strut Routine

There are so many factors to consider when choosing music for a routine. Does the beat suit the dog, does the music have a theme, is there definite section changes, does it lend itself to an interesting costume and will it be able to draw the audience in?

When I started to look for a new piece of music to do a routine to, I knew I had to consider all the above but I also wanted something Pepsi and I could have fun with. Pepsi had performed several routines in the past. He had proven to me that he was capable of performing his part while I did mine. I could turn my back on him, and work at distance. Most importantly, I had seen glimpses where I was able to connect with the audience and Pepsi was able to carry on without me focusing on him.



Being able to look into the audience and bring them into your routine is such a great feeling. You get to see the reaction your performance is having on the audience. You put them at ease since you are at ease. They can really enjoy your routine when they see you are confident.

I don't remember how I ended up choosing Stray Cat Strut but I think Ray had suggested it. This piece of music checked all the boxes. It had a good beat with definite section changes. The theme was there and it lent itself to an interesting costume.

With the music decided on it was time to get busy on the choreography. Ray choreographed the routine keeping in mind what behaviours Pepsi already knew. However, he also added some behaviours that were new to Pepsi. This is always a good idea since it expands your skills and you don't end up doing the same moves in each routine.

Pepsi already knew rollovers quite well but had never done them as I twisted and turned to face him then face away from him. That was a challenge but what was really more difficult was when I was at a distance and he had to roll to me. He had to learn to correct himself after each rollover to make sure he was parallel to me. If he didn't he wouldn't be rolling to me.

After many months of practicing and the routine was coming together, I started to work more on my choreography. I had been practicing with the basic movements but now it was time to put the polishing touches on it. I did a lot of practicing without Pepsi at first to make sure my moves were consistent each time. I pretended that the audience was there and practiced how I would interact with them. Once I new exactly what I was doing I started to introduce Pepsi to it.



During this time I also start thinking about a costume. With the lyrics of the song it was obvious to me that I had to dress up as a cat. I went looking for a pattern and material and found some black curly fur, sparkly orange material for the chest and orange and black striped soaks. The headpiece was detachable which at the time didn't seem to matter one way or another. However as you will see in the video of the routine it did become a problem. As I was l was going through the routine the headpiece started moving further and further down onto my face. By the time I finished the routine I was almost doing it blind since it nearly covered my eyes. With a few stitches to attach the headpiece to the body that problem turned out to be an easy fix.

It was a great costume for the most part and it really helped me to get into the character of the routine. However, the costume worked well in the fall and winter but if the weather got hot it was like being inside a sauna. The black curly fur absorbed the heat and kept body heat inside. The routine was not that long but when performing you usually need to get dressed and ready quite far in advance. Sometimes you might be wearing a costume for fifteen minutes or more. I decided I needed a summer cat costume so I got busy and made one. This worked well for those hot spring and summer days when we were doing demos.

The video below is of the routine being performed at the Lower Mainland Dog Fanciers show in Abbotsford. There were about five hundred people watching. Both Pepsi and I had a great time. You can just see Pepsi's enthusiasm and I thoroughly enjoyed being able to ham it up and interact with the audience. What a wonderful feeling to be able to have fun with your canine partner while bring joy to hundreds of people at the same time. It is one routine I will always remember and treasure along with other memories of my sweet Pepsi boy.

*Gail Walsh*

PS. Thanks Ray for all your creative guidance to make this routine what it was.

To see the routine, check out this link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Roz3B8wuASk