



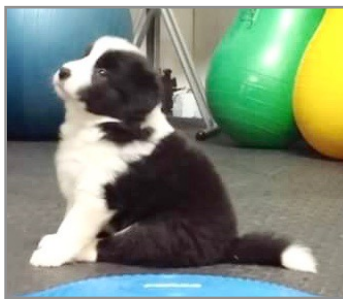
THE WAG

PAWS 2 DANCE NEWSLETTER JULY 2016 VOLUME 22



Coach's Corner with Tristan Underwood

When selecting a puppy for freestyle there are many factors one should take into consideration. The key factor though is balance between temperaments. The dog and trainer should complement each other's personalities; otherwise conflicts will arise. If someone looking for a puppy is incredibly high volume they should take this into account and seek a partner with high volume. If the person has low energy, they should search for a puppy that also has a subdued personality. However, the more skilled the trainer is, the more he or she should be able to adjust to the dog that he or she is teaching/training. This ability to adjust is the main skill of training dogs for any sport. Mike Sweeney Photo.



Editor's Note: *Canine Musical Freestyle* is probably the most challenging of dog sports. I've asked two members to share their unique challenges with you. I'm sure you'll enjoy their stories on pages 6 and 7. And then there is the challenge of operating a MF club with members living hours apart – page 8.

Calendar of Events

P2D **Prancing Paws**, Langley, BC, April 29/30

WCFO **Back to Paws**, Arlington, May 13/14

P2D **Island Fling**, Nanaimo, BC, June 24

WCFO **Dance the Skies**, Langley, BC, August 12/13

P2D **Boot Scootin' Boogie**, Arlington, WA, Sept. 9,10

WCFO **Great Pupkin Ball**, Richland, WA, TBA

Welcome new
members



Marilyn Lindsay
Susan Wallace

Sherry Sullens
Blanka Zeinab

Bookmarks

Robert Crais' *Suspect* is a murder mystery that just happens to have a dog in it. The story provides some good insight into training police and scent dogs.

Kimberly Manuelides' *Getting Home: For Some Dogs, It Just Isn't Easy* is written from the perspective of two rescue dogs.

From the Judges' Handbook

WCFO Skit Division in a nutshell For a more in-depth look at this new division, go to the WCFO site.

A "skit" is a routine that **presents a story or character** or **depicts an incident/occurrence/event** that is reflected in the music or other sounds including voice presentations (such as a poem) in full or partial silence or recorded sounds or sounds created by the performing team during the presentation.

Features of a SKIT

Clearly **conveys a story, incident, or event** to the audience

Noticeably **involves both the dog and handler** in the telling of the story

Handler stays "in character" throughout the entire SKIT (if in character)

Props and Music clearly relate to the presentation



How to . . . Tips and Variations for Circles

*Circles are a natural movement that can really add energy to a routine while giving the handler plenty of opportunity to interpret the music. Here are some tips and some variations to consider. Find our **Circles** video at <https://vimeo.com/202705481> Hope you find something new to try.*

FORWARD CIRCLE

Starting out: Use a leash or a lure to guide the dog around; then fade to a physical cue and eventually voice cue only. **Be sure to rev the dog up before the cue to ensure quick circles.** For continuous circles, two strategies: some handlers cue only once and the dog circles until given a different cue while some handlers cue each circle just before the dog finishes the previous one.

The other direction: Be sure to teach circles in both directions. Give this movement a different name.

Changing directions: a couple things to try

- CW circle(s) from heel, weave to right, CCW circle(s) from right, weave to left.
- Have dog change direction mid circle (a little more challenging!)

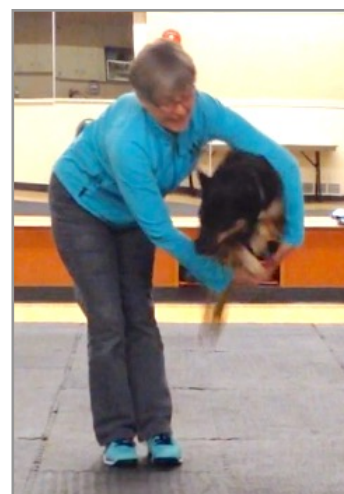
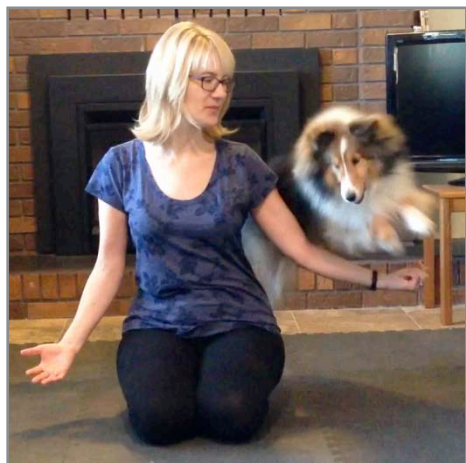
Handler Movement: The handler could stand still, move arms, pivot in opposite direction to the dog or interpret the music in some other way.

Moving Circles: the dog circles the handler while the handler moves in a deliberate direction. Best to start with small steps. This provides a good opportunity for the handler to interpret the music with body movement.

Handler Position: Handler could kneel, sit, or even stand on one leg while dog is circling. While this appears to be just a circle, it will take the dog a few tries to understand this new perspective so you may have to guide the dog at first. Try kneeling with dog circling on its hind legs.



Circles with jumps: While circling, dog jumps over arms of kneeling handler. Handler makes "O" with arms through which the dog can jump while circling. Handler puts out leg while sitting and dog jumps over leg. Handler holds a cane or hoop for dog to jump while circling.



“Out” Circles: There are several methods to teach the “out” or “big” circle. This is one method.

- create a small circle using low gating or pylons.
- have dog in a down position on the outside of the gating/pylons with handler inside the circle
- cue dog to circle. (The first couple times, you may have to lead the dog around with a lure.) Reward by reaching treat ahead of dog or by throwing treat ahead of dog.
- gradually increase dimension of circle to desired size
- gradually fade the gating to pylons and then fewer pylons and smaller markers – to no markers
- vary starting position and raise criteria for number of circles

Tips:

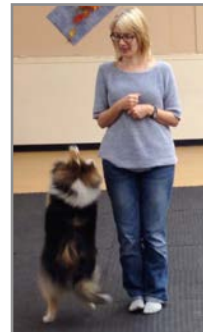
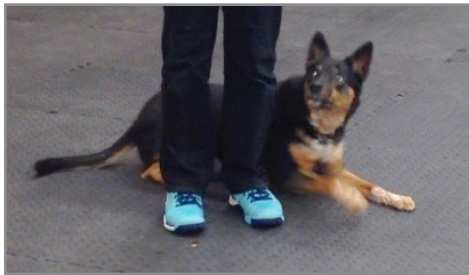
- ask dog to stay in down position till you reach the centre of the circle so that dog can focus on the task of running rather than watching the handler. Use this time to rev up the dog.
- give encouragement to the dog as it moves in the big circle, ensuring energetic movement

Variation: Handler moves in a large circle the opposite direction of the dog.

Circling Objects: You might need a different cue for this movement. The dog can circle – forward or backward – something the handler is holding (cane, scarf, etc.) or an object at a distance (prop, platform).

Different dog positions: Circling forward on *hind legs* is more challenging for most dogs than circling backward.

Start by moving with the dog then standing still while moving lure to guide the dog. Fade the lure to a hand cue and eventually to voice cue only. Follow the same strategy with circles in a *crawl* position or a *three-legged* limping circle.



CIRCLE BACKS - Tip: give the CW and CCW back-circles different names.

Starting Out: Here are three different methods. Experiment to determine which one your dog responds to best. Sometimes a combination of methods works.

1. **Confined area:** create a tight circle with low gating. Stand with dog in heel position in this circle. There should be just enough space between handler and gating to allow the dog to move. Start in heel position with lure hovering over the dog's head. When the dog takes a single step back, mark and treat. Because the space is confined, the dog will have no choice but to move around the handler. Gradually increase number of steps. Have a treat in each hand so that you can lure the dog smoothly around.
2. **Back Chaining:** start the dog directly in front of you facing toward your right. Ask dog to find heel position. Mark and reward when the dog takes a step backwards into the heel position. Gradually move starting point further around your body.
3. **Meet Dog Half Way:** Pivot with your dog. Once the dog gets going, pivot in the opposite direction and meet the dog half-way. Mark/Treat. Then, do the same but give a second cue to complete the circle-back.

Variations: Most of the movements executed forward can also be executed going backwards, with the exception of jumps. Have fun creating variations with this most basic of freestyle moves.

WCFO Dance the Skies 2016
Langley, BC

... Wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence



Thanks to Valorie's miniature carousels, Lisa's very real-looking popcorn, a collection of stuffed Midway toys and some wall art, the Playland theme really took hold. A team effort for the entire weekend made judge Dianne Trippett of Oregon and all participants feel welcome. Saturday night Annette hosted the gang at her new performance facility – see next page. Photographs are by Valorie Lennox, Vickie Phillips, and Sue Sweeney.



Annette's new barn is perfect for freestyle. The floor is concrete covered with interlocking mats – *that don't need to be picked up!* The "audience" half of the building is stained wood paneling – stained by Annette, of course. Seating includes chairs and pews and the end wall boasts a mezzanine, a sewing room, a bathroom, and a change room. The "performance" end is painted black and is wired for lights and other special effects. One side wall is covered with 50 feet of mirrors. On the other side are huge swinging doors opening up to a shaded area perfect for crating dogs.



The Island K9 Freestylers had great fun at the Vancouver Island Exhibition in Nanaimo August 19th, 20th, and 21st. Clockwise from top left: Adrianna & Rhys, Lenore & Sir Lance, Melodie & Surfer, a team of pirates (Yvonne & Tweed, Linda & Bernie, Sharon & Tucker, Darlene & Brandy, Ron & Parker, Melody & Surfer, Lenore & Lance, Jodie & Phurry), Ron & Parker and Yvonne & Tweed, Lenore & Sir Lance, Linda and Bernie, Yvonne and Tweed, and Carol & Hunter. Gail & Kalia and Valorie & Crumpit also performed.

Overcoming Challenges to Have Fun with Freestyle

Many of you have seen **Karen and Benny** perform in the training divisions of Paws 2 Dance events in Langley and in our recent training videos and may wonder why such a talented duo isn't entering more events. I've asked Karen to explain.

How Freestyle Dog Dancing Saved My Life

Well, it didn't really save my life, but that got your attention, didn't it?

I was asked to write a little bit about what it is like to do freestyle dancing while having multiple sclerosis (MS).

First, I should explain that MS is a disease that causes progressive inflammation and scarring in the central nervous system, which means scarring anywhere in the brain and spinal cord. These scars have a very similar effect to what you might imagine tumors would cause in the same places in your own body. Some of the symptoms of MS are outwardly visible, when they can be helped with the cane or wheelchair, for example. The other symptoms, which are invisible to other people, are much more difficult to manage . . . vision problems, a type of fatigue that is unique to MS, and nerve pain, for example. It is very common for people with MS to be extremely ill or disabled and yet look outwardly normal. Everyone with MS has different symptoms depending on where their scars are located and what pathways are interrupted. MS symptoms are not stagnant, but are unpredictable and ever-changing. They change in quality and severity over time and they change from day to day and even from hour to hour.

With regard to freestyle dog dancing, there are more than a few challenges that I experience because I

have MS. The first challenge, for me, with my particular MS symptoms, is simply showing up! I don't decide whether or not to participate until a few hours before the event and I'm not able to stay very long after my performance. This makes me sad because I miss out on seeing most of the other performances and also being able to learn by seeing what other people do.

How do I manage this? Help. Lots of help from many nice people in the freestyle dancing organization who help me to be able to enter events in a way that works for me.

The other main challenge that I have with regard to my own, personal MS symptoms is that I have a feeling of imbalance in my head.

How do I manage this? I can't do any quick turns of my head, so I have to eliminate any movements that would spin my head or tip my head upside down. I have to be quite robotic with my head movement and keep facing forward. I can create a little bit of extra movement by just twisting my body or swinging my arms. I get my dog to do all of the spinning and rolling over!

Even though it is a really big challenge to participate in freestyle dog dancing, I do it because I absolutely love it! I love the fun of working with my dog and I love the entertainment value of the sport. I love the people I meet and I am very grateful to have had this hobby introduced to me as a result of having taken dog classes for my puppy that included the progression to freestyle dog dancing.

Thanks for giving me the opportunity to talk about this and also to explain a little bit about MS.

-- Karen Walker



Overcoming Challenges to Have Fun with Freestyle

Every time **Gracie** steps into the ring with **Heather**, audience members can't help but root for her. When it comes time for special awards, she usually wins the "most inspirational or endearing" prize or something similar. I've asked Heather to share with us a little about her remarkable partnership with Gracie.

Dancing With a Blind Dog



Close your eyes. Now imagine you've just walked into a party. The music is loud, people are talking. You recognize every perfume and cologne that everyone is wearing because your senses are heightened. Someone might touch you or another might invade your space. Now imagine this going on for at least a few hours.

Feel a bit of sensory overload? Feel "not quite right"? Magnify that by ten. That is what my dog feels like in a competition or class.

When Gracie lost her eyes I wanted her to have a happy, useful life. The thought of her sitting on a couch in darkness brought a sadness to me and I wasn't going to allow that to happen. Among other things I decided to try freestyle.

In working with a blind dog you must become their eyes. Every move is a thought out plan that involves having to verbalize just what that plan is. Much like training a sighted dog but having to rub your tummy

and pat your head at the same time. At first I was directionally challenged because I never had to really think about those things before. If I turned a different way I could improvise and it was always doable because my dog could see me, read me or get out of my way. Gracie cannot. Many times I ran into, or tripped over her when I got my signals mixed up. I'm sure she wondered what I was doing or if I had been drinking.

I found that wearing a cat bell around my ankle helps Gracie to know where I am. I don't wear it out of the ring but with the music and all the other happenings in a competition, it keeps her grounded. Should there be a distraction of sound or smells, I can tap my foot which rings the bell and brings Gracie back into focus. Funny enough I find I still give her some hand signals but I'm learning not to.

Gracie has to work hard at what she does but thankfully for me, she loves that. Her happiness comes through her tail and that never stops. It is so amazing for me to be able to learn from her. I believe that I have learned to "think outside the box" and be more creative when I train because I have to.

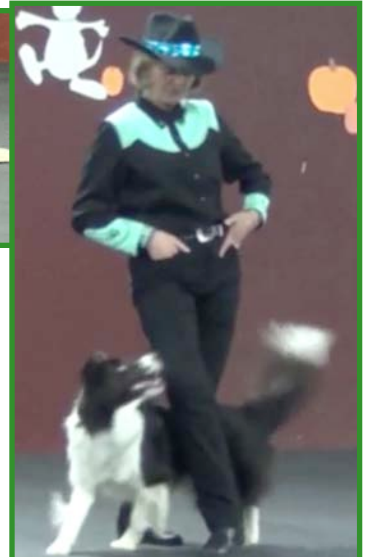
I am in awe of my little blind dog and I am grateful to all the sports that allow me to work and compete with her.



--Heather Van Oene and Gracie



Overcoming Challenges to Have Fun with Freestyle



We just do it . . . somehow! *by Caroline Money*

Emerald City (ECK9) started with just two people 15 years ago with a dream to give other interested people a place to show off their talents and their talented canines. There have been many challenges along the way trying to get the club members together for monthly meetings, parties, demos and all the things that hold a group together since our membership is so widespread from Oregon, Eastern Washington, Western Washington, Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland, BC. Somehow we have managed to stay together through our love for the sport and spirit of competition. When we see each other at the competitions, it is like a family reunion.

This year ECK9 sponsored the fledgling WCFO event in Richland, WA, thinking that since the Richland group was a new group, WCFO would fund the judge. When they found out the event was being sponsored by ECK9, WCFO backed out of that, leaving ECK9 with the bill for the judge and all her expenses on top of paying for the building. Fortunately, the owner of the building cut the cost of rental in half which enabled us to host the event. We had a great raffle – with most items coming from ECK9 club. The raffle ended up making more money than raffles at any of our other competitions. We were pleased to be able to help this new group of freestylers in the Richland area of Washington and wish them much success in the future.

We will keep doing Freestyle as long as there is anyone interested in the most fun, most difficult, most challenging but also most rewarding sport dogs can do.



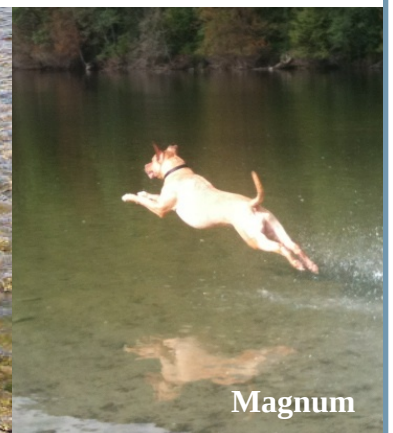
2016 Photo Challenge: Dogs and Water – Swimsuit Edition



Benny and Karen



Dansa (head submerged) & Harta



Magnum



Pippin in hydro therapy



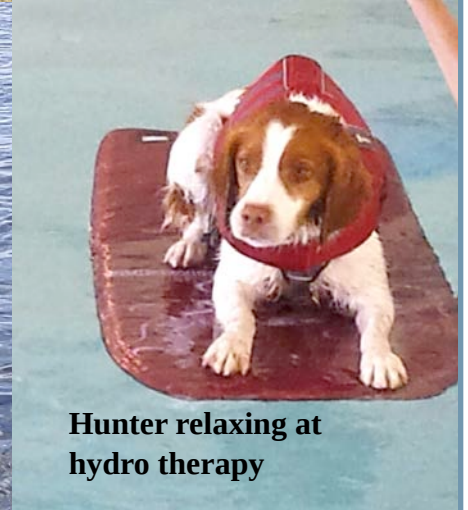
Dansa & Harta sharing a drink



Tess & Sonic taking a dip



Hunter in Big Qualicum River



Hunter relaxing at hydro therapy



Ty
2003 - 2016

In Memoriam

Navigating Our Websites

*Lin has been hard at work updating our websites and making them easier to navigate. Here is a quick lesson on how to find things on the **Members Only** site.*

1. Go to paws2dance.com. Scroll till you see **Members Website**. Click
 2. Enter your Email Address and Password.
 3. Click on the button that you need.
 - a. **Competition Results**: Includes titles and all results between 2008 and 2016
 - b. **WAG**: Click on INDEX to find the articles in each of the 22 WAGS. Then click on the edition you want to see.
 - c. **Minutes, documents, and photos and videos** are self explanatory.
- For Competition Guide, go to the public website, competitions.

Freestyle Workshop – Hosted by Island K9 Freestylers

Praise, Reward, Movement, and Clarity

At the end of October, Island freestylers gathered at Nanoose Place Community Centre for an Island K9 Freestylers workshop, taught by our own talented **Lenore Baskin**.

The dogs ranged in age from Gail's 5-month-old Standard Poodle to Lenore's 13 year old Great Dane. The handlers ranged from super excited, to well, **SUPER** excited. We always look forward to training with Lenore!

When planning the workshop, Lenore asked everyone....

What do you and your dog do well?

What do you and your dog struggle with?

What do you and your dog enjoy?

What help would you like?



The replies Lenore received varied so much! A trainer brand new to Freestyle wanted to learn how to plan a successful training session. Isn't that a clever question for a beginning freestyler? Others wanted to achieve focus & attention, learn more about choreography, manage nerves when performing, deal with frustration when things aren't going well, and more. Lenore took everyone's Wish List and created a workshop: "Praise, Reward, Movement & Clarity".



We started off with a warm up to music. Well, that was fun! We practiced a progression of tricks to music. We played The Cookie Game, the best game EVER, according to our dogs!

We explored our energy levels from frustrated, to calm, to happy, to ultra happy, then applied 'calm' to 'ultra happy' energy in an exercise with our dogs..... What an amazing difference in energy, drive and enthusiasm we saw! This might seem confusing, but if you think about it, how would you react if your best friend reacted with 'Whatever??' to your most exciting news? How about if instead of reacting with 'OK', they said, 'Holy Smokes! That's FANTASTIC!?' We thought about that then tried to "Fake It Until We Make It" with our dogs. Lenore says that Practice Makes

Perfect. Plus, we added in something unexpected which drove our dogs into Super Excited Mode!

We choreographed our own moves to part of a song. And, the trainer brand new to Freestyle choreographed her own routine in front of everyone with confidence and creativity. On the spot! Wow! We danced! We laughed! The dogs danced! The dogs laughed! We learned what we could add to our training sessions to get more value out of training time. There was a



lot more, all of it such fun. Now that was a great day!

'Praise, Reward, Movement and Clarity', indeed! Thank you, Lenore for a VERY fun, VERY rewarding day.

Thanks to Island K9Freestylers' executive for organizing this workshop . . . and, thanks to Michael for transporting the mats. The husbands never get enough credit, do they?



--- Article and photos by Sharon Anderson.