



Ontario Border Collie Club

In This Issue!

**Winter Arena Trial; Winter Trialing: Texas and Florida;
Scanning for Lambs; Lambing at Swaledale; Spring Training
Clinics; Better Pictures; Kingston SDT 30th Anniversary**



Swaledale Lambs

WANT TO JOIN US?

On September 22, 1984, the Ontario Border Collie Club was formed near King City, Ontario. An enthusiastic group had gathered for a trial near Winchmore farm, and they sat down after supper on Saturday night to draw up the aims and objectives of the new club.

The primary objective of the club is to promote the traditional herding ability of the Border Collie by holding trials and training clinics. The club also encourages obedience and other non-traditional uses of the dog.

It was decided to publish a newsletter a few times each year to keep members up to date on upcoming activities. The club members are mainly farm people with a high regard for and a common interest in the Border Collie. We want to maintain the dog's natural working instinct and hope to prevent it turning into nothing more than another show dog,

If you have an interest in working dogs on stock, or are interested in being an informed spectator at sheep dog trials, please fill out the online membership form and send it along with your cheque to: Teresa Castonguay, 716 Mitchell Rd, RR #2, Warkworth, ON K0K 3K0

2016 Club Officers

PRESIDENT

Cynthia Palmer
presidentobcc@gmail.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Werner Reitboeck
vicepresidentobcc.com

TREASURER

Teresa Castonguay
treasurerobcc@gmail.com

SECRETARY

Tracy Hinton
secretaryobcc@gmail.com

DIRECTOR

Sheri Purcell
directorobcc@gmail.com

WEBMASTER:

Rebecca Lawrence
obccwebsite@gmail.com

Newsletter

EDITOR:

Helen Dunning
obcceditor@gmail.com

ART DIRECTOR/DESIGN:

Michelle Lawrence
obccphotographer@gmail.com

Newsletter contribution deadlines (3 weeks before issue dates):
Jan 15, Apr 21, July 21, Oct 21

Opinions expressed are the opinions of the author and are not necessarily those of the OBCC.

Cover Photo by Helen Dunning



From the Editor

In this issue I have included the responses to the "Random Ranch Thoughts" article featured in the last issue. If anyone wishes to further add to this discussion please feel free

to send your thoughts to obcceditor@gmail.com and we can continue this discourse.

Many thanks to all those who contributed to this issue, particularly those people who put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) despite saying "I'm not sure I can do this" when asked to write an article! Our community is richer for the shared thoughts, advice and experiences. We cover such a large geographical area and the newsletter is an important source of information about events.

I really appreciate all of your efforts to make this newsletter happen.

Happy herding.

Helen Dunning



*Helen and Dogs
Photo by Gordon Dunning*

I appreciate the article in the last newsletter airing the issues surrounding the recognition of 'ranch' as a sanctioned class for OBCC. It's a complex question. But it's all so confusing given that many Ontario trials offer the class but it is not recognized and there is no year end award. Some Ontario trials merge the class with nursery, which could be to save time, or to offer OBCC novice handlers an opportunity to unofficially attempt the larger course. Or, because we are double sanctioned with NEBCA, offering a ranch class feeds points to their recognized class but means nothing in Ontario, so it could be to attract NEBCA members to our trials. Is it any wonder that it's confusing to a novice handler like me? (Full disclosure, I am running a ranch dog this summer in the jurisdictions that provide it).

So, I suggest we do one or the other - sanction ranch or discontinue it at Ontario trials. If we don't agree with it or sanction it, then let's not try to be all things to all people. And the best way to determine that would be to put it to the membership. May I suggest we put out a survey to all members asking the question? Such a survey should include 3 choices - yea, nay or don't know - so that folks who don't trial have an option too. Let's ask the membership to decide whether ranch should be sanctioned by OBCC and resolve this once and for all.

Lynn Johnston

I'd like to make a few comments regarding the Ranch Class discussions. Basically, a rebuttal for the Against Reasons.

"Faster" progress into Open for Novice Handlers is not necessarily a good thing. Competence in handling skills take times and ideally a novice handler needs to improve their skills through the levels or they will not be successful in Open. You cannot "buy" your way into Open...you must learn it to earn it.

I would think that the Ontario Border Collie Club would want to align themselves with provinces or states that abut the province of Ontario; Quebec, Michigan, Ohio, NY, etc. I don't see our novice handlers making the trek to California, Alberta, BC, or Oregon to run Novice classes.

Teaching a young dog to shed too early can cause problems for other pieces of work and should be left till the end when the other sections have been mastered.

It's much easier to set sheep for a Ranch class than it is for PN as normally the set out requires two handlers and the sheep have to be brought down the field. Ideally, the Ranch class would reduce the numbers in PN...attracting the more experienced handlers with Nursery dogs, and allowing the novice handlers a better chance at placing in PN. I've heard from more than one source that they get tired of losing to Professional Handlers with Nursery dogs

There are two huge differences between Ranch and Open, and one is called "the shed or split", and might even be a "split, pen, single". Newcomers to Open often don't get a shed for several years, which means they never see a ribbon. The second huge difference is the level of competition. Even a medium sized trial has 60+ open entrants and often they are top open handlers who often don't run Ranch...or they run a Nursery dog that is less of a threat and can be beaten by an older dog with a novice handler.

The distance can be a huge factor between PN and Ranch,...especially for the handler that has just begun using a whistle and has yet to master the volume. Dogs don't take whistles they can't hear... and shouting that distance is impossible. Control at a distance is a difficult thing to master,....practising at the bigger distance in Ranch is priceless.

Mary Thompson

Although I will most likely not take part in Ranch in the near future, I am in favour of this category. As a Novice/Novice handler, I won my share of ribbons and feel like I need to step up to Pro/Novice this year in order to improve. However, the idea of competing against top Open handlers and their nursery dogs is at the least, intimidating. Many will say that one should compete against themselves and try to better their own performance regardless of the competitors but it is encouraging to have a shot at the podium sometimes. I really enjoyed having top handlers around at Novice trials and feel I gained a lot from watching them and talking with them. I still feel that Ranch should be held at the same time as the Novices categories. But ultimately, if the dogs are destined to move up to Open, why not start them in Ranch? As a newcomer, I truly feel that the addition of a fourth category will encourage beginners to continue training and trialing. Here's how I see the 4 categories;

Novice/Novice: Beginner who is just starting out, one dog, limited access to sheep.

Pro/Novice: Handler with good control over flock, maybe more than one dog or better breeding, access to sheep.

Ranch: Handler who performed well in Pro/Novice the previous year but still needs experience to move up to Open. Might be working with a dog, 5 year old or more, access to sheep/farm. Open handler with young promising dog (nursery) most likely from an Open dog breeding, access to sheep/farm.

Open: Handler that worked his way to Open through 2 or 3 categories with older dog. Handler that performed well in Ranch with young dog.

Patrick Gosselin

THE LAST WINTER ARENA TRIAL 2017

By Marie Sawford

The last of the winter arena trials was held on March 19. The weather was lovely. People stood outside with the hatches of their vehicles open and chatted while waiting for their runs. Tracy Hinton set up a Maltese cross to keep us entertained during our runs. It was a fun and challenging element of the course and great opportunity to practice it.

Everyone gathered to chat some more and enjoy another fantastic pot luck lunch.

As expected it was awesome!



Kevan Gretton. Photo by Anne Wheatley

Winner of the Novice Class on Sunday was Chris Knowlton and Spot and, in reserve, was Victoria Lamont and Dram.

The Open Class on Sunday was won by Kevan Gretton and Sid. In reserve was our President Cynthia Palmer and Duke.

The results for the winter arena trial series:

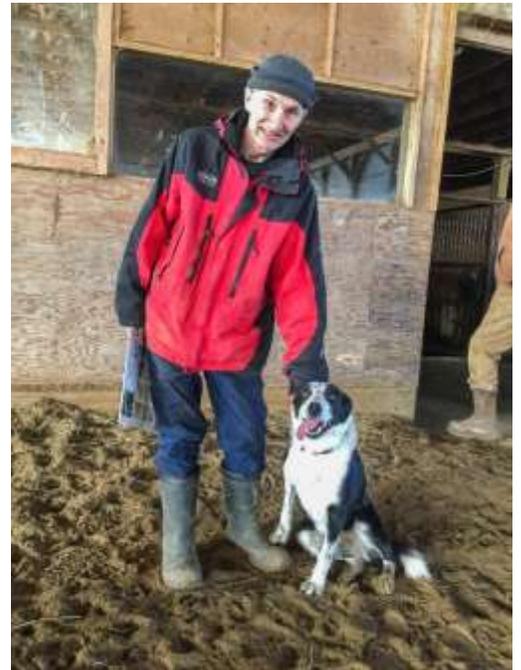
Novice Class

Champion - Victoria Lamont and Dram

Reserve - Louise Hadley and Tug

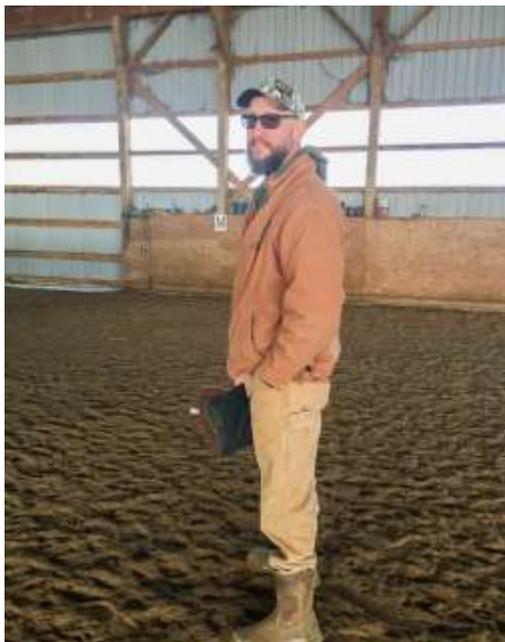
Open Class

Kevan Gretton and Sid
John Palmer and Dutch



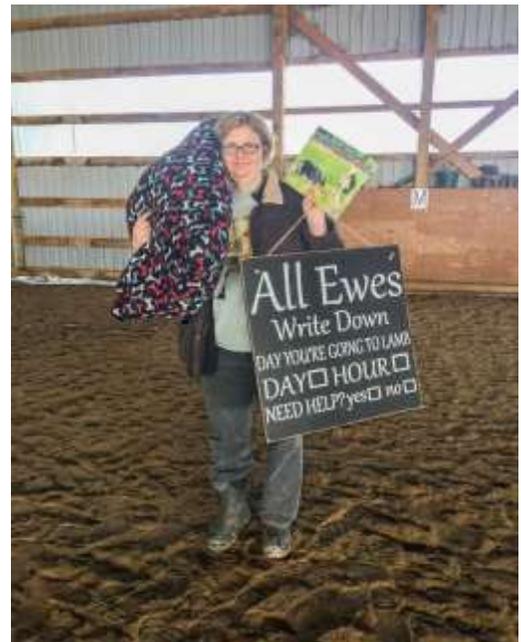
Chris Knowlton. Photo by Anne Wheatley

Victoria Lamont was the winner of the lovely sign that was donated by Chris Gretton. Winners of the other classes won dog beds and calendars.



John Palmer. Photo by Anne Wheatley

Many thanks to all those people that make these arena trials possible. Kim and Kevan Gretton, Viki Kidd, Tracy Hinton, Scott and Chris Gretton for their work in the pens. Many thanks to the Leaches at Seven Pines Stables for letting us take over their stable for our arena trials



Victoria Lamont. Photo by Anne Wheatley

TRIALING IN TEXAS

By Joanne Murphy

Several OBCC members head south to Florida to trial in the winter. Jim and Joanne Murphy have headed to Texas for the last few years. Here is Joanne's take on this alternate winter option.

We started attending the Texas winter trials about three years ago. We have been attending four trials, Fort Stockton, Junction, Gatesville and Top of the Hill.

Fort Stockton is located just off the I10 in Western Texas. The trial is held at the Fort Stockton Gun Club, which is about 10km from the town. We were able to have a plug in and get water for the dogs and trailer. The outrun was about 375 yards and faces east. So in the morning we were facing into the rising sun. The whole course and sheep were challenging and the terrain was rough.

This year the sheep were sheared Rambouillet yearlings and the weather was a bit iffy. The first day we had 99 degree weather. The second day they were calling for temperatures to be below 40 degrees with freezing rain. So the farmer pulled his sheep and the day was cancelled.

The **Junction** trial is held inside a one mile horse race track. It is sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce. They provided a cooler with oranges, bananas, water and breakfast bars. They also had a bbq going for goodies.

The terrain on the field was grass. The outrun is about 350 yds. The sheep were tough Dorpers.

Gatesville was held at the farmer's field. They have a huge flock. We had unshorn Rambouillets. The outrun was 350-400 yds. They were able to run Nursery/Novice at the same time as Open was run on another field. The terrain was grass. Here we were able to have three challenging runs. The Rambouillets were hard to move and many runs stalled out or ran short of time.

Top of the Hill trial was the most challenging of the group of trials. It was held about 20 miles outside of the German town of Fredericksburg. The terrain sloped uphill with bush and trees in places. Again, the outrun was 350-400 yds. The Dorpers were hard to distinguish as they were the same colour as the terrain. The early runs were difficult to lift but improved as the trial progressed.

We feel that we learn something every time we go to Texas. All the sheep are range sheep and they and the fields offer a great challenge to all handlers.



Photo by Joanne Murphy

Winter Trialing in Florida 2017

By Kim Gretton

I was asked to provide the newsletter with a report of our trip to Florida from the perspective of a spectator.

Just so you know – for this spectator it's all about the weather, food and company!

Tracy had left earlier than us as she was going into Brian Cash's arena trial in Georgia. Kevan and I were going to a family wedding at Blue Mountain. Thankfully the weather the day of the wedding wasn't bad, as it was an outdoor wedding! We came home after the dinner so we could get an early start. There was a big storm, so leaving that Sunday was not possible. Monday was slightly better so we left mid-day.

First stop was Georgia at Brian Cash's so the dogs could stretch their legs and try to remember what working dogs are supposed to do. It had been a long winter without much opportunity to practice.

Next, we stayed at Sharon & Allen Hickenbottom's near Ocala. A beautiful spot with a grass road nearby. A local Paso Fina horse breeder rode by training different horses.



Anne & Dusk at C54. Photo by Lynn Johnston

Then to the first trial at C54. We met up with Anne Wheatley, Lynn Johnston and Catherine Rae. They had been in Florida for 2 weeks practicing and soaking up the sun. It was very foggy in the morning for the trial start. Tracy was one of the first to complete the course. C54 organizers believe in using natural and convenient obstacles, such as a palm tree instead of a panel for one side of the drive, or large feeders as panels. The wind in the palms and the length of the outrun gave all the dogs a chance to broaden their horizons. The neighboring farm was made into a gun club so there was lots of noise all day as well.

In Ontario, we have pen crews. In Florida, they have 'chunkers'.



Thirsty sheep during sheep change at C54. Photo by Anne Wheatley

One of the things I like about C54 is the canal road which is great to walk on. This year it wasn't recommended due to the water moccasins and fire ants being very active as it was so much warmer this year. I still have the scars on my feet from the fire ants. We heard lots of stories from locals about snakes although Kevan only saw one rattler and I saw a couple of small black snakes, but it was enough to put you off exploring. There is a pond there where the dogs really enjoyed cooling off. It wasn't until after the swim that Brian Cash told us gators love ponds like that and you can't tell they are there until they take the dog!



Kevan in the rain at Asher Dell. Photo by Kim Gretton

There was a new trial at Asher Dell during the week. It was raining – good for Florida as they had a drought for a few months. I used the excuse of laundry to beg off sitting in the rain and shopped. Don't tell Kevan.



Just missed the chute. Photo by Lynn Johnston



Tracy & Dax at Asher Dell Farm. Photo by Lynn Johnston



Lynn & Eve ready for Nursery Run at That'll Do Photo by Anne Wheatley



Eve At That'll Do. Photo by Lynn Johnston

That'll Do Farm trial at Mark & Cheryl Ireland's was the last trial. On the Thursday night, they provided dinner for everyone. Friday night was a group dinner at a Mexican restaurant. The Ireland's have a great BBQ on the Saturday night with entertainment. This year the entertainment was local Irish dancers who were practicing for competitions and a one-man band. All the Canadians helped with set out or scribing. Sand Hill Cranes kept the course interesting by eating the corn set out for the sheep, cawing when they heard the handlers whistle and generally being in the way.



Kevan at That'll Do. Photo by Kim Gretton

We stayed a few days in St. Augustine before heading home. We walked the dogs on the beach, lay in the sun, went sightseeing and tried great restaurants. The pool was open, about 65 degrees, so I was the only one to braved it.

Already looking forward to next year...

SCANNING FOR LAMBS

By Rebecca Lawrence

On February 11th, I had the opportunity to help at the farm of one of our OBCC members while she was having ultrasounds conducted on her flock of ewes. Rebecca Parker, Veterinary Technician, performed the ultrasounds and was gracious enough to answer my questions regarding it.



Performing ultrasound scan on ewe. Photo by Michelle Lawrence

The purpose of ultrasound on a one a year lambing system allows the farmer to know which sheep are lambing and possibly how many fetuses each is carrying. On an accelerated system, it informs which sheep are bred and allows the farmer to know which ones aren't so that they can be included in the next breeding group or culled. As Rebecca stated, this allows for cost savings for the farm, as the farmer can make adjustments to save on feed and time management. If the ability to count fetuses is available, the farmer can also make feed adjustments for singles versus twins or multiple births. Size of flock isn't a hindrance to the procedures, Rebecca tends to book a few smaller flocks in one area to be done when she is available in the region. Rebecca covers most of the province of Ontario, from Ottawa to north-west of London. To the north, she goes to Owen Sound with a yearly trip up to New Liskard. She travels to approximately 100 farms a year, some of them once a year and others every 6 months depending on the breeding program.

The ideal time to ultrasound is between 50 to 85 days after breeding with an almost 100% accuracy rate if done during this time. Rebecca can identify a pregnant ewe at about 30 days until the last few weeks before they are due. This timeframe is especially important if the farmer is seeking knowledge on fetus count. For fetus counts, after 90 days it becomes too difficult to accurately determine how many lambs the ewe is carrying. The fetus is now so large that Rebecca cannot determine if she is seeing two or more lambs or the same one multiple times.

Time frame isn't the only factor when it comes to accuracy on fetal counts, the breed also has an effect. Accuracy ranges from 85% to 100%. Some breeds with multiple fetuses are very hard to count, but breeds like the traditional British breeds (Suffolk, Dorset & North Country Cheviot) are easier to get an accurate count.

Her set up requirements are fairly minimal. She asks that the animals are kept off feed for at least 4 to 6 hours, and if there is a handling system to run the sheep through, it makes the job easier. If there is no handling system, she asks that the animals be contained in a small area. Rebecca scans the abdomens on their right side, therefore she requires space to the left to fit both her machine and herself. The only physical item she requires is warm water for the machine's lubricating system and to clean it when she is done. As well, she finds it easier to have at least 2 people on hand to help move, mark and sort sheep.

Rebecca uses a machine called the Oviscan 6, which is designed for small ruminants and she prefers it as it has a wide angle of view of 175 degrees versus the more common 95 degrees. This wide angle allows her to more easily see if there are multiple fetuses. The machine also has its own lubrication system that feeds right into the hand-held probe which helps to speed up the process. Rebecca reaches under the back leg of a ewe and places the probe on the body next to the udder, an area of skin that lacks wool. The lubrication system is then started to deliver the warm water allowing the ultrasound wave to enter the body and bounce back to the prop. She then can read the images on the monitor to see if the sheep is pregnant and depending on time frame, how many fetuses are inside.



Ultrasound showing single lamb. Photo by Michelle Lawrence

Not only does Rebecca ultrasound sheep, but she even does goats and a few alpacas too!

LAMBING TIME AT SWALEDALE

By Sheri Purcell

It can be the best of times and it can be the worst of times.....it's lambing time!

Although the actual birthing is complete for yet another year, the 50+ lambs competing in the 100 yard dash are a daily reminder of the miracle that happens each spring at Swaledale.



Swaledale Lambs. Photo by Helen Dunning

I didn't grow up on a farm, or have any connection at all to farm life as a child. We lived in the city and suburbia. We had a dachshund and a poodle and no sheep! It wasn't until I accidentally stumbled across a small sheep dog trial on a holiday in England with my Mom, that I decided I needed to get some sheep and a sheepdog. What a learning curve it has been, from the 3 old, ornery Suffolks that I purchased from a local farmer (later traded in for more "suitable" sheep for a novice shepherd), to a flock of approximately 100. The prospect of breeding and lambing was never in the cards back then, some 15 years ago. The sheep could stay for the spring, summer and fall and leave for the winter. Clearly that plan failed!



Swaledale Lambs. Photo by Helen Dunning

Lambing is pretty much a year long planning process. It starts many moons before the small nose and set of hooves appear.

Over the years I have experimented with many sheep breeds, including the rare breed St.Croix, Dorpers, Katahdins and most recently the Mule. The term "Mule" is used to refer to a cross between an upland ram (usually a Bluefaced Leicester) and a purebred hill ewe, such as the Scottish Blackface, Swaledale, Welsh Mountain or Cheviot. The production of mule ewes is a widely used breeding management system in Britain. The 3-tier system has been perfected over hundreds of years in the



Photo by Helen Dunning

U.K. and over the past few years I have attempted to follow it. The mule ewes are then bred to terminal sires, preferably a "British" Suffolk or Texel. I chose the Suffolk, handsome "Humphrey"!

These crosses have produced very nice market lambs and also have kept the flock more uniform. The process could then be repeated with older mules being bred back to another Bluefaced Leicester. This is easier said than done here in Ontario, as BFLs are few and far between. Instead I chose a North Country Cheviot ram, another handsome boy "Bob".

Humphrey and Bob have served Swaledale well, as have Basil, Obadiah and MacDuff, to name just a few! This year's lambs have arrived in a variety of colours, ranging from solid white to pitch black. Having put the 2 rams in with the girls together I have learned that the



Photo by Helen Dunning

dating game can be quite competitive! Clearly twins (obviously fraternal) can have 2 different daddies.... naughty ewe! Of course, we had to name those two, "Hetty Jo" (Humphrey's daughter) & "Bobby Jo" (Bob's daughter).

With the labour and delivery phase complete, the child rearing worries and wonderment continue as each day we watch carefully to do the best we can to keep everyone healthy.

It truly is both a heartwarming and heart wrenching time.... its lambing time!

A WEEKEND SPRING TRAINING CLINIC WITH MARY THOMPSON

By Liz Burden

On the weekend of April 22nd and 23rd, a dog training clinic was hosted by Mary Thompson at her training facility near London. Eight dog handlers ranging in experience from very novice to experienced, as well as one audit, took part in the program. And WOW, what a weekend it was! Jampacked with information, all geared towards helping each individual handler improve their skills in sheep herding and trialing. Combined with an already well planned and executed program on dog training, were unscheduled lessons in sheep husbandry as we had firsthand experience with a lambing crisis. As quoted by one participant, Mary is complimented on her "true grit". In the next day's trialing lessons and lessons in understanding sheep husbandry, each handler was challenged at their level on and off the field. The more experienced handlers helped with the delivery of some stubborn ewe lambs, and the novice people delighted in bottle-feeding the youngsters. Thus, began a fully-rounded and valuable weekend experience!

On Saturday morning, the more experienced handlers took to the field first, zeroing in on problem issues and honing their skills. By noon, most of the novice afternoon participants had arrived and we all went to a nearby restaurant. Much conversation was enjoyed as we got to know each other. In the afternoon, the novice handlers took to the field. Under Mary's keen, watchful eye we practiced a mini-trial course and began to see how each of the individual skills required to complete a competitive course fit together. Everyone appreciated how Mary helped us to see what she was reading/seeing in the sheep, and their responses to the variety of working styles of the dogs. Hence, important lesson #1 - "Watch the sheep." We agreed that we all need improvement in that area as reading sheep is basic from the most novice to most talented handler. At the end of the afternoon we realized that the theme of this clinic was "Make it happen." If you are going to ask your dog to follow a command you must "make it happen", even if you gave the wrong command!!!

With our brains saturated with information, we left the training field to enjoy a delicious potluck supper in Mary's home. Here, the learning continued with much valuable discussion of shared ideas and feelings concerning so many aspects of learning about dogs and sheep. We came to an understanding that "we are a family of like-minded people" with a love for our dogs. We have the desire to improve as handlers, and we all experience the raw frustrations that this captivating sport has for some individuals. Give yourself time. It is a humbling sport at any level of accomplishment.

After breakfast at Mary's on Sunday we got to work once again, full of enthusiasm, and ready to try out Saturday's learning tips. Each of us wanted to "make it happen". Well here is another learning curve - sometimes it does happen the way we want it to, but quite often it doesn't. Hence, the support of the group was invaluable. We are a family of like-minded people!

Every effort was successfully made by Mary to personalize the required learning of the individual handler as to where they are at on their journey in this totally addictive sport. As a wrap-up to the day's activities, Mary asked each person to share their personal reflection of the area which would become their personal take away goal. Some have already been mentioned in this article, and these are some more stated reflections.

- A lie down must mean a lie down. So... Make it happen. Many of us repeat the command more than once. Say it once, and then do whatever it takes to enforce it.
- The handler's body language hugely affects the dog's response.
- The handler's voice must not be too quiet or too loud. Mean what you say, and make it count. (Again, make it happen).
- Find the lead sheep, and flank accordingly to turn the head. If driving, look at the cheeks of the sheep.
- Timing is crucial, as dog and handler work in partnership. A late flank, a late response, and guess what? You've lost the moment.
- A decent flank does not happen on the fly. There must be a stop first, and a redirect. Follow the dog's tail.
- Pretty much the only time you want speed from your dog is on an outrun.
- When penning... make sure your dog covers the "mouth" of the pen door to stop the sheep from trying to come out.

Thanks Mary for sharing your hospitality, knowledge, and passionate love for this challenging and captivating sport. By working through our issues together, you indeed have helped us to see how we can "Make it Happen".

SPRING TRAINING WITH COREY PERRY

By Lene Band

Neither wind nor freezing temperatures could dampen the enthusiasm of the enthusiastic handlers who gathered at Swaledale Farm owned by Sheri Purcell and Hugh Grant for the opportunity to work with Corey Perry from Alberta.



How many people does it take to put up a tent? Photo by Helen Dunning

By Sunday, the weather had turned quite cool and heavy rains were forecast. It was decided that we should spend the morning in the small field to reinforce the lessons learned and then after lunch, weather permitting, to go out to the big field and test our accomplishments.

The rain held off so after another hearty lunch we donned our arctic gear and headed out to the big field to practice courses. That was the true test of what the dogs and handlers had learned after an intense training weekend. There were many proud moments as dogs showed what they had learned.

As a bonus, we had the pleasure of watching Corey introduce Sheri's 8-month-old puppy to sheep. His calm, encouraging manner soon had the pup showing great potential as a champion herding dog.

Many thanks to Corey for braving the elements in Ontario and helping our dogs and handlers. Special thanks too, to Sheri and Hugh for feeding and warming us, and to Helen, Tara and Gordon for setting out and rotating sheep. And a special and heartfelt thanks to the handlers for their good humour and friendship.

After the warm temperatures of Thursday, Friday dawned cool but mostly sunny and windy. By 8:30am handlers were ready to show Corey what their dogs could do and what needed to be worked. It seemed that most, if not all, dogs needed some remediation on the "DOWN" command and some on widening their flanks. That became the morning exercise. After each dog, Corey explained the performance of each dog, what was observed and what needed to be done to correct the performance.

During a delicious lunch, after further discussion of dogs and handling, it was decided that most wanted to practice driving. Many of the handlers were just moving to Pro Novice or had only been in Pro Novice for a year so after lunch we all gathered in the smaller field to practice driving until it was time to gather for a delicious meal prepared by Hugh and Sheri.

Saturday dawned cloudy and cool with high penetrating, damp winds. Handlers sat huddled together as one by one Corey took them through their paces. It was amazing to see how each dog and handler improved under his calm instructions.



Corey working Sheri's young puppy. Photo by Tania Costa

BETTER PICTURES

By Werner Reitboeck

I was asked to write a short article on how to take better border collie pictures.



Painters start with an empty canvas, photographers start with a full viewfinder. Painters add items to the canvas to create their painting, photographers on the other hand should remove items visible in our viewfinder.

Like painters, photographers have to ask themselves what they want to say with the picture, and whom they want to "speak" to. I have seen thousands of photos while teaching photography that were very meaningful to the owner as they were a memento of some event in their lives. But many of these pictures meant absolutely nothing to fellow students or me.

I shall try and give some tips on making pictures like this a little more meaningful to all viewers. To show only what you want to show: make it simpler.

One way of doing this is to **go closer**. By this I mean frame your subject tighter. The subject is everything you need to be in the shot, you might have a main subject and other subjects that give extra information. For example, a border collie stretched out, flying at full speed through the air is the picture of a just that: a border collie at high speed. If I want to convey that this dog is competing at a trial I have to add a caption to this photo. If, however, I show that border collie facing off with an ewe, I need to give less verbal information to say "border collie at a sheepdog trial". The less you have to explain in words the stronger your shot.

If you can, use a shorter lens: There is a big difference between a "voyeuristic" shot taken with a long telephoto lens from far away and the same action taken with a wide-

angle lens from the midst of the action. Most of the time that wide-angle shot will have a lot more punch.

Go lower or higher.

We all experience the world from our "eye" height. By going lower or higher we automatically create more interest as we show the world from an unusual perspective. A lower perspective often creates a strong reaction involuntarily. A cat photo from above shows a kitty, cute but harmless. Same kitten walking towards the camera with photographer lying on ground, kitten towering above the camera, it becomes a dangerous beast, ready to bounce on the viewer and tear them to pieces. Additionally, a low position also helps to separate the main subject from background, especially if taken with a wide-angle lens and it emphasizes the feeling of depth.

Use limited depth of field.

A large aperture (f/stop) like f/2, f/2.8, f/4 ... will give you less depth of field compared to a smaller aperture (f/11, f/16, f/22...). So, if we use a larger aperture the main subject should be sharp but everything in front of and behind will be blurred.

(Every time we focus on a subject, objects in front of and behind the focused subject will also appear in focus: this is referred to as depth of field. A little side tip: when shooting a landscape where you want maximum depth of field do not focus on the furthest object but something in front to obtain maximum depth of field...there are formulas for that if you really want to become obsessive.)

Depth of field is quite a big subject so just some more comments: Longer lenses (telephoto) have less depth of field compared to shorter (wide-angle) lenses at same distance and f/stop. At closer distances the depth of field will be less, etc.

With limited depth of field, blur is used to isolate the subject from the surrounding area. If your subject is moving, motion blur can be used to isolate subjects and also convey the idea of speed. It is tempting to always use as short a shutter speed as possible to freeze action but sometimes that results in rather static shots. If subject travels past you, one way to express motion and still show the subject sharp is to pan your shot. This means you follow the subject in your viewfinder as it moves past. If done well the subject will be sharp and background will be "speed" blurred (shown in motion streak). With this technique, you can use quite a long shutter speed and still obtain shots of a sharp subject. To get good at this, you should probably train a bit. It is important that you teach yourself to carry through with moving the camera past the

shot, i.e. don't stop as soon as you shoot. In many cases the feeling of speed can be increased further by blurred legs (spokes on wheels, etc.) as they would move at a different speed than the rest of the body which is "synchronised" with the viewfinder (camera) movement.

Be aware of your foreground and background. We see a subject that we think will make a beautiful shot but are not aware that a tree is growing out of their head etc. (Years ago, I did the cover for the Annual Report of Bell Northern. It was a difficult shot that took a lot of planning, taken with a large format camera (the camera where the photographer disappeared underneath a black cloth). Sun had to be right, people walking through shot had to be right etc. Unfortunately, I did not notice that when it came to the exposure a stray dog had wandered into shot and lifted his leg against the wall of the building. The resulting shot was not exactly the message I or, more importantly, my client wanted to convey. As I had a second shot we were able to rescue the shoot but as the people on first negative were better we had to splice the two shots together (before Photoshop so not very simple).

Like verbal language, visual language has "correct spelling", grammar etc. Instead of an alphabet, visual elements like lines, shapes, colours, texture, etc. etc. are

used. And there are "rules": rules of thirds, golden mean, odds, etc. If you can become aware of these elements you will probably become a better photographer.

If asked to give as concise advice as possible I would say try to become as curious as a child to the world around you. When you see something that you like do take a "bread and butter" shot but then ask yourself if you could improve this shot by changing your position, your equipment (lens as an example), your camera settings... (perhaps if the light were different so come back at a different time?). Learn to be patient to take the picture at right moment.

While I was asked to talk about composition I feel that the one major problem with many, many photos is their sharpness. This, I think, has become even worse with the use of smartphones. On that small screen, most of the time pictures look sharp enough but take the same picture and display it on a desktop, or worse, make a larger print and the picture falls apart as it is just not sharp enough. Teach yourself to hold the camera steady while you press the shutter!

Good light! and have fun.



All Photos accompanying this article by Werner Reitboeck



2017 OBCC EVENTS

You'll want to mark the following dates on your calendar so that you don't miss these events:

Jul 2 - 3	Handy Dog Novice and Nursery Trials
Jul 22 - 23	Shepherd's Crook Summer Novice Trial
Aug 3 – 6	80 Acres Trial
Aug 7 - 13	Kingston Sheep Dog Trial CBCA National Championships: Nursery (Aug 7), Double Lift (Aug 13)
Sep 16	Good Companions Farm Novice Trial
Oct 7 – 9	Triple Crown Shepherd's Crook Fall Trial
Oct 10 – 12	Triple Crown Indian River Fall Trial
Oct 12 – 15	Triple Crown Swaledale Fall Trial

Watch the website for further events.

The Thirtieth Anniversary of the Kingston Sheep Dog Trial

By Amanda Milliken

In a line at a Kingston restaurant last week, the man next to me mentioned he recognized me from the Kingston Sheep Dog Trials. I said, "I'll take that as a compliment." I am the local face of the trials, a responsibility I take seriously. He went on to say how much he and his wife had enjoyed the trials over many years. I thanked him for his ongoing enthusiasm and support.

"Many" is key, as the Kingston Sheep Dog Trial celebrates its thirtieth Anniversary in 2017. The trial began as a bicentennial event for the former Pittsburgh Township. The township liked its ability to showcase their underutilized park facility—Grass Creek Park. The trials reflected the urban/rural makeup of the township and endowed them with an unusual special event, which they uniquely called their own.

In 2000, Pittsburgh Township was merged with the City of Kingston. Those of us who worked on the trials wondered if our special event would be lost in the bigger setting of Kingston's municipal works. It was not—far from it. Not only has the trial thrived, but the city acquired 50 acres on the west side of the park which were slated for development. Besides expanding the park the purchase was made with an eye to making room for the growing trial.

Last year we ran 168 dogs at the Kingston Trials—a record for a trial in North America. These are times when trial entries are limited nearly everywhere. We have tried not to do that and so far, have succeeded.

Two people have been with the trial since the beginning, Karen Curtis and I. Our committee, which now includes Randy Scott, is deeply loyal to our event and works hard for its positive face to be front and centre. We look forward to everyone from OBCC joining us to celebrate this landmark trial in Ontario.

WORD SEARCH: OBCC DOGS

F B V P S I L S D Y Q N H G G P I C
C P R I T U G N C J U R Z R O S S J
I S G J P B W E W A E U S M D U S K
L I D I Q H T D X K K J R P S C P Q
K X J A E M W Y D E J O E M O W F F
E K C M L A E O L A K O H Q Y T J C
Q B P I X C D P T E P W C C A I H A
F K N A H Y M C L O R V A G G P E O
A S V Z B W M A X M Y K E X Q B J J
K N R Y R G D D F J O F R O P D E G
C N N P E H S N U Y O S P S O S D I
T P Q I P E N N Y K S J S R S B A Y
O K H E E C E P B L A K E I X T R E
O H K Y P T A D H Q L Y E J M A A K
N U X W Y C S I D K J I L L Y J P G
D X G L P Z U S N T U O C S L T G V
W Z L Z N A G A E T S N N I F U Z H
R E P P E P T T O C S J U K C A J S

ANNIE

ELLY

LAD

SCOTT

BEA

FINN

MACY

SCOUT

BLAKE

HANK

MAX

SHEP

CAP

HEMP

MOSS

SID

DARA

JACK

PENNY

SIGI

DOD

JAKE

PEPPER

SPOT

DOREY

JESSIE

PIC

TEAGAN

DUKE

JILL

PREACHER

TUG

DUSK

KEY

ROSS

TYLER



ONTARIO BORDER COLLIE CLUB NEWSLETTER
14 Woodgarden Crescent
TORONTO, ON M1E 3K2