

WHAT'S OF INTEREST?

- President's Editorial
- UK Instructor
- The Art of Natural Handling
- How to stretch your dog
- ACWA Members Results

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ACWA'S NEW HOME!

Hi everyone and welcome to the 2nd issue of The Contact Zone for 2006. I think the biggest happening for the club in these past couple of months has been the relocation of the club's training grounds to the Canine Association of WA Grounds on the corner of Ranford and Warton Rds in Southern River. This move was not planned - we had hoped to retain our mutually beneficial agreement with the German Shepherd Club but it was not to be.

Our new home at the Canine grounds has some distinct advantages, not the least of which is the spaciousness and the great lighting. With time and effort and the eventual CAWA plans of seeing full

facilities placed on the lower arena I have no doubt that ACWA and it's members will



Congratulations to WA's only agility Papillon "Rocket" and Helen Stathy! First trial: 2nd Place and Clear!

continue to flourish. Since the return to training at the beginning of February ACWA membership has certainly increased with many new people joining up and starting their young dogs off right. ACWA's next biggest

challenge is raising much needed funds for the purchase and manufacture of our own set of equipment. Special thanks must go to **Janice Jenkins** one of the most tenacious and successful members of the club when it comes to fundraising ideas and getting people on board. In the past couple of months Janice has worked hard to help raise funds for the club. Inside this issue is a list of contributors that have helped her along the way with donations of all kinds.

Well that's it for another edition - I hope your training and trialling is ticking along nicely. My thanks go also to our hard working instructors, volunteering their time. Without them ACWA would not be able to exist. - *Simone Tolhurst*

UK Instructor for ACWA!

Jon Watts is coming to WA. Who is this guy? I hear you ask. Well here is a little snapshot of Jon's achievements:

- started agility in 1994 aged 10
- won junior under 18 handler of the year at Crufts in 1999
- competed for the British team at the world finals in Germany
- competed for England in the four nations competition in 2005
- has been in the British finals on numerous occasions including 2005
- competed in every major UK final available and quali-

fied in championship classes - has instructed for over 5 years including work in the UK, Finland and Sweden

So as you can see he is a fairly well established and accomplished agility competitor and instructor of note.

ACWA will be hosting some training seminars with him to help raise funds for purchasing Equipment.

Novice Handling/Skills Training: \$100 for 8 hours of instruction (max 8 working spots - ALLSOLD)

Advanced Handling/Skills: \$100 for 8 hours of

instruction (max 8 working spots)

Auditing is available (this is where you attend and watch, take notes and ask questions) \$15 for 4 hours, \$30 for the full 8 hours.

Times/Dates:

Tuesday May 2nd: 6pm - 10pm (Novice Part 1)

Wednesday May 3rd: 6pm - 10pm (Advanced Part 1)

Sunday May 7th: 8am - 12noon (Novice Part 2)

Sunday May 7th: 1pm - 5pm (Advanced Part 2)

Vale - Millie & Della



Mel and Millie doing what they loved best - sincerest condolences to the Rhodens on their loss.

"The discipline of natural handling is a matter of practice. We practice a thing enough that it becomes integral to our spirit and chi, and until it is a largely a matter of muscle memory."

- Bud Houston

It is with great sadness that ACWA acknowledges the passing of two truly great German Shepherd girls and wishes to express our deepest sympathy to their owners.

VALE

**Vonarron Miss Millenium
UD ADM JDM ET
"Millie"
1st Jan 2000 to
11th March 2006**

Dearly loved and sadly missed by Mel and Maureen Rhoden. Millie was an outstanding dog in the field of Obedience and Agility. One of the most consistent competing dogs she has many wonderful and special achievements to her

name. Willing to work her heart out for her best friend and constant companion Mel, Millie will be remembered for her love of her tennis ball and her friendly personality. Rest in Peace Millie, we will miss you.

VALE

**Ameliaberg De Laura
CDX ADM JDM ET
"Della"
4th March 1993 to
11th March 2006**

Della was owned and loved and is now very much missed by Richard Barville. Della was a once in a lifetime dog and certainly a German Shepherd who became known for her absolute love of the sport of Agility and

her innate desire to work for Richard in all situations. She travelled Australia extensively with Richard doing demos and competing very successfully, representing WA many times. Upon retirement from the sport after achieving her JDM (being amongst the 1st WA dogs to do so) the WA Agility community recognized her achievements and contribution to the sport in the form of a plaque which we presented to Richard. Whilst she will be remembered by many as the ultimate agility dog of her time she has been and will continue to be in his heart, Richard's best friend and companion. Rest in Peace Della, happy weaving where ever you are.

Canine Massage and Stretching - Improve your Dog's Performance

For a competing dog full mobility is essential for the dog to perform at its best. As canine physiotherapist I treat dogs with muscle, tendon, joint and ligament related problems and injuries and have experienced how massage and stretching improves performance.

Massage and stretching improves the quality of your dog's life. The dog may apart from running faster be able to enjoy the natural agility of youth for many more years of its life. Massage and stretching are no replacements for visits to the vet but they do help prevent injuries occurring. They are a complement to daily training and diet and are suitable for all dogs regardless of breed, age or size.

The main purpose of massage and stretching is to maintain and improve mobility, increase the blood circulation and have a relaxed and happy dog. If a dog has shortened musculature or muscle tensions, pressure accumulates across the joints and this impairs mobility. Regular massage and stretching help prevent strain injuries. Impaired mobility is a contributing factor in muscle related problems and can, in the long term, lead to a number of different types of injury. We should aim to achieve a balance in the musculature. Injury

can be caused by training your dog too much with too little rest between training sessions. The muscles become tired and tense. Another dog might have poor stamina due to lack of exercise. The muscles atrophy, becoming smaller and weaker. A weak muscle is more easily tired and more easily injured.

If your dog is already suffering from an injury you should be extremely careful. Since the muscles have limited elasticity and blood flow, there is a great danger that the injury will be aggravated. Secondary problems may also arise if you continue to train the dog. When a muscle ceases to function as it should, other muscles take over and try to compensate. This can result in excessive strain or imbalance and new injuries. Other causes of tension and stiffness might be psychological. The dog may have a tendency to become stressed in different situations. A nervous dog is tense and finds it difficult to relax.

If you learn how to massage and stretch your dog you also learn about its body and musculature. You can compare how the muscles feel and are better able to identify tension and impaired mobility.

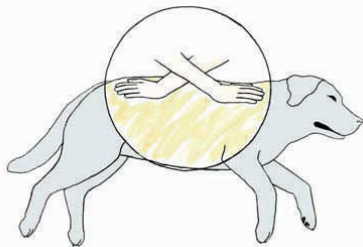
Performing dogs. You could compare your dog's performance to an athlete in a 100 or 800 metres race. For instance we know that a professional athlete is training hard to perform competitively. As an owner of a performing dog we also train our dog hard to perform well. When the competition starts and the dog is away it reaches a high speed in a few seconds. We want our dog to be first crossing the finishing line. To achieve that, our dog needs to get into shape for a competition or active season. The physical training is a specific, goal oriented approach used to achieve our goal. Some performing dogs are trained in various ways using cycling, swimming or by running on sandy surfaces and in hilly terrain. For our dogs to perform the best they also need to stay healthy and to avoid injuries such as ruptures, chronic inflammations and stress fractures. Too much training when the dog has insufficient time to rest and recover can cause injuries.

A performing dog, just as an athlete, is pressed hard and the muscles, tendons, joints or ligaments are liable to injuries. This all makes the preventive care so much more important. To perform well we need our dogs to stay healthy and their mobility to be good.

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE!!!

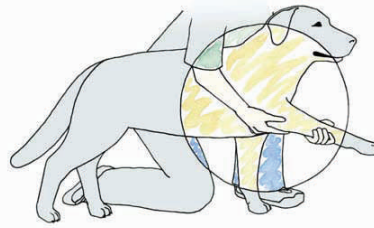
Please be advised that ACWA will now be charging the full calendar year membership fee from March 1st 2006. In other words you will be asked to pay for a full year membership if you have joined in the month of March. You will receive a reminder when your fees are due at the end of your year. Any new members will be asked for the yearly fee.

When it comes to the professional athlete he or she has a team of physiotherapists, masseurs and doctors helping him or her to make the outmost performance. The same approach is also very common in horse racing probably because of the big earnings in keeping the horse healthy. You now have the opportunity to learn more about massage and stretching and to prepare your dogs better for racing. Massage. Massage is by far the best treatment for reducing muscle tension and the recovering period is reduced. You can progress faster with tougher training if you integrate massage and stretching because the muscles are assisted in the work of increasing the absorption of nutrients and the removal of lactic acid. Massage also extends the tissues and muscles we are unable to reach through stretching. Massage and stretching will give you a relaxed and better performing dog.



"The greater part of the pressure you exert should be applied by the flat hand although your thumb and fingers are also engaged in manipulation."

Stretching. Stretching is when you extend an extremity towards it's ultimate position, in other words you separate the muscle's root and insertion, holding this position for a moment. With stretching you work up good mobility in the muscle and around the joints and you also reduce the pressure on the joints.



"Hold the dog's elbow with one hand, grasping the wrist with the other. Move the leg forward and upwards, stretching the elbow joint and the flexor muscles of the foreleg (shoulder joint)."

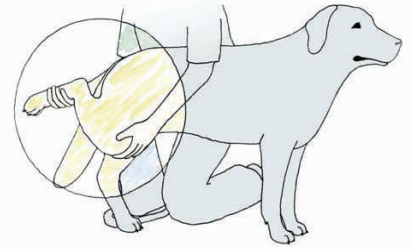
How to use this knowledge in competitions? First remember that the dog should have warmed up and exercised before starting the competition. I also strongly recommend that you allow your dog to wind down after the competition before any stretching activities.

Here is a check list that could be used before the competition.

Let the dog walk slowly for a while and then increase the tempo for 2-3 minutes. Let the dog trot for 2-3 minutes. Let the dog gallop for one minute. Then let the dog make some short explosive moves.

Let the dog wind down a little by going back to trotting and then walking. Warming up does not tire the dog but rather increases blood circulation and warm up the muscles ensuring that the joints are lubricated and more supple. The dog is now ready to perform.

After the warm up you could also easily test your dog's mobility using the eight most common stretching grips. You should be sensitive to your dog's signals. The dog should not experience any discomfort. If it does, don't hesitate to contact the vet.



"Place one hand directly above the knee joint and the other hand on the lower part of the leg around the hock joint. Lift the leg upwards so that the knee is bent. Push gently upwards and backwards with the hand positioned above the knee joint."

After completing the competition let the dog wind down and then carefully do some stretching exercises. And when you come home reward the dog with massage and you will get a happy performing dog ready for new challenges. Massage and stretching is an essential and low cost investment in your dog's health and future competitions.

Jörn Oleby, author of the book "Canine Massage and Stretching – A Dog Owners Manual". Pictures used from the book. You can find the book at these places: UK: www.amazon.co.uk - USA: www.puplife.com- South Africa: www.petpublications.co.za – Australia: www.agilityclick.com

Thankyou Very Much For Your Kind Donations!

ACWA would like to sincerely thank the following people for their generous donations to our fundraising efforts:

Mel & Maureen Rhoden
Sue Hogben
Sylvia Hamilton
Jodie and Bev Auld
Gillian Self
Steve and Nicola Thompson
Helen Moorehead
Cathy Snook
Janice and Roger Jenkins
Pam Scurlock
Andrea and Keith Patching
Debbie and Talisa Hyde
Sandra Yearsley
Di Rose
Karen Phillips
Frank Fitzpatrick
Judy Tsakalos

Lisa Poprzeczny and Kathleen Karen and Paul Duggan

Without the help and donations of these people and the willingness to contribute to their club ACWA would be certainly struggling to find much needed funds. Our sincere thanks to you all!

**DON'T FORGET!!
ACWA'S FIRST TRIAL
ON JULY 15TH - please
see Maureen to put your
name down to volunteer
to help put on the day!**

"Playing & training are synonyms"

Training should not be "work". Work is somewhere you go during the week so you can afford the entries fees for agility trials. Think of training not as "work" but extensions of play, or a series of related tricks, and you and your dog will have enjoyable, productive training sessions.

Nancy Gyes -

www.powerpawsagility.com

Agility Chi



A Guide to the Art of the the Natural Handler

*This article is taken from
the Just For Fun Agility
Notebook Vol 27 and is
written by Bud Houston. He
kindly gave his permission
to me to reprint here.*

An Introduction to Agility Chi

'Chi' means energy. In Yoga, it is called 'Prana'. The natural agility handler seeks a focus of energy and a connection to the energy of the dog. He seeks in his own body a relaxed familiarity and absence of tension. And in

his partnership with his dog he works always with trust, *connection*, and confidence. We rely upon the notion that the *dog* is an intuitive and clever creature who is a student of human movement. The natural handler then seeks to use those natural laws already within the scope and understanding of the dog as specific tools to direct the dog in the game of agility. Certainly *handler movement* in agility is a science. But it is a *soft science* or *natural science* that doesn't really require a mathematical ability or an understanding of advanced physics.

The Eight Essential Points

Though you may find these concepts a little obscure and difficult to understand at first, don't be discouraged. Think carefully about what each point means and practice diligently. Over time the meaning and purpose of each point will become clearer. These Eight Essential Points are loosely grouped into three parts: body, connection, and mind.

1. Hold yourself upright, allowing the body to be supple and relaxed. Your hands will never rise above the level of your shoulders and generally should work at the level of your belt. Loosen (relax) the waist. The waist is commander of the body. If you can loosen your waist, then your legs will have power and your body will be firm and stable.

2. Co ordinate the upper and lower body movements. Motion should be rooted in the feet, released through the legs, controlled by the waist, and manifested by the hands through the shoulders and arms. The upper body should agree with the lower body.

3. Your relationship with the dog is elemental and fundamental. The dog should be ever treated with kindness and with a generosity of spirit and heart.

4. Begin your work with the dog in agility with engagement. Be completely aware of the connection between you and your dog, obtaining the dog's complete attention by giving your own complete attention.

5. Always move with trust and confidence in the dog. When the handler does not trust the dog then the handler's ability to move naturally (and confidently) is spoiled; thus, the handler becomes the one who can't be trusted. Your movements can then be light and nimble and you can act exactly as your mind directs. Avoid thinking of anything else beyond your movement, the dog, and your basic mission.

6. Allow a positive spirit while neglecting the corrosive influence of ego. The spirit is the master and the body is its subordinate. If you can lift your spirit your movements will become light and nimble.

7. There must be absolute continuity of movement always applying positive pressure in the direction of the course; honoring the path of the dog. The handler points more certainly with his toes than with his hand.

8. Attack the course with boldness and never with self-doubt or the desire merely to survive. Play with focused *chi* (energy) and self awareness. Self awareness (*intuition*) is the outcome of practice, binding our understanding of movement to have access to an inner guidance that knows the way. Let the moments teach you.

If you would like to read more of Bud's articles go to: <http://www.dogwoodagility.com>

We are on the Web:
www.agilityclubwa.com

Recent results of our ACWA Stars!

ACWA is always very proud of its "weekend warriors" who get out there and have a go at our WA trials. One of the surest signs that a club is doing well and is successful is when you can see that training paying off for it's members. Congratulations to the following members:

*Brian Cowling with BC "**Oscar**" (2nd Place Novice Agility CCC 08/04)

*Cathy Snook with Toller "**Alex**" (1st Place Open Agility, Master Agility and Open Jumping Bunbury 09/04)

* Steve Thompson and BC "**Buff**" (1st Place Master Jumping Bunbury 09/04)

*Joan Perks and Golden Retriever "**Willow**" achieving their Novice Agility title with a 1st Place at Bunbury 09/04

* Helen Stathy and Papillon "**Rocket**" (2nd Place Novice Jumping CCC 08/04)

*Sue Hogben and BC "**Nifty**" (1st Place Masters Jumping GODC 25/03, 2nd Place Open Jumping CCC 08/04)

*Nicola Thompson and BC "**Sage**" (2nd Place Novice Agility and Novice Jumping Western Classic)

*Andrea Patching and NZ Heading Dog "**KiwiSmudge**" (1st Place Novice Jumping GODC 25/03 and 3rd Place Novice Agility Western Classic)

*Eileen Phillips and BC "**Chloe**" (1st Place Novice Jumping Bunbury 09/04)

*Di Rose and BC "**Brodie**" (2nd Place Master Jumping Bunbury 09/04)

* Karen Phillips and BC "**Riot**" attaining both Novice Agility and Novice Jumping titles at the Western Classic.

* Rod Stockdale and BC "**Toby**" (1st Place Masters Jumping Western Classic)
There are many more of us out there doing well (apologies to those I've missed, simply comes down to lack of space!) - it's great to see and let's hope we can keep ACWA well represented in the clean runs at trials.



Andrea Patching's "Rumour" won 1st Place in Masters Agility in Albany.