



The Spot Light

Musical Dog Sport Association

Canine Freestyle Newsletter – created by Freestylers for Freestylers!

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In the past year, while working with a group of freestyle clients, I was challenged to try something outside of my personal 'skill set'. I ask this of my client's often in training classes, "try something new, look at it a different way, watch your dogs natural movement..." and so on. Well they thought it would be good for me too... SO... I bought a Mandolin!



I had never held one, played one or even seen one played, but I love a challenge. My mandolin came out of its case for the first time at my first music lesson, it felt awkward and foreign, and I was surprisingly 'shy' when learning my first scale (I didn't want to break something I didn't know how to fix!). And then my instructor said something that made me smile, "learning is the same no matter if it is learning to play an instrument, cooking, water skiing, or training your dog. Take a deep breath, take small steps, practice often but not too much, and enjoy the ride..." Oh so familiar sounding... Although I have not a single lofty goal of becoming part of a blue grass band, I am practicing often, I have learned a few songs (I have finger tip calluses to prove it!), it now feels somewhat familiar, but still very new and most certainly not something that comes naturally... and I am enjoying the ride!

I think it is good to step outside of our own comfort zones/skill sets every now and again, especially in dog training, and learn something new, see things with a different perspective, and refresh what we are currently doing.

I wish for all of our MDSA Members a spring filled with 'newness'. Take that step back and refresh some of the things you are doing... It does help to bring that breath of fresh air into an already great freestyle relationship. Take the challenge to change it up a bit and learn something new.

Nancy Tanner
Newsletter Editor
MDSA Judge

MDSA Task Force – We need YOU!

MDSA is growing in all of the right directions with; membership, events, website information, data entry, and much more. Pam Martin is heading up the 'MDSA Task Force' and asking for volunteers to come and help out. Whether you have 15 minutes a week or 15 minutes a month, MDSA would love to hear from you. Please contact Pam directly if you have questions and/or are ready to volunteer.

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Welcome Carolyn Pfrank!

I have been around dog training all my life (many thanks to my mom!) and was given my own dog to train at the age of 10, a Dalmatian/Border Collie mix. I trained her for 4-H obedience and agility competition, discovering clicker training along the way. In the mid-1990s I had my first encounter with freestyle, a demonstration at a large obedience competition that I attended as a spectator. I remember the routines looking much like obedience exercises and the music not being very exciting. It didn't intrigue me at the time.



My other 4-H dogs were a Border Collie and a Golden Retriever, and after I aged out I decided to try a terrier. After much debate about which breed to try I decided on a Border Terrier, and found a young adult male that needed a performance home. Tycho, now eight years old, has made me the trainer that I am today...mostly by keeping me humble. He loves to learn new things but does not care for competitions. As a result, he had received a lot of training (obedience, agility, and tricks) by the time I encountered freestyle again. I thought it might be Tycho's sport after my mom attended one of Carolyn Scott's workshops in April 2006, raved about it, and gave me the DVD from the weekend. I watched the DVD, started gathering more information, and was able to attend one of Carolyn's workshops myself in 2007. I was hooked!

As I began to explore freestyle with Tycho I learned that I have a good sense for music (I attribute it to my eight years of music- mostly orchestra, where I played violin- during my primary education) but am mystified by choreography. I decided not to worry about it, and focused on improving my improvisational skills. The approach worked well for me and better for Tycho, who begins to get bored at the first sign of repetition. I now plan out a basic framework (heelwork here, weaves at this place, spin on this musical flourish) but rarely- if ever!- practice the entire routine from beginning to end with Tycho. In 2010 I hope to finish his MDSA Novice title.

A year and a half ago I acquired a new dog, another Border Terrier, named Pash. He is silly, exuberant, loves everyone he meets, and does nothing half-heartedly. Pash is nearly three years old but fools most people into thinking that he's still a puppy. He will be making his freestyle debut in one of the 2010 MDSA video events.

Outside of training my own dogs, I teach performance classes and workshops at Joshica's Planet Canine in Elkhart, Indiana and am a workshop presenter and judge for the Indiana 4-H Dog program. I have a degree in Packaging Technology and support my "dog habit" by working for a medical device packaging company. My free moments are usually spent reading, playing on the computer, or sitting in front of the television with a stripping knife in hand, waging the constant battle to keep my dogs' coats presentable

Karen Moore and the Malinois Kids! – Gold Coast in Queensland Australia



I dance with my Belgian Malinois Zoya who is 3 1/2 now. I also have Simba a 7 1/2 year old BM who is a fabulous tracking dog but a bit too highly strung for dancing. We are soon to add to the family another Mal and I'm anxiously awaiting news of the birth and hopefully she too will join us on the dance floor.

I've been training dogs for a few years now and teach basic obedience and Rally at my local dog club and I have a little training business with a friend helping people with problem dogs (It's usually the people not the dogs!!!!). We are clicker trainers.

I got really interested in freestyle after a seminar here in Oz with the fabulous Mary Ray 3 years ago and there's been no holding us back. Last year I entered a marathon 6 video comps and just loved it. We had great success and the most wonderful comments on our work which is most gratifying. I have just had the results of our MDSA entry and we qualified with flying colors. Last year also Dances with Dogs (as we call it here) was recognized as a trialing sport and the first 'real' comps were held. We won our first live freestyle event which was a great thrill.

I am lucky enough to train with a great group of people and everyone is very supportive of each other. Recently I was invited to do a presentation on Costuming at a self help seminar as I have a background as a professional model and I was also a champion Ballroom dancer and ran my own costume making business. I thoroughly enjoyed this experience as a presenter and it was very well received.

I am also the treasurer of Dances with Dogs Club Queensland and our club has just been ratified by our governing body. The sport is growing here and we are getting some very good performances even in Starters.

Zoya is a very high drive dog and it takes a lot of effort to control her but she is so much fun to work with. She was a huge hit with the crowd when we appeared at the World Dog games in Sydney late last year in the inaugural Dock Diving event. This is one of my favorite photos it was taken when we performed for Mary Ray at another seminar she held here in Australia. I look forward to more video comps this year as well as the live events

Cheers, Karen M & The Malinois Kids

Tiina Jounio, Oiva & Niklas – Oulu North Finland

I started freestyle in 2004. I think it was a jackpot that I found this kind of sport. I have done agility and obedience, but my sheltie Oiva (born 1996) was very sick in 2003 and we had to give up all our hobbies. Freestyle was something we both enjoy and it was not too demanding for Oiva. Oiva is now a very charming old gentleman. He is totally deaf, but still doing some freestyle just for fun.



While Oiva is my mind-reader, my aussie Niklas (born 2004) is not an easy-peasy. I have paid very much attention to motivation and to improve our teamwork. Things are going better and nowadays we understand each other quite well. I take first time part to MDSA's video event in 2007 and all those tips I have received has been very helpful. In November 2009 video titling event we received a Novice Freestyle Dog Title and I'm so proud of Niklas.

We have a small freestyle team in our dog club in Oulu. We are training together and helping each other once a week. We are giving demos and sometimes competing in Finland. I'm also a freestyle judge. Freestyle in Finland has been developed by organization named "Tahtitassut". Also FCI member organization The Finnish Kennel Club will take freestyle in its agenda in may 2010. The interest to freestyle is growing but I hope freestyle will stay just a happy job.



Kind regards, Tiina

MDSA TITLING EVENTS 2010

June 1, 2010	Video Titling Event # 06201006V	musicaldogsport@gmail.com		
July 24, 2010	Live Event Kansas # TBD	musicaldogsport@gmail.com		Judge Nancy Tanner Forms coming soon
November 1, 2010	Video Titling Event # 11201007V	musicaldogsport@gmail.com		
November, 20 2010	Live Event Maryland	musicaldogsport@gmail.com		Judge Emily Pyle Forms

	# 11201008L		coming soon
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Elizabethanne Stevens, Charley, Alexandra & Chase - Salt Lake City, Utah

I have three wonderful poodles that are game to try anything. Charley is almost 13, Alexandra is almost 11, and Chase is 5 1/2. I became interested in freestyle about one year ago, and submitted routines in the June and November 2009 video events. The poodles are now Novice Freestyle Dogs, and we couldn't have done it without my wonderful husband and Videographer, Greg!

Charley was the first dog I had as an adult and, when he came to live with us, I had no idea the places he would take me. I was looking for a pet and he ended up being my first competition dog. Charley is that once in a lifetime dog. Before freestyle, he competed in agility, obedience, tracking, and rally, and was a therapy dog. When Charley was seven months old, I went looking for a better training method than what was being offered locally. After a friend recommended that I read [Don't Shoot The Dog](#), I learned about clicker training and taught myself everything I could from books and the Internet. I love the relationship with my dogs that results from such training. There is nothing like a non-stop wag and a passel of poodles clamoring to be trained!



In addition to freestyle, Alex has competed in conformation, rally, tracking, and agility. She is very enthusiastic. I retired Alex from agility in 2009, although she was still plenty fast and very willing to go tearing around a course! She does not act her age and is often thought to be a much younger dog than her actual years. However, agility at high speeds is physically demanding, and I wanted to make sure that she stayed sound and healthy into her senior years. Her grandmother lived to be almost 19, and so I hope to be submitting video routines with Alex for many years to come! Doing freestyle with Alex is a thrill, and she very much enjoys performing.

Chase, too, has agility, rally, and tracking titles. Against all odds, he has gotten me involved in field work. The boy loves his ducks! He is also quite a talented little draft dog. Chase's attitude and athleticism make choreographing routines for him such a treat. I am very excited to see what we can accomplish together in freestyle!

Nothing has tested my training skills like freestyle. I love the challenge of training quick responses to verbal cues in a variety of circumstances. I have taught some classes locally, and earned my Level 1 and 2 Clicker Trainer's Competency Assessment Program ("CAP") certification with distinction. Recently, I have been most fortunate to work with Kay Laurence as a member of her online Learning About Dogs teaching staff and I am working towards the Level 3 CAP requirements.

In addition to enjoying all things dog-related, I spend my free time cycling with Greg, training for triathlons, learning to play the classical guitar, and working as an attorney.

Susan Tucker & Ginger –Lincoln Vermont



My Golden Retriever, Ginger, and I have been doing Canine Musical Freestyle since 2004 when Peg Cobb started a class with four of us that included M.P. Jackson. After completing classes in Obedience and Agility, I was eager to learn moves that Ginger and I could practice at home without equipment. Due to Peg and MP's enthusiasm for the sport, we quickly moved beyond our classes to workshops, demonstrations and competition. The classes brought new friendships and exercise for both Ginger and me, but I had not planned on getting caught up in demos and competitions. I learned to create routines to show at gatherings for humane society functions and to groups of the elderly, but competition was never one

of my priorities. I was so sure we could not get through a routine. It took a long time to get Ginger to ignore the spectators and concentrate on me. And a long time for me to learn to relax and just enjoy showing an audience what we could do. Still, it is certainly much easier to submit a videotaped routine for competition than one done live!

I videotaped our routine to submit to the Veterans Class (November 2009 DVD) when Ginger was 12 ½ so that I would have a record of what will probably be our last performance. We used moves I knew she could do without a problem and music that suited us. It was so nice to receive the lovely comments from Jill Stuart (sent to MDSA online workshops on 1/3/2010) to let us know that she enjoyed it. I love to watch well-trained dogs in well-choreographed routines. But it is just as much fun to watch Ginger learn and remember her moves. I have worked Ginger on my right, in front, and behind me as well as on my left. She is still learning. And I am still learning how to communicate with her. We practice for exercise of body and mind, at any time of day, indoors and out. And we demonstrate our achievements to long-suffering friends. It is all about fun. We hope all of you keep dancing!

November 2009 Video Titling Event Qualifiers

The MDSA Executive Board is proud to announce the teams who received a qualifying score in the November 2009 Video Event. We wish to congratulate everyone who entered this Event and encourage the non-qualifiers to keep working and practicing, and hope to see you all again in a future Event.

We are most pleased to congratulate Candace Crouch and Heath and also Candace Crouch and Shadow for qualifying and receiving their second leg and their Standard Freestyle Dog Title . These are the first SFD Titles given by the MDSA!

The teams receiving their second leg and a Novice Freestyle Dog Title are:

Judith Azaren & Dusty

Kim Duffek & Henry
Tiina Jounio & Niklas
Kim McMunn & Banner
Melissa Snell & Teddy
Elizabethanne Stevens & Alexandra
Elizabethanne Stevens & Charley
Elizabethanne Stevens Chase
Barbara Walls & Nate
Anne Weidemann & Foster

The teams receiving their first leg toward a NFD Title* are:

Stuart Anderson & Preston
Mandy Baker & Sadie
Kim Beckberger & Emillie
Marcia Boring & Dylan
Ann Buck & Boozer
Dawn Casey & Cache
Sharon Castle & Wolf
Sandy Clark & Twig
Sandy Clark & Cooper
Susan Cooper & Sunny
Linda Grimshaw & Kramer
Pamela Johnson & Bandit
Shannon Jones & UggieBug
Shannon Jones & Jessie
Connie Kelly & Bosley
Tracey Kroll & Merit
Nicole Kudla & Lisa
Betty Lewis & Shimmer
Camilla McCullough & Jackson
Faye McDonald & Cha Cha
Faye McDonald & Legs
Karen Moore & Zoya
Jane Nichols & Emily
Julia Pieper & Mia
Dana Riddel & Scooter
Teri Rolph & Kam
Bridget Spence & Louie
Lori Weber & Chelsea

*These teams qualify for the grandfather rule of two legs to earn a NFD title.

New MDSA Members: WELCOME!

Jackie	Smith	CA	USA
Marilyn	Lindsey	WA	USA
Patricia	Thompson	CA	USA
Amy	DeLong	MN	USA
Maureen	Foos	IN	USA
Dorothy	Ashe	MD	USA
Stephanie	Bell	FL	USA
Carole	Husein	SA	AUS
Nicki	Dobson	KS	USA
Jamie	Kitz	CA	USA
Debra	Lynch	WI	USA
Mary	Horne	CT	USA

Jon	Sanders	TX	USA
Kim	Cameron	TX	USA
Donna	Pashia	MO	USA
Heidi	Harbaugh	TX	USA

Debbie Clarks 'Peaches'-Pure Golden 1999-2009

We all fell in LOVE with Peaches during the "Magic of the Match" in March 2009. In just a couple of months we lost her to cancer. Her heart was pure Gold and we will miss her much. Peaches was a wonderful asset to the community as a therapy dog. Peaches entertained the veterans at the local VA hospital in Dallas with her tricks and large crowds at the State Fair of Texas. I think the Elton John song, "This is Your Song" is befitting on how Peaches led a true golden life.

*And you can tell everybody this is your song
It may be quite simple but now that it's
done, I hope you don't mind
I hope you don't mind, that I put down in
words, How wonderful life is while you're in
the world*

Rest in peace Ms. Peach, Pam martin



It all started with my first full Golden Retriever, Peaches. She was a very high-strung active girl, so I looked for an activity that we could enjoy together. We tried agility for a while, but Peaches simply did not enjoy it. Then we tried obedience. I was lucky enough to walk into Pam Martin's Novice/ Polish obedience class. What a challenge my Golden girl was! We earned our Novice Obedience (CD) title, but decided competition just wasn't Peaches' cup of tea, so we tried freestyle. We finally found our home! Peaches thoroughly enjoys freestyle. I think it's the loose structure and the ability to perform the "moves" she enjoys. I got a second Golden Retriever, Autumn, from the local Golden Retriever rescue. Autumn is my competition dog (agility and obedience) and also a freestyler.

We have been involved in freestyle for three years now. Autumn was adopted from the local Golden Retriever rescue 5 years ago when she was about a year old. She was completely (I mean COMPLETELY--including house-training) untrained when she came to our house. Autumn now competes at the Excellent level in AKC agility and earned her Open Obedience title (CDX) in July, 2007. She's a little ham and likes to show-off her freestyle tricks while waiting in line to go into the ring---obedience or agility. Performing a brace freestyle routine at the 2007 State Fair of Texas with both Peaches and Autumn. I never knew performing would be so much fun. I thought I would be a nervous wreck with the big crowds, but when you are out there with your dog (or dogs in my case), everything else in the world goes out of your head. It's just you and your dog out there having a great time with each other. Harley is my newest golden rescue. When she came to rescue she was in bad shape and I had to wait a couple of months before she could go home with me. She is only a little over a year. I plan

to participate in this year's "Magic of the Match" as Harley has giving me new beginning.



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