Francis Chai



Sheepdog trial handler, now offering lessons and clinics

bcfrenzy@hotmail.com

From a companion puppy in Tucson to the Dutch national team, the USBCHA National Finals and a new life of teaching.

2026
USBCHA National Finals semifinalist, with Kip

2×
On the Dutch team to The World Trial, with Mink and Gill

2
Invitations to Soldier Hollow, in 2008 and 2014

1994
Got his first border collie puppy, Ailsa, as a companion dog

The route

Tucson, Arizona 1994–1997
Silicon Valley 1997–1998
Gilbert, Arizona 1998–2006
Bend, Oregon 2006–2015
The Netherlands 2015–2020
La Fayette, New York 2020–2026

The story, place by place

1994–1997
Tucson, Arizona

A smart-looking puppy and a TV program

In 1994, while pursuing his graduate degree at The University of Arizona, Francis got his first border collie puppy, Ailsa, as a companion dog. He had no idea what the breed was bred to do. He picked a border collie simply because it is known as an intelligent breed.

Then a TV program showed a border collie working sheep, and he was amazed. In 1995 he started training dogs at the farm of Beryl Baker in south Tucson, while finishing his PhD in Electrical Engineering.

PhD, Electrical Engineering, University of Arizona

1997–1998
Silicon Valley, California

Engineer by weekday, student of the sport on weekends

In 1997 Francis took his first job as a young engineer in the semiconductor industry. He often drove to the beautiful Oak Springs Ranch, home of the prestigious Sonoma Wine Country Sheepdog Trial, for lessons with Sandra Milberg.

He soon realized that keeping his own sheep in the congested South Bay was nearly impossible, so he took a job in Phoenix, Arizona.

Oak Springs Ranch

1998–2006
Gilbert, Arizona

Mentored, then trialing with Ailsa

After 1998, Francis was mentored by Dodie Green in Sonoita, Arizona, and began trialing with Ailsa. As the years went by, Ailsa won the 2001 Grassland in Sonoita and started placing in the top 5 at well-known trials across the southwestern US.

She also placed top 5 at prestigious trials farther afield:

Zamora, northern California · Ettrick Kennel, Missouri · Powder Horn, Buffalo, Wyoming · 2001 Grassland winner, Ailsa

2006–2015
Bend, Oregon

Rising to the top team

Motivated by easy access to dog trials, Francis moved to Bend, Oregon in 2006 and began to emerge as the top team with his dogs. During his years in central Oregon he was invited to compete at Soldier Hollow twice, in 2008 and 2014, with Belle and Chime. Belle was one of the finalists in 2008.

Notable wins in Oregon, 2006 to 2015

St. Patrick's Day Heppner, Oregon	2007 Belle · 2009 Belle · 2014 Chime
Northwest Championship Scio, Oregon	2007 Belle · 2009 Belle · 2012 Chime · 2013 Loon
Western States Regional Day trials	2007 Belle · 2009 Belle
Three Pine Double-lift champion, Alturas, California	2008 Belle
Western States Regional Double-lift champion	2013 Chime
Palm Cottage Cottage Grove, Oregon	2013 Chime

Soldier Hollow 2008, Belle, finalist · Soldier Hollow 2014, Chime

2015–2020
The Netherlands

Across the Atlantic and onto the Dutch team

In 2015 Francis took a new job and moved to The Netherlands. During his time in Europe he was twice on the Dutch team to The World Trial, first with Mink and then with Gill.

The World Trial, Dutch team, with Mink · The World Trial, Dutch team, with Gill

2020–2026
La Fayette, New York, south of Syracuse

Back in the US, a break, and a comeback

Francis moved back to the US during the 2020 pandemic and settled south of Syracuse, New York, in La Fayette. He stepped away from the trial scene for 4 years because of the responsibilities of his profession, then competed in a few trials in New England.

2022
Ox Creek, Canandaigua, New York: winner with Gill

2026
Kingston Sheepdog Trial: day 1 winner and combined high with Kip

2026
USBCHA National Finals: semifinalist with Kip

2026
Trailing Of The Sheep: finalist with Kate

2026
Northern Nevada Sheepdog Trial, Dayton, Nevada: reserve champion of the double-lift final with Kate

2026
Ox Creek, Canandaigua, New York: reserve champion of the double-lift final with Kip

The dogs

Each partnership, with the results named in the bio.

Ailsa

First border collie, from 1994

- Companion puppy who started it all
- 2001 Grassland winner, Sonoita, Arizona
- Top 5 at Zamora, Ettrick Kennel and Powder Horn

Belle Oregon years

- 2007 and 2009: St. Patrick's Day (Heppner), Northwest Championship (Scio), Western States Regional day trials
- 2008: Three Pine double-lift champion, Soldier Hollow finalist

Chime Oregon years

- 2012 Northwest Championship, Scio
- 2013 Western States Regional double-lift champion
- 2013 Palm Cottage winner
- 2014 St. Patrick's Day, Heppner; competed at Soldier Hollow

Loon Oregon years

- 2013 Northwest Championship, Scio

Mink The Netherlands

- Dutch team to The World Trial

Gill

The Netherlands and New York

- Dutch team to The World Trial
- 2022 Ox Creek winner, Canandaigua

Kip 2026

- Kingston Sheepdog Trial day 1 winner and combined high
- Semifinalist at the USBCHA National Finals
- Ox Creek reserve champion, double-lift final

Kate 2026

- Trailing Of The Sheep finalist
- Reserve champion, double-lift final, Northern Nevada Sheepdog Trial

Lessons and clinics

Francis is retired from his profession and is now offering lessons and clinics. Get in touch to book.

bcfrenzy@hotmail.com

Based on the bio of Francis Chai, October 18, 2026.