



NEBCA News

The Official Publication of the North East Border Collie Association, Inc.



Diane Ferrer

Sherry Sheldon's Fury at Willowdale Novice Trial

The mission of the North East Border Collie Association is to promote and to protect the Border Collie as a working stock dog through the sanctioning and regulation of competitive herding trials and by providing information on training, health and breeding.

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NEBCA Bylaws & Rules

can be found at
<http://www.nebca.net/welcome.html>

If members require hard copies, please contact The Secretary, Skylar Landis, 24420 Chestertown Road, Chestertown, MD 21620

NEBCA Membership

Annual Renewals due January 1st
\$30 per individual, or
\$35 per farm/family

Those wishing to receive a hard copy of the Newsletter by US mail please add \$10 for this convenience. Otherwise the newsletter is available on the website.

To join or renew, send your name, address and dues to The Secretary, NEBCA, Skylar Landis, 24420 Chestertown Road, Chestertown, MD 21620
OR submit online at
<http://nebca.net/membershipChoice.html>

New members may join at any time. After October 1, you will automatically be paid through the following calendar year.

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From the President

Our newest President Teri Rhodes sends her apologies at being unable to supply a column of presidential musings. She is freshly home from her long trek to Colorado for the prestigious Tabletop Stockdog Trial, where both her dogs Aron and Zuben had placements in the top 20%, quite an achievement. Once she settles back in to life at the New Jersey farm I am sure we will be hearing from her.

In the (distant, pre-internet) past it was traditional to publish a list of the NEBCA library holdings in the summer issue or the Newsletter. I'm not sure why— like people would have more time to read and study videos in summer? Why not publish it in winter? At any rate, now two things have happened: 1) the list of holdings is too long to put in the Newsletter and 2) the list is on the website year-round. So go there and look at it, maybe learn something new, even if it's from an old source.

Be like Rhonda (see page 13)

The library is awash with DVD's on training, shedding, penning, puppies, judging and more. See the website (under Education).

From the Editor

Summer! Everybody's favorite season (except maybe the sheep, who have to get to work traipsing around trial courses).

We had a winter of NEBCA webinars (nine! A record number) on multiple topics. If you missed them, you will have to wait for January 2026 for the next ones, although a few may be in the NEBCA library. Now we've slogged through spring mud and are gearing up for the NEBCA trial season.

We've already seen three excellent Novice trials take place: Bittersweet Farm, Willowdale and Sugar Bush Gap. See results and photos inside.

Trials come and trials go. In between we train our dogs and care for flocks. We all welcome new trials (Willowdale) and those that are resurrected (Bittersweet Farm) along with old favorites. Both Open and more Novice trials are coming up, although it is true some popular trials have, for various reasons, fallen off the calendar. Maybe this summer is the time to dip a paw into a Fair trial or two (see page 11).

In this issue you can learn about Club Member Jessica Edgerly (page 9), how to manage your baling twine (pp. 12-14), and congenital deafness (page 6). Gene Sheninger and Teri Rhodes welcomed an interesting new handler to their Wayside Farm for training and gained some modest fame (pp. 17-18). And finally, I broke down to share a little of my 2024 sheepdog adventure "out West" Canadian style (pp. 15-16). I wrote this piece not to become famous but to suggest what is possible, for anyone, and to encourage everyone to expand their trialing horizons.

I feel compelled to close this column with the incessant refrain: If this Newsletter is to continue, you the membership need to please send in items! Trial photos and stories are always welcome, from any perspective. Other items are enjoyed by all I am sure. I have been told I can't print a "Letter to the Editor" but if you wish to disguise your opinion as a crafty article..... (obviously I do it all the time).

Bittersweet Farm Novice Trial May 2-4 2025

Bittersweet Farm in Hampton CT hosted the first NEBCA Novice trial of the season in the Northeast. Upwards of 60 dogs competed on Friday and Saturday in Ranch and ProNovice and 15 dogs ran twice in Novice/Novice on Sunday. Each dog/handler team was presented with a packet of two North Country Cheviot ewes and one yearling.

The sheep started out light and flighty on Friday but became quite heavy during the early afternoon on Friday when temperatures hit 83 degrees. Neither sheep nor dogs were happy with the heat. The sheep brighted up for the remainder of Friday and Saturday. Sunday brought cooler temperatures and clouds with the forecasted rain fortunately holding off until the very last Novice/Novice run on Sunday!

There were prizes to six places in all the novice classes and to two places in USBCHA Nursery. Additionally, there was an overall Champion award in each of the novice classes plus an award for most promising dog in each class.

A special thank you to our Ranch and ProNovice judge Judy Gambil and to Chloe Scott, our Novice judge. Both did a fabulous job sorting the runs fairly and consistently. Emily Yazwinski was our sheep spotter “extraordinaire” and Larry Campion efficiently and kindly managed the set out pen. Thank you both.

Thank you to all who helped scribe, exhaust, score-run and helped in every other way, especially Merry Klimeck who stayed an extra day to help push out for the Novice class on Sunday and to Vicki Close and Farm Diggity who donated a Bluebird whistle prize to the trial. And thank you Victoria Snowden who organized the score sheets and run orders and work schedules.

It was a fun weekend! Thank you to all that came to run and supported and helped. See you in October!

Carol Campion, trial host

Novice/Novice 1		15 dogs ran	
Place	Handler	Dog	Score
1.	Donalee Slater	Rev	71
2.	Nicole Palmer	Brit	54
3.	Lindsay Schaeffer	Mamba	53
4.	Deanna Ray	Keelan	53
5.	Wayne Simon	Cody	53
6.	Donna Ciartanti	Em	50

Novice/Novice 2		15 dogs ran	
1.	Donalee Slater	Rev	66
2.	Lindsay Schaeffer	Mamba	60
3.	Donna Ciartanti	Em	59
4.	Victoria Snowden	Daphne	58
5.	Nicole Palmer	Brit	46

Overall Novice/Novice Champion

Donalee Slater & Rev

Most Promising Novice/Novice Dog:

Lindsay Schaeffer’s Mamba



Judge Chloe Scott (left) with Lindsay Schaffer, handler of Most Promising Novice Dog Mamba

Bittersweet Farm Novice Trial Results, cont.

ProNovice 1		25 dogs ran	
Place	Handler	Dog	Score
1.	Eileen Wilentz	Colin	75
2.	Carol Champion	Mick	72
3.	Jessica Edgerly	Froggy	70
4.	Jacqueline Erickson	Scoirce	70
5.	Kate Collins	Tibbie	70
6.	Victoria Snowden	Cora	66

ProNovice 2		25 dogs ran	
1.	Carol Champion	Mick	75
2.	Merry Klimek	Mac	72
3.	Victoria Snowden	Cora	69
4.	Nancy Ortiz-Sharpe	Wind	64
5.	Denise Leonard	Teak	64
6.	Jessica Edgerly	Froggy	63

Ranch 1		18 dogs ran	
Place	Handler	Dog	Score
1.	Warren Mick	Mac	75
2.	Caroline Gordon	Stella	74
3.	Pam Wataha	Sis	73
4.	Normandie Hand	Bell	70
5.	Judianne Van Nostrand	Spin	62
6.	Jacqueline Erickson	Shinto	61

Ranch 2		19 dogs ran	
1.	Elizabeth Smith-Fries	Gracie	76
2.	Pam Wataha	Sis	75
3.	Barbara Amata	Max	75
4.	Normandie Hand	Bell	70
5.	Caroline Pover	Kali	67
6.	Caroline Gordon	Stella	65

Overall ProNovice Champion

Carol Champion & Mick

Most Promising ProNovice Dog

Jessica Edgerly's Froggy

Overall Ranch Champion:

Pam Wataha & Sis

Most Promising Ranch Dog:

Pam Wataha's Sis

Nursery 1 **9 dogs ran**

1.	Warren Mick	Bud	79
2.	Merry Klimek	Mac	74

Nursery 2 **9 dogs ran**

1.	Jessica Edgerly	Froggy	77
2.	Pam Helton	Abby	75



Jessica Edgerly's Froggy



Pam Wataha with Sis and judge Judy Gambil

Deaf from Birth: the “other” Border Collie Deafness Condition

Reprinted with Permission from the ABCA

We hear a lot about Early Adult Onset Deafness, and rightly so, because it can be devastating for working dogs to go deaf after so much time and effort has been spent in training them, and because research is actively ongoing to identify its genetic causes. But we don't hear as much about the other principal cause of deafness in Border Collies: congenital sensorineural deafness. This other type of deafness occurs in pups, after birth but before they are six weeks old.

One of the many complex structures we all need to have to hear—dogs and people alike—is cochlear hair cells in the inner ear. Without movement of these cells, the chain of sound transmission to the brain is broken—nerve impulses to the brain will not be generated. These hair cells are nourished by a vascular bed in the ear called the *stria vascularis*. In congenital sensorineural deafness, the *stria* is fine up until a few weeks after birth, but then it begins to degenerate, and very quickly thereafter hair cell function is lost and deafness occurs. The condition is irreversible and permanent.

Deafness can be discovered before pups go to their new homes, either through BAER testing or other less sophisticated and less reliable hearing tests, but how can this type of deafness be prevented from occurring in the first place? Unfortunately, we don't yet have an answer to this question.

We do know that the cause is genetic. We do know that it is not related to the sex of the puppies—it affects both males and females. We know that, unsurprisingly, it is more common if the dam was deaf. We know that it can be present in both ears (bilateral deafness) or only in one ear (unilateral deafness), and that unilateral deafness is more common. Research done on other breeds of dogs—mainly Dalmatians, because this type of deafness is especially prevalent in that breed—has pointed to the piebald or white factor gene, located at the S locus. There are three recessive forms of that pigment gene, and there is some suggestion that dogs carrying two copies of the allele that produces the most white on a dog's body—the

s^W mutation—might be related to the disorder. But even in Dalmatians the evidence is not clear, and certainly the vast majority of Border Collies carrying two copies of the s^W mutation are not deaf. Still, the possibility that two copies of the s^W mutation PLUS some other, unidentified regulatory gene might be the culprits cannot be ruled out given our current knowledge. There have so far been no studies done of a possible s^W mutation effect on deafness in the Border Collie.

On the other hand, it is pretty clear that the merle gene has an impact on this type of deafness. The merle gene (Mm) is dominant, and therefore a merle Border Collie bred to a non-merle will produce merle puppies (Merle patterning occurs in the dark color areas of a dog, producing light-colored splotches in those areas. It is different from ticking, which produces dark-colored spotting on areas that would normally be white.) But a merle bred to another merle will produce pups that don't appear merle at all—they are mostly or entirely white, and frequently deaf. They can have other health problems as well, including blindness. For this reason breeders should take care not to mate a merle dog to another merle.

A study done in 2006 on UK Border Collies found that “Deaf Border Collies had higher rates of merle coat pigmentation, blue iris pigment, and more white on the head than normal hearing Border Collies”. Blue eye color has long been correlated with deafness across a number of dog breeds and other species, and blue eye color occurs in merles more than in those with other Border Collie color patterns. Unfortunately, the researchers in this study did not focus at all on the incidence of deafness in dogs carrying the extreme piebald (white factor) gene, because of their stated belief that “the S locus is not thought to be involved in the regulation of deafness in Border Collies”. The S locus alleles determine the amount of white on the body, not white on the head.

Other than this one study, there does not appear to be any research done on the relationship between coat color and congenital sensorineural deafness in the Border Collie breed. Because it has been shown that causes of sensorineural deafness differs across breeds, this is certainly work that needs to be pursued.

Willowdale Novice Trial May 17 & 18

The inaugural Willowdale Trial was hosted by Josh Newcomb in Kennet Square. This trial forms “Leg One” of a newly launched NEBCA Novice Triple Crown. Leg two will be the Belle Rose trial in Chestertown, MD and a final leg will be at Wayside Farm in NJ.

RESULTS:

Novice/Novice 1				5 dogs ran				ProNovice 2				10 dogs ran			
Place	Handler	Dog	Score	Place	Handler	Dog	Score	Place	Handler	Dog	Score	Place	Handler	Dog	Score
1.	Wayne Simon	Faye	68	1.	Sherry Sheldon	Fury	69	1.	Sherry Sheldon	Fury	69	1.	Nicole Palmer	Brit	62
2.	Nicole Palmer	Brit	62	2.	Nancy Ortiz Sharp	Wind	63	2.	Nancy Ortiz Sharp	Wind	63	2.	Wayne Simon	Cody	53
3.	Wayne Simon	Cody	53	3.	Joanne Fassbender	Bryn	61	3.	Joanne Fassbender	Bryn	61	3.	Normandie Hand	Wick	41
4.	Normandie Hand	Wick	41	4.	Nicole Palmer	Bran	55	4.	Nicole Palmer	Bran	55	4.	Wayne Simon	Faye	40
				5.	Rebecca Roach	Roy	53	5.	Rebecca Roach	Roy	53				
				6.	Sharon Barrett	Virgil	47	6.	Sharon Barrett	Virgil	47				
				7.	Carol Champion	Mick	46	7.	Carol Champion	Mick	46				
				8.	Marianne Walters	Tess	39	8.	Marianne Walters	Tess	39				

Novice/Novice 2				4 dogs ran			
1.	Nicole Palmer	Brit	67	1.	Nicole Palmer	Brit	67
2.	Wayne Simon	Cody	63	2.	Wayne Simon	Cody	63
3.	Normandie Hand	Wick	62	3.	Normandie Hand	Wick	62
4.	Wayne Simon	Faye	40	4.	Wayne Simon	Faye	40

Novice/Novice 3 **4 dogs ran**

1. Nicole Palmer Brit 75

2. Wayne Simon Cody 70

3. Wayne Simon Faye 62

4. Normandie Hand Wick 25

Novice/Novice Overall Champion:
Nicole Palmer & Brit

Novice/Novice Reserve:
Wayne Simon & Cody

ProNovice 1				10 dogs ran			
1.	Joanne Fassbender	Bryn	65	1.	Joanne Fassbender	Bryn	65
2.	Nancy Ortiz Sharp	Wind	64	2.	Nancy Ortiz Sharp	Wind	64
3.	Sherry Sheldon	Fury	52	3.	Sherry Sheldon	Fury	52
4.	Joanne Fassbender	Tuk	48	4.	Joanne Fassbender	Tuk	48
5.	Sharon Barrett	Virgil	47	5.	Sharon Barrett	Virgil	47
6.	Rebecca Roach	Roy	40	6.	Rebecca Roach	Roy	40
7.	Nancy Ortiz Sharp	What	40	7.	Nancy Ortiz Sharp	What	40
8.	Marianne Walters	Tess	37	8.	Marianne Walters	Tess	37
9.	Carol Champion	Mick	33	9.	Carol Champion	Mick	33

Diane Ferrer



Skylar Landis's Tate

Willowdale Novice Trial, cont.

ProNovice 3

9 dogs ran

Place	Handler	Dog	Score
1.	Nancy Ortiz Sharp	Wind	73
2.	Rebecca Roach	Roy	67
3.	Joanne Fassbender	Tuk	66
4.	Nicole Palmer	Bran	58
5.	Sherry Sheldon	Fury	52
6.	Carol Champion	Mick	50
7.	Sharon Barrett	Virgil	44
8.	Marianne Walters	Tess	31

Overall ProNovice Champion:

Nancy Ortiz Sharp & Wind

ProNovice Reserve Champion:

Sherry Sheldon & Fury

Ranch 3

12 dogs ran

Place	Handler	Dog	Score
1.	Skylar Landis	Tate	78
2.	Joanne Thayer	Pepe	76
3.	Joanne Thayer	Zasaz	76
4.	Amy Hershberger	Joe	72
5.	Nancy Obenier	Mo	68
6.	Nura Sudi	Spree	63
7.	Rebecca Roach	Matix	61
8.	Nancy Obenier	Mirk	59
9.	Judianne Van Nostrand	Spin	56
10.	Marianne Walters	Nick	52

Overall Ranch Champion:

Rebecca Roach & Matix

Overall Ranch Reserve:

Nancy Obenier & Mo

Ranch 1

13 dogs ran

Place	Handler	Dog	Score
1.	Rebecca Roach	Matix	79
2.	Judianne Van-Nostrand	Spin	72
3.	Nancy Obenier	Mo	71
4.	Amy Hershberger	Joe	65
5.	Skylar Landis	Wren	65
6.	Joanne Thayer	Pepe	64
7.	Normandie Hand	Bell	64
8.	Nancy Joyce Simmons	Louise	54
9.	Nancy Joyce Simmons	Star	54
10.	Nancy Obenier	Mirk	51
11.	Skylar Landis	Tate	41
12.	Joanne Thayer	Zasaz	40

Ranch 2

13 dogs ran

1.	Rebecca Roach	Matix	81
2.	Nancy Obenier	Mo	73
3.	Nancy Joyce Simmons	Louse	70
4.	Joanne Thayer	Pepe	68
5.	Joanne Thayer	Zasaz	67
6.	Skylar Landis	Wren	66
7.	Normandie Hand	Bell	65
8.	Amy Hershberger	Joe	55
9.	Nancy Obenier	Mirk	53
10.	Nancy Joyce Simmonr	Star	50
11.	Nura Sudi	Spree	47



Diane Ferrer

Joanne Fassbender and Bryn having a good run at Willowdale Novice Trial

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 : Willowdale Trial photos (pages 1, 7, 8) generously :
 : provided by Diane Ferrer of :
 : **The Pup Photo** :
 : **Dog Show/Dog Sport Photographer** :
 : Find her at <https://thepupphoto.mypixieset.com> :
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Meet the Membership: Introducing Jessica Edgerly

In her own words

I live in Lebanon, CT, which is a small farm town. We own a small farm of 7 acres and have about 60 sheep; some are blue face Leicester and some are Katahdins. I own a training facility in Colchester CT called **Central K9** where we offer most dog sports and dog training. My goal is to bring trials to the building (arena trials, since that is what we have room for) and get new people involved in the sport of sheep herding. Getting new people involved is how we will keep this sport and the lifestyle it celebrates going.

My dogs compete in multiple sports and also some of them work the farm and do goose patrol.

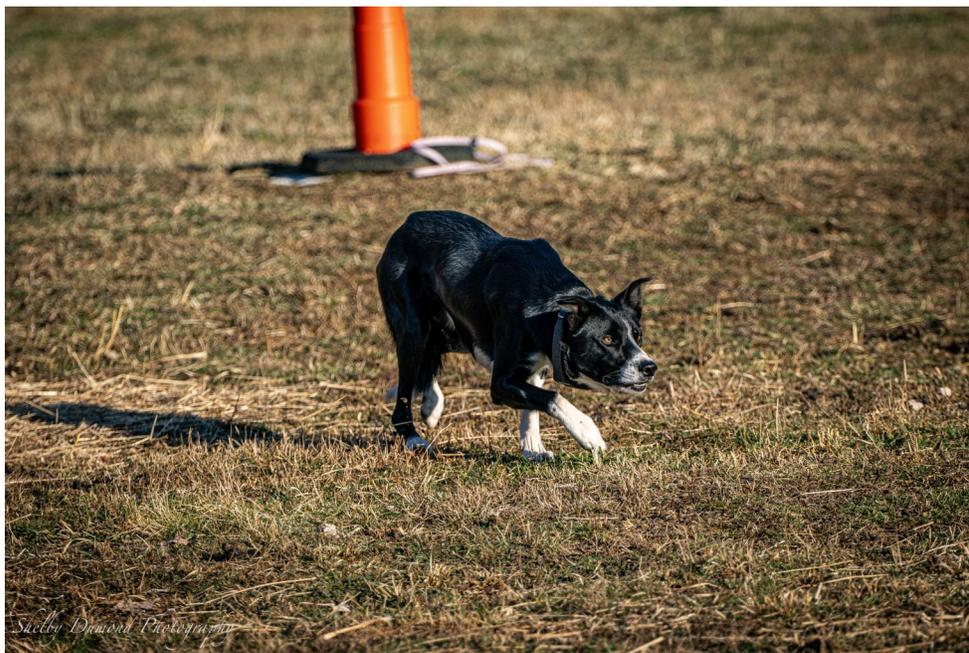
I started competing in sheepdog trials with my border/cattle dog named Diesel and was hooked. I then got my first border collie named Ranger who I competed in Novice with and went to our first Novice Finals and placed 6th. My first trial was Fetch Gate and it was so exciting and nerve wracking at the same time. I train my dogs myself and this year I hope to be competing with my first Nursery dog. Last year was my first time in Open with a dog I bought from Shannon Fritz, her name is Dot. We had a lot to learn together but was a fun adventure. My first trial with her was in Florida and I was second up. I was so nervous but she did well and we finished the whole course and everyone was so welcoming to me and helpful and so nice. Hope to be at more trials this year but my full time job gets in the way during the summers. In summers we (my husband and myself run our business) hold a lot of events for dock diving and we also do dog-themed entertainment shows at fairs. We work a lot but I enjoy training dogs so to me it's not work.

Hopefully this year we will be able to go to the Bluegrass, MSSA (Mountain States Stockdog Association) finals and the Novice Finals.

We are hoping to put on some NEBCA Open and Novice trials this year either in Connecticut or Massachusetts.

For me I really enjoy watching Joni Tietjen handle dogs. I don't know a ton of handlers but she seems to be able to train them up pretty good.

I find training the dogs endlessly fun and exciting. Every dog teaches us a lesson if we are listening. Dogs are like people: they learn at their own rate and also each one is different from another one.



Jessica's Dot

Jessica Edgerly

Sugar Bush Gap Novice Trial Results

Windsor NY June 1, 2025

Judge Barb Armata

Trial 1

Trial 2

Novice/Novice

Place	Handler	Dog	Score
1.	Normandie Hand	Wick	54
2.	Linda Pace	Jake	31

Novice/Novice

Place	Handler	Dog	Score
1.	Normandie Hand	Wick	64
2.	Linda Pace	Jake	53

ProNovice

1.	Sara Reiter	Cliff	69
2.	Victoria Snowden	Cora	51
3.	Yvonne O'Brien	Stella	49
4.	Tom Hoeber	Arrow	43

ProNovice

1.	Victoria Snowdon	Cora	51
2.	Yvonne O'Brien	Stella	39
3.	Sandy Lockwood	Pearl	28

Ranch

1.	Sara Reiter	Zac	79
2.	Caroline Gordon	Stella	62
3.	Normandie Hand	Bell	60
4.	Jean Barrett	E'ire	59
5.	Peter Van de Carr	Oso	56
6.	Pam Davies	Seren	50

Ranch

1.	Carolyn Pover	Kali	77
2.	Caroline Gordon	Stella	69
3.	Tom Hoeber	Bow	67
4.	Pam Davies	Seren	59
5.	Jean Barrett	E'ire	57
6.	Kim Lippolis	Joe	57

HIGH OVERALL

Novice/Novice: Normandie Hand & Wick

ProNovice: Victoria Snowden & Cora

Ranch: Caroline Gordon & Stella

Summer Means Fairs!

Fair trials, that is.

Longtime NEBCA member Lynn Deschambeault submitted this round-up of this summer's New England "fast and furious" fair trials. All are welcome. Entry is often (but not always—be sure to check) day-of and entry fees are low. Payout is often better than you ever dreamed of and a lot of fun is had by all. Contrary to some misguided opinions, running your dog in an arena points and time trial will not ruin him or her for "the big time" on the big field. It's all about training and handling. Last year's Calgary Stampede (the most famous point and time trial) winner went on the following month to make it into two large double lifts.

From Lynn:

"I manage seven trials here in New England; all are points and time. All but one are held at fairgrounds so we can call them "Fair" trials; the exception is the NH Highland Games!

Ossipee valley fair (July 10) is a small old fashioned fair in South Hiram, Maine. It is the "newest" of the trials! Payout is usually to the top five finishers. Enter at the fair (\$25 per dog) but contact Lynn ahead of time to get free entry into the Fair.

Blue Hill and the Northeast US Sheepdog trials (Blue Hill Maine over Labor Day weekend) are two of the oldest sheepdog trials of ANY kind in the US, having been put on for more than 50 years. They draw large crowds for first a Saturday trial in a horse show ring, then Sunday is held on a portion of the race track with huge crowds in the grandstand! Fast and at the edge of your seat exciting!! Runs can be as fast as a minute, record is under a minute for the winning run!! Great fair, the best crowd and good payout! This year: August 30 and 31, enter on the grounds, \$10 per dog per trial.

The Highland Games is held at a Scottish festival with a huge appreciative crowd. We used to run up the mountain at Loon, it is now on a very small course, but a good payout and wonderful crowd!

Fryeburg Fair, in Fryeburg Maine (Sept 27/28), is largest agricultural fair (except for the multi-state Big E) in New England with a decent-sized course on the

infield of the track. A great fair that draws a large crowd. Good payout, \$25 entry fee by pre-entry, with often a fun jackpot to follow the runs.

Topsfield Fair in Topsfield MA is October 9— pre- enter on the Fair's website.

Time / points trials have a bad rap, but in truth they require precise handling and a dog that responds quickly and accurately. There is less time and space to make errors! In the past Blue Hill has attracted some of the best, most storied handlers in the US. The Pulfer Boys, Maurice MacGregor, Betty Levin, Roger Deschambeault, Walt Jagger, and many others came from all over to compete at this small country fair. Blue Hill fair trial was started by Jim Davidson who ran it for over 50 years!!!"

An added attraction is you get to wander around these fairs, visit exhibits, see the livestock (many New England fairs have oxen competitions (pulling and obstacle course), something you won't see anywhere else in the US or maybe the world), eat fair food and buy local items.

Contact Lynn at 207-256-0999 or merlynn@fairpoint.net for more info. She would love to see new competitors and will be happy to answer your questions.

And don't forget The Big E, Springfield MA, Sept 22.



Added attraction of attending a Fair trial in Maine!

Tips for Small Flock Management

Text and photos by Ginny Prince

Baling twine is one of those things like cars and computers, can't live with it, can't live without. Twine holds our hay together and is remarkably handy for all kinds of uses. However baling twine adheres to a corollary of Murphy's law, that when repurposing it the knot will always be at the worst possible place. At the same time, twine has an amazing propensity to tangle in bedding, gates, machinery and feet (sheep, dogs and human) with potentially injurious consequences.

The following is a suggestion for making peace with baling twine.

Start with *taking the time to cut the twine close to the knots* (photo 1). Make this easy by having a cutting tool in a convenient location. I keep an 8 dollar folding knife from my local chainsaw shop in my barn pants and another in my barn jacket for this. The knives are red so easy to find when dropped (photo 2) and are handy for lots of other uses (miniature pry bar, screw driver, awl etc.) A friend says she finally found a use for a flexi lead: hanging scissors from it for cutting twine in her barn.

Photo 1



It is easier to take hold of the knots, slide the twine free of the bale cleanly and either wind the twine up around your hand in a compact roll (photo 3) or hang it with minimal tangling (photo 4) than if the knots are here there and everywhere. You also have a great supply of long pieces of string that are way easier to use for a myriad of things, or to store rolled up singly or in pairs to have handy in a pocket or your vehicle.

Here is another benefit when you want to deal with only part of a hay bale: Leave the twine on the hay bale and after separating off the flakes you don't want, take the knot ends of your 2 pieces of twine and knot them together (photo 5). (The original knots will make this a very strong connection that won't pull apart if you use a lot of tension to keep your part bale together.) Then bring the free ends of the twine to your knot (photo 6) and pass one end through the loop in each direction (photo 7). Pull the ends snug and make a bow (photo 8). You can make an overhand knot first but it could be difficult to undo. I only do that if I am going to carry the partial bale a long way.

I hope this tip reduces the swearing in your life as it has for me!

How to manage your baling twine, in pictures



Photo 3

Keep twine under control: Ball it up (photo 3) or hang it neatly (photo 4)



Photo 4



Meanwhile, while you are corralling your baling twine, your dog has the run of the house. Here Ginny's Rhonda studies up by watching an Elvin Kopp training video.

You too can borrow this and many other fine videos from the NEBCA Library.

Introducing Baling twine Origami by Ginny:

Securing an open bale with its cut twine:

Step one: Photo 5— Tie together the two ends

Step two: Photo 6—Bring the free ends of twine to the knot you made in step one



Step 3: Photo 7—Pass one end of twine through the loop in either direction

Step 4: Photo 8—tie the two ends in a bow



Ed. Note: I think I may need Ginny to demo this to me in person

As Newsletter Editor, whenever someone goes somewhere new or exciting (National Finals, The Bluegrass, Tabletop, the Worlds, Soldier Hollow, a trip to Ireland....) I am always bugging them to “write an article for the Newsletter!!”. People mostly don’t want to but they usually give in. So, having some empty space in this issue, I felt obligated to write a little something about MY in the summer of 2024trip. Many have already heard it on FB but for those who haven’t, here are some snippets of:

My Big Amazing Sheepdog Adventure by Pam Mueller

It all started in August of 2023, when I took my not quite two year old dog Gnat to run in Nursery at Grass Creek. There I met Alana Leech, from Alberta, who said to me, “Hey, next year you can come to Alberta to run in the Canadian Nursery Championships **and** the Canadian Open”. Well that seemed like an interesting but preposterous idea so I filed it away. Of course my dog could barely get around a Nursery course she wasn’t running any open trials, but that was more than a year away so.... the idea sat in my mind and came to sound more and more like a fun adventure and so I began mentioning it to people. Pretty soon a friend from Seattle said she was coming to watch, and then my dog’s breeder from BC said she was coming to watch....now I was committed (in the end neither one came to watch!)

Then I met Marilyn Terpstra and she asked if I was going to “all the trials”. What? “Well we always go to the whole circuit: Canadian Championships (Alberta), Sheep Creek (Shaunavon Saskatchewan) and Hilltop (Mankota Saskatchewan)” No way I said. No time, and those are Open trials on BIG fields...not for *my* dog! But after some thought it seemed silly to go all the way to Alberta)which I belatedly discovered is north of Montana—pretty damn far away) and not take in everything possible even if the dog couldn’t run the field. So I went. Packed the little Prius to the gills and set off on the appointed Sunday in August to drive west for 2700 miles. Twelve days, three trials, nine runs for now not quite three year old Gnat. On big fields. And bigger fields.

Flat, rolling, hilly, contoured fields; green, brown, golden fields. Three, four, five sheep in a packet. Range sheep, farm flock, lambs. Sheep that ran, sheep that stalled, sheep that sprinted. Sheep that went forwards, backwards, sideways. Gnat didn’t win or place she didn’t even always finish the course but she found her sheep every time but once and brought them to my feet all but twice. Her scores were better left unsaid but her experiences as a young sheepdog priceless.

First stop was the Canadian Finals (where Gnat got to run Nursery twice and Open twice) in Cypress County, south of Medicine Hat Alberta — endless rolling prairie, massive rolls of hay, wheat fields and gigantic grain elevators. My first experience was arriving during a heat wave to an AirBnB that had no A/C. My second experience was pulling up to the ranch gates at 6:30 AM and being directed to the spectator parking because, hey, no competitor arrives to a sheepdog trial in western Canada in a Prius. They all come in pickup trucks. Once that was sorted out, host Chris Jobe and all the handlers were very welcoming.



The Championships were held on a fairly flat field with five feisty sheep, see the picture! It never rained one drop but the wind across the prairie was at times ferocious. The sheep were challenging to lift especially by the last day when many were lost to setout. Gnat didn’t lose hers but had to retire (she was holding them at the top end) and be “rescued” with the side-by-side as it was certainly too far to walk out and fetch her! She did get to the shedding ring on Day 1 and what a thrill that was. After five days in Alberta that included a handlers dinner with door prizes and a BBQ CBCA meeting with lots of wasps and culminated in an exciting Double Lift, I packed up from the desperately hot AirBnB and headed east a few hours to a beautiful hotel in Shaunavon Saskatchewan.

Jamie Gardner’s ranch, Sheep Creek, was a bit hard to find as the directions included miles of gravel roads and “turn right after the creek”. I literally drove in several frustrated circles and dead-ended once at an oil well before finding the ranch, where I marched up onto the deck and declared “I hope there’s a steak for me!” (there was — ever-hospitable Jamie had offered steak dinner the night before the trial). The field here offered a downward sloping dusty bowl with farm flock of sheep that wanted to run but would behave well if treated well (Gnat was not in that category) and were hard to pen. After two days in Shaunavon capped by a great catered Handlers Dinner I left my lovely hotel (despite being a tiny town the area gets a lot of oil workers so sports a really nice, pretty cheap, dog friendly hotel) and drove east some more, to the true one horse town of Mankota and

Wendy Schmaltz’s Hilltop trial.

Hilltop is a well kept secret-not-so-secret trial and I almost hate to mention it for fear everyone will descend on it. But given that it’s in the middle of nowhere 2000 miles from most of us, that probably won’t happen. Hilltop is not just a trial it is an event. The whole town turns out, first to bid on the Double Lift handlers in a “Calcutta” auction and then to watch. Other events accompany the trial: a car show and quilt auction and “ranch rodeo”. There were dinners of one type or another each night (not to mention the Northern Lights) and three amazing trials in a vast open plain surrounded by hills. Each day the sheep were set on a different hill at 400-450 yards through challenging terrain. The first day was so difficult only one third of the dogs (Gnat not among them) made it to the top. Subsequent days were a little easier so that most dogs could at least pick up their sheep but the four young lambs were not easy to persuade round the wide open course. I was quite pleased to score a resounding 16 one day — not a DQ, not an RT! I had meant to leave Sunday morning for the long drive home but couldn’t resist watching the truly talented teams in the Double Lift.

People asked me how I did it. Easy. Just pack the car (one suitcase, one bag of dog food, one case of selzer, one case of beer), grab a credit card and a map and passport and throw in the dogs and we were off. Why I did it? Why not? New country, new challenges, priceless memories. It’s easy now to see that my young incompletely trained dog developed some bad habits (stop at 400 yards you say? Ha!) but I don’t mind (time to re-train) and I wouldn’t have missed this for anything.

Obviously I like to travel, don’t mind driving and it was not hard to walk to the post with my dog. I knew she would run out. What was hard was not knowing any of the handlers (I knew Tracy Hinton — but not really) and having to go up and start talking to strangers who all knew each other. Because face it a

big part of trialing is socializing with your friends, even if that’s watching the runs and commenting on them, and if you have no friends.....plus I was often clueless and needed help to navigate events. But of course Canadians are friendly and I suppose I



benefited too from being an oddity (as well as not a competitive threat!). I truly enjoyed meeting so many new handlers — “big hats” I’d only heard about such as Milt Scott and Peter Gonnet, those I knew but had never spoken to (Scott and Jenny Glen), but also other amazing and interesting people like Jen L’arrive (winner of 2024 Calgary Stampete), Karen Ramstead (finisher of seven Ididarod races in her pre-sheepdog days), Barry Breemersch who invited me to train at his Manitoba ranch on my way home, and Californian Ron Stark — we bonded over politics that didn’t interest the Canadians. Fellow Americans Marilyn Terpstra and Kate Ash —initially skeptical— became my go-to people for help. And too many more to mention.

It’s a different country out there. One handler told me he had to go home early because he had to help his son-in-law bale 1000 acres of straw. 1000 acres of straw can you even imagine that? Do I want another adventure? You bet I do, and I’m scouting. Although I’m a little afraid I won’t be able to match the thrills and mystique of this one.

What Should I Call My Puppy?

TOP ISDS DOG NAMES FOR 2024

As reported in *International Sheepdog News*, Spring 2025

Dogs:

1. Ben
2. Roy
3. Jim
4. Jack
5. Moss

Bitches:

1. Meg
2. Fly
3. Jess
4. Nell
5. Tess

And then there are the naming conventions as explained by a British sheep farmer: Working Collie names should be:

- A) One syllable
- B) Starting with a hard consonant
- C) An aspect of the natural world OR human name
- D) Furthermore, the ISDS does not permit foreign (non-British) words

Note that all the popular names (above) conform to convention

But I bet if ABCA were to compile a list it would look quite different!

Dr. David Slotwiner, a cardiologist in NYC, escapes on weekends to Wayside Farm in NJ, where long time NEBCA member Gene Sheninger and new NEBCA President Teri Rhodes help him train his border collies Cosmo and young Luna, and learn life lessons along the way. The following article appeared recently in the NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital magazine and was shared to Facebook. It lists no author attribution. Dr. Slotwiner also hosted a podcast at the farm, where he expounded on lesson learned from dog training that make him a better doctor.

A cardiology chief shares how training his dogs to herd sheep shaped his perspective on leadership

In the middle of a muddy pasture on a farm in New Jersey, Dr. David Slotwiner, an electrophysiologist and chief of cardiology at NewYork-Presbyterian Queens, calls out to his border collie, Cosmo. He shouts commands like “lie down” and “come by” to get Cosmo to stop, start, and change directions. Their goal: to corral a small herd of sheep into a pen.

This is a typical weekend for Dr. Slotwiner, who is also an assistant professor of clinical medicine and population health sciences at Weill Cornell Medicine. Shepherding became an unlikely side passion after he began these visits to the farm to help Cosmo, his family’s border collie, whose aggressive, reactive nature was proving problematic.

Both Dr. Slotwiner and his wife, Anne, who have always had dogs in the family, suffered multiple bites as Cosmo grew older. “We were encouraged to give him up, but there was no way we were going to do that because he would have been put to sleep” he says. Determined to help Cosmo, they consulted multiple dog trainers, to no avail. Then one of them referred the couple to a farm that trained border collies to herd. On their first visit, almost immediately after seeing the sheep, “Cosmo understood how his presence could influence them”, Dr Slotwiner says. “Within 45 seconds, he was herding them. His personality changed, we realized this gave him a lot of confidence and mental stimulation. It was like he found his calling in life.”

Dr. Slotwiner also became hooked and started to train as a handler. He says his journey with Cosmo has been a test of his communication skills, patience, resilience, and ability to problem solve—which isn’t so different from what’s required of him on the job, whether he’s leading global efforts in his

field to standardize patient data or teaching trainees in the operating room.

“Whatever leadership role I am in, the parallels are quite remarkable,” Dr. Slotwiner says. “It’s always a constant adjustment trying to be as effective of a leader as I can.”

By his own admission, Dr. Slotwiner says his career goals were never to be the one in charge. Instead, he says he stumbled into leadership the same way he stumbled into shepherding – as a reflection of his passion for finding solutions.

For the past two decades, one of the biggest problems he’s been trying to tackle for his field is how to streamline data supplied by cardiac implantable electronic devices (CIEDs) like pacemakers and defibrillators. Because each device maker transmits patient data using their own IT protocols and systems, accessing and processing that information tends to be cumbersome and archaic. Dr. Slotwiner’s interest in solving this issue began years prior to joining New York-Presbyterian Queens, while he was working as an associate director of an electrophysiology lab in 2006. He joined an FDA advisory panel for the approval of CIEDs, which deepened his understanding of the regulatory space around the devices just as they were starting to incorporate remote monitoring.

“I wanted to make sure these devices were being utilized in the way that they were most beneficial,” he says. “That included trying to figure out better ways to manage the enormous amounts of data they were generating, because none of our electronic health records at the time were set up to do that.”

The first major roadblock was that the four manufacturers who made these devices all used their own proprietary terminology to describe the products’ functions. “For example, most pacemakers have a way of responding to fast heart rhythms, but each company has a different name for that,” Dr. Slotwin-

er says. “I realized the only real way to manage that data would be to develop a standard nomenclature so that you have a way to communicate this data between different IT systems.”

Dr. Slotwiner spearheaded a five-year effort to standardize about 1,500 terms, a process that required getting industry backing from the major cardiology societies; buy-in and compliance from the device makers, who had to be persuaded that collaborating with competitors would be good for business; and approval of technical standards from an international engineering standards organization.

The next phase of development is to create interoperability protocols that will allow data to flow seamlessly between the devices, the manufacturers’ data servers, and patient electronic records. Dr. Slotwiner is currently working on these efforts with HL7 International, a creator of global standards for health informatics, and the World Forum for CIED Management, an international organization he co-founded. He expects bi-directional communication to be possible next year – exactly 20 years from when he first started on this mission.

“This is a complicated space, and I wasn’t trying to be a leader in it. I just saw a need and was figuring out how to fill it,” he says. “I also realized I had a skill that not many had: the ability to bridge very different groups of people. I like working with engineers, other physicians, basic scientists, and corporate leadership to help everybody see each other’s side. I guess that made me into a leader, because I was passionate and wouldn’t let it go.”

An interest in working with all types of people and patients is one of the reasons Dr. Slotwiner—who was an intern, resident and fellow at NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medicine – came to NewYork Presbyterian Queens in 2015, initially as the director of the electrophysiology lab before becoming chief of cardiology. He says that back in his training days, “I looked at my chief and thought, “That’s the last thing I want to do.” I started my career focused on clinical care and research, and I thought that would be all I did.”

But as he gained more experience, he realized that the changes he wanted to effect could only happen if he

went into leadership, so he embraced the opportunity to take on the new role when a former colleague reached out. “I knew from my previous job, which was also in Queens, that certain areas of the borough were real healthcare deserts,” he adds. “I knew I was needed and could make a big difference here, and that I was coming back to a place that shared my values around improving the quality of patient care.”

That doesn’t mean he purports to know exactly what it means to be a good leader, but he has seen similarities with his experiences on the farm. Being a rookie dog handler, for instance, has helped Dr. Slotwiner relate better to the younger doctors and medical school students he trains. “When you teach, it’s important to know what it feels like to be in their shoes. You can lose that once you become an expert,” he says. “But to be a novice again at something, I can say without question, has helped me be a better teacher.”

And on some days, he relies on what he’s learned from working with Cosmo and his second border collie, Luna, to remind himself that ultimately what people – and dogs—respond to are the same.

“With herding, I had to learn to become confident with Cosmo and the sheep, and that’s something I’ve really been working on,” he says. “They demand calm, confident leadership to get the reaction you want from them, and that’s not so different with humans. Being clear, calm, and comfortable in your own skin as a doctor as you guide patients through treatment is something you learn in medical school, but I had to learn that in my role as chief, too. And I’m still learning.”

“It’s incredibly hard to herd sheep with dogs. Like anything, people who are good at it make it look really easy. But it does not come naturally to me. And so it’s been a long learning experience. But I’m getting better and I’m gonna win a competition at some point, I am— I’m sure of it.”

NEBCA TRIAL CALENDAR 2025

See NEBCA website for most up to date info and entry forms

June 26-29	Caora Farm SDT	235 Sharon Rd Millerton NY	2 Open 2 Nursery 3rd Nursery if entries allow	Martha Walke
June 28-29	Belle Rose Summer Novice	Chestertown, MD	2 each NN, PN, Ranch (possibly 3 each)	Skylar Landis Bellerosekennels@gmail.com
July 3-6	Fetchgate Farm 2.0	Cortland, NY	2 Open 2 Nursery	Carolyn West 860-729-0550
July 4-6	Cascade Farm	360 Pettyboro Rd Bath NH	Open, NN, PN, Ranch, Nursery	Mary Ames 603-838-2018
July 12-13	Handy Dog Summer Trial	St. Agatha, ONTARIO	1 each NN, PN, Ranch, Open, Nursery	Victoria Lamont 619-417-0765
July 26-27	Morse Brook Farm Trial	Westminster, VT	NN, PN, Ranch	Liz Shaw 802-376-6280 farfetchfarm@gmail.com
Juy 31-Aug 3	80 Acres	Kingston, ONTARIO	Nursery (July 31) 2 Open	Sue Schoen 607-655-1139
Aug 5-10	Grass Creek SDT & CBCA Championships	Kingston, ONTARIO	2 Open (Aug 6-9) CBCA Nursery (Aug 5) CBCA Championships (Aug 10)	Amanda Milliken C: 613-540-4845 O: 613-546-1451
Aug 16-17	Ox Creek August Trial	Canandaigua, NY	2 Open 2 Nursery	Carolyn West 860-729-0550
Aug 23-24	ABCQ Trial	Levis, QUEBEC	NN, PN	Josee Lamontagne
Aug 30 Aug 31	Blue Hill Fair NE US Open	Blue Hill, ME	2 Open Pts and Time	Lynn Deschambeault 207-256-0995
Sept 5-6	Handy Dog Fall Trial	St Agatha, ONTARIO	Friday Novice Day Sat/Sun Open One Nursery each day	Victoria Lamont
Sept 13-14	Ox Creek Sept SDT	Canandaigua, NY	2 Open 2 Nursery	Carolyn West 860-729-0550
Sept 19-21	Shepherds Crook	Woodville, ONTARIO	NN, PN, Nursery, Open	Vikki Kidd
Sept 20-21	NEBCA NOVICE FINALS	Wayside Farm Hackettstown, NJ	NN, PN, Ranch	Skylar Landis Bellerosekennels@gmail.com
Sept 22	The Big E	Springfield MA	2 Open Points and Time	Pam Mueller pjmueller1@gmail.com 607-342-4291
Sept 27-28	Fryeburg Fair	Fryeburg, ME	2 Open Points and Time	Lynn Deschambeault 207-256-0995
Oct 3-5	Kitley's Corners	Jasper, ONTARIO	3 each NN, PN, Ranch, Nursery, Open	Celeste Lacroix
Oct 17-19	NEBCA Fall Foliage	Kingston, ONTARIO	2 Open; Double Lift for quali- fied handlers	Sue Schoen 607-655-1139
Oct 9	Topsfield Fair	Topsfield, MA	Open Points and Time	Lynn Deschambeault 207-256-0995
Oct 31-Nov 2	Bittersweet Farm Fall Novice Trial	109 Hammon Hill Road, Hampton, CT	NN, PN, Ranch, Nursery	Carol Champion 860-455-5660 carcampion06247@gmail.com

NEBCA
257 Athol Richmond Road
Royalston, MA 01368

NEBCA 2026 Sheepdog calendars are here!

Get yours from Diane Geer: geerdiane@gmail.com, 860-941-7575, order online or get one with your NEBCA membership renewal and pay no shipping



2026 Border Collies
North East Border Collie Association