



A.W.M.A. ONLINE MAGAZINE

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A VERY SPECIAL BOY AND HIS DOG

BY CHESTER HEMBREE

Lucas, who is 4 years old, has a very rare genetic disorder called Sanfilippo (pronounced San-fa-lee-po) Syndrome or also known as MPS III type A. It affects 1 in 70,000 kids which is roughly the same chances of being struck by lightning. They are 14 different types of MPS that range in severity and fall under the larger group of Lyposomal Storage Disorders. Without digging too deep into genetics 101 I'll put into layman terms what is going on. His body does not produce a specific enzyme that breaks down cellular waste. So the body stores it in places that it shouldn't. Basically he lacks an internal garbage truck so to speak. With respects to his particular disorder it affects his brain, central nervous system, joints, hearing, sight, and internal organs. Unfortunately there's no present cure or treatments available although there does appear to be hope on the horizon though some recent research breakthroughs. Sanfilippo is progressive and is often compared to be like a childhood Alzheimer's. As he gets older he loses more of his abilities. The ability to eat, talk, and walk are soon lost, usually around the age of 5 to 6. Lucas already has a feeding tube in place and has lost about 75% of his abilities. By the time a child with this is age 7-8 they are in a vegetative state and suffer frequent seizures and compromised immune system. Then by ages 12-14 death occurs. It's a hard pill to swallow but we have come to terms with it and try to make each and every day special. Lucas has hearing aids, the previously mentioned feed tube, eyeglasses, braces for his feet, uses oxygen, and a wheelchair. Even with all of this he is quite the little fighter and refuses to give in to his physical limitations. He is a true inspiration to me.

And then, there is Juno, Lucas's service dog. She is a 2 year old Belgian Malinois. She is unlike any Belgian Malinois that I have ever worked with in the past. She has all the good qualities and none of the little quirks that Malinois are known for getting into trouble over.

I was tired of having to see Lucas having to be restrained in his wheelchair all the time due to his aggressiveness and behavioral issues that accompany his disorder. I wanted him to be mobile while he still had some of his abilities. So I checked with a local service dog agency but they told me that Lucas would not be able to use a service dog because of his behavior and deteriorating abilities. I refused to accept this answer. I said my prayers and left the rest up to the Man upstairs. A few months later I came across Juno on a Belgian Malinois Rescue Group's web page. She was about 2 hours away from us and at a kill shelter. She didn't have long left.



She had been surrendered to the shelter because her previous owners didn't know anything about Malinois. I use to help with the training of police K-9s back when I was a law enforcement officer. That's when I developed my love for the breed. I loved their desire to work and their never quit attitude. I had the feeling in my gut and my mind was set. I had to go see this dog. When we got to her she was very emaciated and only weighed 45 lbs and was 16 months old. It was time for the leash test. She walked with me on a lose leash and never pulled. Next was the Lucas test.

[cont'd. on page 2]

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Interview with Joshua McCleary, 2xs Winner of NARA's Decoy of the Year	Page 3
Note to the American Public: Belgian Malinois, Look Don't Touch	Page 5
Letter from the President	Page 4
David Green's Tips on Obedience Training	Page 7
How I spent my summer	Page 8
Photos from the 17th Annual FMBB World Championships	Page 9



[cont'd. from the front cover] Those two took to each other like it was meant to be. So it was decided that I would put my training skills to the test and prove the skeptics wrong. Especially the ones that insisted that Malinois were only good for bite work.

I was working out the details on what all I was going to train her to do. I wanted to make sure she had plenty of time to adjust to the family and to learn her place in her new pack. We were just giving her lots of attention and love during this transition. One day I noticed her circling Lucas while in his chair. She was whining and nudging him with her nose. I went to check on him and his oxygen levels had dropped very low and he was starting to turn blue. So after giving Lucas some oxygen he quickly returned to normal and Juno greeted him with lots of licks and affection. That's when I knew she had the ability to pick up on his neurological changes. She now alerts us when Lucas is about to have a seizure or if his oxygen levels drop really low. She has saved him several times with this including once while we had him in a pool. She almost jumped in trying to get to him. While he is having a seizure she will lay on him and lick him in the face till he comes around. I didn't train her for this. She does this by herself.

I have also trained Juno to climb up on Lucas when he has a "melt down" fit and starts banging his head or screaming. She will lie across him in his chair to calm him down. She helps Lucas with his mobility, which is what we were told would never happen. Lucas is able to walk beside her and hold onto her harness for stability. I have a tethering leash hooked to both of them. Lucas, like any typical 4 year old, wants to run and play. That is a disaster that always ends in him getting hurt and needing a trip to the emergency room. If he starts to run he always falls. So with the tether in place, if Lucas decides to run Juno promptly goes into down position and acts as an anchor. This stops Lucas from running off and getting injured. Juno really shines when it comes to helping Lucas up and down stairs. Stairs are awkward for dogs as it is, however Juno is able to start, stop, and turnaround with Lucas on stairs and keep him at a safe pace. Juno also pulls Lucas's wheelchair when hooked to it. She loves to pull his wheelchair or adaptive tricycle.

Juno and Lucas are inseparable. You don't see one without the other close by. We do have to leave Lucas with his nurse and take Juno to the dog park for some R&R. We took them both together once and we couldn't get her to quit working and just play. If she see's us get his chair out she immediately goes to the left side of it, which is the side she works from. Funny thing is a few nights ago we were at a small park and we had just taken Juno's vest off so she could cool down. Lucas and his mom were at the slides. Juno saw Lucas getting ready to climb the stairs by himself and she darted off to get beside him without being told. After she helped him up Lucas went down the slide, followed by Juno going down the slide after him.

Juno has made such a difference in Lucas's life. She gives him that extra confidence and us an extra set of eyes. When I trained Juno, I trained her with all of her commands in Dutch. I did this to avoid confusion when telling Lucas something to do verses giving Juno a command. It's amazing that even though Lucas has only about a 20 word vocabulary, he knows how to say "Blijf" which is her command for stay.

Lucas has a FaceBook page at www.facebook.com/prayingforlucas. I do everything on there from Lucas's perspective. It gives you a chance to see the daily life of a Sanfilippo child though their eyes. I also have a PayPal donate button set-up for donations to his medical spending account. These helps with travel costs for his out of town doctor appointments, non-covered medical items, and of course care and supplies for Juno.

Please stop by and click on the like page and suggest it to your friends. Awareness is the first step towards finding the cure as we continue our goal of 3,000 likes.

If you would like to make donation for research, please visit www.teamsanfilippo.org or you can also learn more at the National MPS Society's page, www.mpssociety.org.





AN INTERVIEW WITH JOSHUA MCCLEARY, 2X WINNER OF N.A.R.A.'S DECOY OF THE YEAR

By Dana Williams
Photos by Jaime Anderson



How long have you been involved in French Ringsport? Do you decoy in any other sports (Schutzhund/Mondioring)?

• I got my start in French Ring through a good friend of mine, Jason Farrish. He encouraged me to certify as a Level II decoy at the NARA WZ Regional Championships in 2008. I was so nervous, then when it was over I was incredibly excited and surprised that I actually passed. I guess that I've come a long way since then. I also certified as a level lid Mondioring Decoy in December of 2008.

What are some of your accomplishments since you've been involved in dogsport?

- French Ring Decoy Level I – Western Zone Regional Championships 2008/Judge Tisserand
- Mondio Ring Decoy Level I – Bulverde, TX December 2008
- French Ring Decoy Level II – Western Zone Regional Championships 2009/Judge Touy
- French Ring Decoy Level III – NARA Championship 2009/Judge Tisserand
- 1st Place NARA Decoy Super Selection 2009
- French Ring Decoy Level III – NARA Championship 2010/Judge Piton
- 1st Place NARA Decoy Super Selection 2010

What kind of work went into certifying to Level 3 Decoy? What was the hardest part of the certification?

- Take a look at my NARA article in the last newsletter on physical conditioning, that's what I do to prepare for the DSS
- The hardest parts of the Level III Certification for me is to hold myself together mentally, focusing clearly on my objectives, and performing in a manner that I know I'm capable of performing. Doing the Decoy Super Selection and the NARA championship in the same weekend in 2010 was incredibly difficult. I knew that I would need to have a solid mental state all weekend long in order to do well.

You have been selected NARA Decoy of the Year twice now. What is the "Decoy of the Year" and how does one earn this award?

- The title of "Decoy of the Year" is awarded to the decoy that wins the NARA decoy super selection. What kind of preparation goes into preparing for a Decoy Super Selection?

What kind of test are decoys put through (physical test, written test, etc)?

- Again please take a look at my article in last quarters NARA newsletter.

Do you go on any particular diet or exercise regime to prepare for an event?

- No specific diet but definitely exercise.

Who are some of the people who have been influential in helping you get to where you are in the sport?

My GF Asheley Winters has long been my largest supporter and has helped me more than I'll ever be able to express in one article. Jason Farrish has been my constant training partner and local competition for as long as I've been in dogs sports. We push each other to achieve more every time we work together.



You have worked a number of big trials ... which dogs have been the most impressive to work and why?

- I'm most impressed with the dogs that are able to pass their respective levels. FR is incredibly difficult and any dog that can hold their routine together and pass a level has earned my respect. Other than that I really don't make distinction between dogs I'm impressed with and dogs that I'm not.

FROM THE PRESIDENT, ANNE CAMPER

Welcome back to the AWMA newsletter! We've had a year without one, and with the help of our new editor, Dana Williams, we hope to be back on track with quarterly publication. Shari Lipski has volunteered to continue with formatting, so with this team we'll do our best to keep on schedule.

I went through the records on club business over the past year so that I could update all of you on the board's activities. It reminded me to inform you that all of the votes for the organization are listed in the news section of the discussion forum. In the interest of transparency, the motions under consideration are provided while the votes are in progress with an explanation for the action being taken. If you have an opinion on a motion, please feel free to contact any of the board members or post on the discussion forum. As another mechanism for ensuring disclosure, we are providing a listing of the names of board members who voted for or against a motion after it the closing date for the poll. The board is here to represent all of you, and this is just one way to keep you informed.

Quite a bit of activity has occurred with respect to AWMA judges. I am pleased to report that we currently have three apprentice judges; Cynthia Zimmerman, Christopher Smith, and Dana Miller. Cynthia is well into her program, and was busy out on the tracking fields that the AWDF Championship. It is important that we have a strong base of AWMA judges so that we can support the efforts of our organization. This has recently become even more important with the decision by Nathaniel Roque to withdraw from being an AWMA judge and the decision by Glenn Stephenson to step down as our Director of Judges. Because we have no fully sanctioned AWMA judges, we are currently unable to fill that position and perform the duties of the DOJ and Judges Committee as per our by-laws. Consequently, the existing Judges Committee will function as the DOJ for purposes of trial authorizations and other duties and the executive board position will remain open until such time as there is a qualified and willing person to serve in that role. We have also revised the requirements to become an AWMA judge. You can find the full description on the website under "judges requirements." The major change is the removal of the prior requirement to have a score of 260 at the Nationals.

The AWDF has been investigating mechanisms to ensure that there is a level of consistency in judging between all of the member organizations. To that end, there has been an agreement to have judges and apprentice judges from all AWDF member clubs attend the judges college in August hosted by USCA where Frans Jansen from the FCI Working Commission will provide information on the new IPO rules. The AWMA board has agreed to provide the resources to cover the fees for our apprentices to participate. At present, Christopher Smith and Cynthia Zimmerman are planning to attend.

For those of you who kept track of the action, the AWMA had a good showing at the AWDF Championship in Kentucky. Hosts for the event were John (Mohawk) Wiitanen and Paula Daigle and the AWMA club Motor City Working Dogs, and I would like to thank them for all the work that they put into the event. . This was a huge undertaking with a large entry of near 125 entries. The AWMA had a total of 25 entries, or over 10% of our total membership. At the end of the event, the champion was Edison ot Vitosha and Mark Natinsky. First place IPO 2 was Deb Krsnich and Shock Troop's Extreme Duty. First place FH 2 was Don Cates and Windrush Jami's Takela. In the end, AWMA had the second place team in the team challenge. All of the results can be found at www.schutzhund2010.org/competitors.html.

We also had a great team represent us at this year's FMBB. For the first time, the agility team was open to all Belgian Shepherds. Agility team members were Kim Buchanan and Sprite's Entertaining Choice "Emmy", , Chris Libs and Rumba du Volant, Shari Lipski and Amara von der Eichenquelle & Tisa du Banc des Hermelles. The IPO team was Sean Rivera and Daneskjold Iron, John Soares and Vion La Maschera Di Ferro, Benny Barmapov and Master De Alphaville Bohemia, Marina Shukh and L'Simba Du Loups Du Soleil, Brian Hendricks and Uras La Maschera Di Ferro, and Christopher Kutelis and Mecberger Hegel. The team captain was Michelle Kutelis. In the end, John and Sean placed very well in 6th and 7th place respectively. Congratulations to the entire team and in particular to John and Sean. And I would specifically like to thank Shari Lipski for all the hard work she does with organizing all the details to ensure that our team is coordinated and prepared for the event.

Speaking of national and international events, the 2011AWMA National Championship is scheduled to take place Sept. 30-Oct. 2 in Leland, Illinois. The event is being hosted by Global K-9 and Rik Wolterbeek and with Al Govednik as the primary point of contact.

[cont'd. on page 7]





NOTE TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC: BELGIAN MALINOIS, LOOK DON'T TOUCH

BY FRANCIS METCALF

I know what you are thinking. Since a Belgian Malinois was used by Navy Seal Team Six on the raid of the Bin Laden compound, it would make a perfect family pet. Just park it in the living room next to your Apache Helicopter!

The work of the Belgian Malinois in Bin Laden's assassination placed a spotlight on the breed likely to spike the breed's popularity. Think of it as the 101 Dalmatians effect. Think of Creulla De Ville in *Fauve Charbonné* (the top-secret Malinois coat color).

The fact is **Malinois do not make good pets**, as they are strictly working and sporting dogs. If you are NOT already involved with dog sport, you should not get a Malinois. (I said that ten years ago, and I'll say it again—Malinois do not make good pets).

Who should get a Malinois?

1. Do you dream day and night of improving your performance as a dog trainer?
2. Do you have reflexes like a Chimpanzee? Can you take a punch without feeling the need to retaliate?
3. Are you calm in the face of embarrassment, danger, and even chaos? Can you remain calm around a very hyper dog?
4. Do you want a dog that can't and won't be a couch potato? A DOG JUST FOR TRAINING?
5. Do you have at least 2-hours per day to devote to training and exercise?
6. Do you have access to a Ringsport or Schutzhund club where you can find a mentor?
7. Are you versed in positive and negative training modalities?
8. Are you willing to put canine performance before your own physical and psychological comfort?

If you answer these questions with a round clear YES, you have what it takes to become a Malinois Handler.

Hard Dogs, Soft Arts

If you think a Malinois is perfect for Agility, Rally, Obedience, or Herding, think again. Be smart and get a Border Collie. Border Collies are ideal dogs for sports not requiring bite work. Malinois are designed for Hard Arts like: French Ring, Belgian Ring, Mondioring, Schutzhund and KNPV. Sure, they also excel in

non-bitework competitions. But drive-building, grip-development, and stimulus-control techniques make the Malinois Temperment complete.

Malinois temperament

When we speak about Malinois temperament, we mean a temperament for work. The Malinois is highly trainable, totally driven, and immensely responsive to outside factors, unlike a breed with a phlegmatic temperament such as the Labrador or Pit Bull, for example.

If you are not a relaxed, happy person who loves physical activity, and has a willingness to take a challenge head on, life will not go well for your Malinois puppy. No doubt it will evolve into a simpering-anti-social-fear-biting-paranoid-walking-liability and *not* the k9 super hero it was meant to be!

Tempered Steel

When a blacksmith makes a sword he heats raw ore until it's red hot, and then shapes it into form. The sword remains soft and pliable, useless for its purpose, until the Smith tempers the blade by successive heatings and coolings. Thus causing a molecular alignment that hardens the edge. By this process, too, the Malinois trainer tempers a Malinois in the forge of Ring.

Every Malinois starts off soft. Eventually, as he matures, if the dog is not tempered through work, he will either end up out of control or fearful.

The trainer taps into the pups drives, heating the steel, and gradually exposing the pup to stressors. Eventually, as he matures, the trainer brings the pup from the euphoric prey drive state to a state of control and focus, metaphorically tempering the steel. This plunging from hot to cold, lends the Malinois its solid temperament.

[cont'd. on page 6]



[cont'd. from page 5] After years of daily training, your Malinois can show the same temperament as a Lab or German Shepherd, yet have the sharpness to work. This is how a dog with the bidability of a Border Collie becomes able to perform in stressful environments such as found in Middle East war zones. It is the trainer's job to insure good temperament. This happens through work, mostly bite work and character development that are part of the Ringsport foundation. No surprise to students of the breed—since Malinois and Ringsport evolved together.

If you are interested in dog sports, start with your own dog, and work up to a Malinois. Even in my household where Malinois are part of our lifestyle, we have them for training and not as pets. Our other dogs are pets.

So, if the dog recruited for the raid on the Bin Laden complex sparked your imagination, before you go out and get one, be aware of the commitment it takes to live with and train a Belgian Malinois.

Two Paths Diverge

If you need a dog for your secret-mission or life-journey or coming-of-age, I recommend a pit bull from a shelter. Teach and learn from him as best you can. Use this dog as your guide. Ask him if you are seeking emotional comfort or the honesty of the hunt. Both inclinations express your love for dogs. But check your priorities. The type of dog you get will decide your path for the next decade.

Emotional Comfort and psychic protection

Nothing is more comforting to the lone hominid than the company of a dog. A furry shoulder to cry on, a best friend that sees you at your worst without passing judgment. This is one of the pure joys of having a dog. This is the path most dog lovers travel. There is a dog waiting out there to share this vision with you. He is loving, protective and stable. He is in a shelter BUT he is NOT a Malinois.

Honesty of the Hunt

Some of us feel a need to go deeper into the human-canine relationship. We want to become a wolf pack or run with a pride of lions. We want to see the honesty of instinctual behavior. We want to control it, and be controlled by it. Our path is similar to that of the Hunter and Farmer who provide their own meal even if it means discomfort.



Malinois are steely workers eager to please if you can meet their needs, they do not make a good shoulder to cry on until you have tempered them through years of work. The motivation of the Malinois handler differs from that of the pet dog lover. The Malinois Handler derives his joy from witnessing an animal engaged in the hunt, an animal at the peak of his health and power. We do not wish to see a subservient animal weakened by human domination. Ringsport and Malinois allow us to take part in the predators epic journey, not as spectators, not from behind a lens but as an equal partner.

For many of us who live in urban areas, being a hunter or a farmer is unrealistic and not pertinent to our existence. The bullet holes in the street sign in front of my house speak of a different world. Unfortunately, it is a world where protection from one another is more in the zeitgeist than pursuing your own game or rounding up sheep.

People who seek to work with this predatory energy now have a modern option. Thanks to a handful of visionary trainers on the border of war-torn Belgium, the art of Ringsport has risen from the ashes of the agricultural economy. The unemployed shepherd found work guarding his human flock, and a new type of working dog discipline was founded.

This happened 100 years ago. Since then the knowledge of how to work a Malinois has been passed from master to apprentice. The knowledge was not passed in writing, on video, not even verbally. It was passed through participation. The breed, the techniques, the selection process, the genetics, the sport is passed down by doing. The dog and the sport are inseparable. This is why if you wish to learn the secrets of the Malinois, you will not learn them at Lackland Airforce Base or at the AKC dog show. Instead you must subject yourself to humiliation of the trial field, you must show your hard work and dedication before the secrets are revealed.

If you choose to take the Ringsport/ Malinois path you will not get much help on your journey. Your family and friends will not understand the hours of dedication it will take.

In Belgium and France almost every town has a Ringsport club. In America where the Ringsport/Malinois scene is still in its infancy, you must be self motivated, and autodidactic. When around experienced trainers, keep your mouth shut and your eyes open. Prove yourself by doing, not by talking.

[cont'd. on page 9]





DAVID GREENE'S TIPS ON OBEDIENCE TRAINING

In the last three years, David Greene and his dog, Luigi Du Dantero, have won high obedience scores for the 2009, 2010 and 2011 Southwest Regional Competitions. They've also earned back-to-back-to-back championships.



Yes, that's three times!

For Greene, there have been three top things that have helped both he and Luigi in obedience: accuracy, consistency, and discipline.

Greene introduced formal obedience to Luigi after he was over a year old.

"Everyone has a different theory," Greene said. "But for me, I wanted to develop a very strong, powerful dog in protection before doing obedience."

Greene said that he did teach Luigi the typical sit, down and come commands early on with a food reward, but the stricter obedience, wasn't done until later. The wait period was also to develop a solid working and trusting relationship.

"I established this relationship with Luigi by playing with him and through our day to day life together - it's like we became a pack and we still are."

For Greene, accuracy means envisioning a perfect picture in your mind about what you are training for in obedience and don't settle for less.

"When I need a spotter, I rely on a friend who tells me if Luigi's performance was right on," he said. "I don't train without a spotter - it means everything when it comes to accuracy."

When accuracy is achieved, consistency comes next. By doing an exercise repeatedly and keeping the accuracy in check, the consistency will follow. Greene wants people to know that discipline isn't just for Luigi - it's for him, too.

"My discipline includes sticking to a strict routine and schedule," he said. "Knowing what my goals are helps me stay disciplined."

By Christiana Greene



Photos by Kadi Thingvall

[cont'd. from page 4]

I am grateful that Al stepped forward to host the Championship since repeated inquiries hadn't revealed a club willing to take this on. The website for the event can be found at www.2011AWMANationals.com. Details are being finalized and the website will contain all the pertinent information. Please consider a trophy donation; I know that the hosts will appreciate your support.

In conjunction with the Championship is our annual general board meeting. We need your club's representative there to so we can have the required quorum. Please make sure that your club's dues are paid and then select your delegate and alternate. To be seated at the meeting, the delegate and alternate must have a letter of appointment signed by two club officers. This process replaces the prior mechanism that required submission of a letter thirty days in advance of the meeting.

We are also slated for elections for regional directors this year. In the near future, clubs should be receiving notification of elections. You do not need to be a member of a local club to run for this office. If you have an interest in serving as regional director and as a member of the executive board, contact your current regional director so your name can be included on the ballot.

There are just a few more things I'd like to bring to your attention. We have changed the qualifications for the IPO 3 club so that IPO 3 titles earned under any AWDF performance judge are now accepted. Consider joining if your dog has attained this title and have your name listed on our IPO 3 club page. Memberships were due on June 1, so please send those in if you haven't done so already. If you need a scorebook, apply for it in ample time. We are now set up to do rush orders for both, but they cost extra, so it is in your best interest to handle this in advance. Dana Williams (membership) and Terry Miller (secretary, scorebooks) do the best they can to get things out to you, but keep in mind that they and all the other members of the board are unpaid volunteers who have obligations outside of AWMA.

I'd also like to recognize the generosity of several people who have provided substantial financial assistance to the organization. You know who you are, and we are grateful for your support. We have also been fortunate to have several new groups sponsor banner ads on the website. To show your support for their contributions to the AWMA, visit their websites and consider a purchase from them.

In closing, I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter. All the best for training throughout the remainder of the summer, and I hope to see many of you at the end of September in Illinois at the Championship either as a competitor or spectator.



HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

BY AMARA VON DER EICHENQUELLE

Hi! I'm Amara and I'm four people years old. This was the best summer yet! In May I had the best time traveling with my mom, Shari, to the mother-country. Wow! When she said we were going to a dog show, she wasn't kidding. I thought I've seen everything, but nothing like this. Malinois, Tervurens, Groenendaels, and Laekenois everywhere you looked. NO BORDER COLLIES! *[For those of you that have been to an agility trial, you know what I'm talking about].* It was awesome! I got to ride on a huge flying tuna can and scare the crap out of the baggage handlers in two languages—it was so cool!

Why was I there? I was a member of the AWMA's Agility World Team with two other team members, Emmy and Rumba. Emmy is a five year old Tervuren, trying to hide her Malinois tendencies—but that's another story, and Rumba is a seven year old male Groenendael. That's a funny name... 'gro-nen-dal'. Sounds like he pulled something—LOL. It was the three of us competing in agility and five studs on the IPO team, Vion, Master, Bruce, Uras, and Mauno. Sounds like a Russian soccer team—LOL.

The AWMA sends a team to the Federation Mondiale du Berger Belge, FMBB for short, each year to compete in various disciplines, such as IPO, Mondio, and Agility. 'What is the FMBB?' It's the world organization for the Belgian Shepherd Dog. This was the 17th year the Championships were held. There were over 600 dogs from 29 countries that came to visit the land of their ancestors.

This year the event was held in the mother country in a city called Nieuwpoort, Belgium, which boasts the largest yacht port of Northern Europe. We rented a three bedroom house less than a mile from the event and from the ocean. A lot of teams stayed at this resort village. I wasn't too thrilled with the ocean, the water tasted funny. Our house in Illinois has a lake and its fresh water—that's so much better. My mom has friends in Holland so we got to go compete in agility at the NVBH's breed specialty show the weekend before. The NVBH is similar to the ABMC in the U.S. I did really good. I hit all my contacts and was really fast. My mom thought I was going to do the same at the Championships, did I fool her. Those yellow contacts that she's always screaming at me about will electrify you if you're not careful. That's why I usually jump them; I don't want to get hurt. I have my agility career to think of. There were lots of funny looking spinning things in Holland. It was like trying to chase a squirrel. I wanted to chase them but mom kept telling me to platz. I hate platz. It's like bleib. I don't understand the purpose of either of them. Life's too short for platz and bleib. I like frei and packen—oohhh can I say that on this forum?

Hey, why don't you try out for a team sometime? You get to travel across the pond, meet really interesting, funny smelling people, and their dogs, and there truly is nothing like the fun and excitement of the FMBB. You know next year it's supposed to be in Rome, Italy. The host club is looking to hold the event on the equestrian grounds that were used during the 2006 Olympics just south of Rome. That should be gorgeous. Finland asked to host the event in 2013, Slovenia in 2014, and the Czech Republic in 2015.

Oh, I almost forgot...the AWMA Board would like to thank you for being a member and we value your thoughts and comments as we strive to make your association a continued success. Please feel free to contact anyone on the board with questions or comments or to volunteer for an event, committee, or just to help out!

Thanks for reading my article and I hope you enjoy the photos we took. Maybe I'll see you at the AWMA National Championship, September 30th – October 2nd, in Leland, Illinois. Mom has to go to the board meeting so I will be bored in the car—get it!!

I wish you and your handler, the greatest success in DogSport.

—See ya when I see ya.

"They should have had towels."





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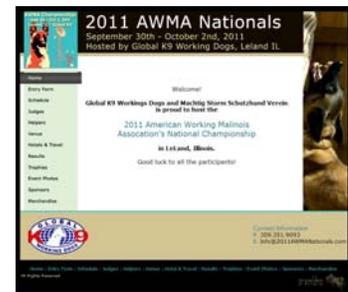
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THE 2011
AWMA NATIONAL
CHAMPIONSHIP
WEBSITE IS
READY TO GO!
CHECK IT OUT AT:

[WWW.2011AWMA
NATIONALS.COM](http://WWW.2011AWMA
NATIONALS.COM)



[cont'd. from page 6]

Learn as much as you can from the internet, but remember the Ringsport path is for the experiential trainer, not the book-worm. You must live it to learn it.

If this resonates with you, then I hope this article will lead you in the right direction. I hope you will find a working dog and make a connection that transcends the saccharine world of pet dogs. If you are like me, you will find out how sweet it is to roam from field to field learning to master your training skills and face your fears. One of my mentors Jean Jauques Jarardo told me that "Ringsport is a kind of therapy, the macho man gains humility, and the Wallflower gains confidence" I would add that some people become egomaniacs too. The Ring has different effects on different people.

I hope that those still reading will become what I call "Ringsport Citizens". We are people who use the knowledge gained from working Malinois in Ringsport to make the world a better place. We do this by helping people overcome their issues with dog aggression and behavior problems, and by training dogs that help serve humanity. Perhaps one of the most important things we do is take part in a system that maintains a population of dogs who are not deformed by the show ring and remain useful in an ever changing world.

If you are still dead set on getting a Malinois, here are some links to organizations that promote Ringsports, www.RingSport.org and CanadianRingSport.com. The NVBK is a Belgian organization widely considered to have the best working bloodlines, www.NVBK.org. By following these links and by attending events sponsored by the various clubs, you can begin your journey.

Good luck!

*For more information on author Francis Metcalf, please check out
Friends of the Family Dog Training at www.friendsofthefamily.info
or view his blog at bayareadogtrainer.wordpress.com*