

Rural Hill

17th Annual Sheep Dog Trials

Special Bulletin - 2011

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Bring your family, friends, and your canine pals to Rural Hill for one of the area's best known dog events - the 17th Annual RURAL HILL SHEEPDOG TRIALS AND DOG FESTIVAL on November 12 & 13.

Many of the world's best and brightest border collies will be on hand to perform with their owner their sheep herding skills. Non-competing dogs are welcomed but must remain leashed and under their owner's control.

Sanctioned by the United States Border Collies Handlers Association, the Rural Hill Sheepdog Trials are open to any herding breeds, but the majority of entries are Border Collies. The Trials are based on tasks that a working dog is asked to do on the farm. Points are earned for each phase of work. The dog and handler team is awarded points for demonstrating precision in the time allowed. One of 13 dog breeds that developed in Scotland, the Border Collie first appeared in the Border country of Scotland in the 1700's.

In addition to the regional sheepdog competition, Rural Hill will offer a variety of family activities including the Dog Sport Demo Field presented by the Greater Charlotte Sheltie Club, a bounce house and inflatables, hayrides around the farm, an antique tractor display, Pumpkin Chunkin' with a model of an 11th century trebuchet (bring our leftover Halloween pumpkin or purchase one at Rural Hill), logic mazes, the Rural Hill Highland Cattle, and more!

The 1760's Davidson Family Homestead site will be open for visitors with open hearth cooking and blacksmith demonstrations. Food and beverages will also be available for purchase.



Gates open each day at 8 AM. Admission is \$10 per person ages 13+, \$7 per child ages 5-12, children ages 4 and under are admitted free.

Proceeds from annual events are used for the preservation of Historic Rural Hill and its educational programs.

About the Sheepdog

Balance. Power. Style and More

A sheepdog trial is designed to test not just the dog's obedience to his handler's commands—important as that is—but also his inborn working ability. Although these trials are open to all breeds, rarely will you see anything but a Border Collie competing at this level. That's because the Border Collie is a breed specifically developed to have the qualities to be useful partners.

One of the most important qualities is balance, the dog's innate sense of where he has to be to keep the livestock together and make them go where he wants them to and/or keep them from going where he doesn't want them to.

Power is the ability to make sheep do what they don't want to do. It's probably made up of determination, confidence, courage and moral authority. It includes bite when absolutely necessary, but you will rarely see a dog bite here (and if he does he will likely be disqualified). A dog with real power is not just one who can face down challenges to his authority, but is actually less likely to be challenged in the first place.



Style is the dog's physical manner of working, mainly the combination of posture and stare that we call "eye." He needs to have enough eye to maintain contact with his sheep and evoke their respect.

Physical traits are important—he must have the sight, hearing, speed, agility, stamina and strength to get the job done. But mental and emotional traits are even more important. He must have the intelligence to understand his training, to generalize, and to learn from experience. He needs the initiative to take charge when the situation requires it, and the biddability to take direction when it contradicts his instincts. He must be able to size up a situation quickly and respond to sudden changes.

Finally, he must have the keenness and character to keep working and not give up when it's hot and he's tired and people are hollering and he's a little confused and the sheep are fighting him every step of the way.



Rural Hill extends a special

THANK YOU

to its Community Partners:

Bojangles, McIntosh Law Firm, Mountain Khakis, Comfort Suites, Highland Brewing Company, Eno, Fairfield Inn, The Kilted Buffalo, Town of Huntersville, Mecklenburg County Parks & Recreation, The Real Yellow Pages, Midas Spring Water, Hauser Rental, Bubba's BBQ, EyeBenders Media, and Lynn Ladder and Scaffolding.

The History of Dog Trials

On October 9, 1873, in Bala, Wales, 300 spectators braved the wet and cold to witness the earliest recorded dog trial. They saw a Scotsman best all other competitors, who were Welsh, to take top honors. Trials quickly gained popularity with the first Scottish trial in the early 1870's and the first English trials in 1876. In 1906 the International Sheepdog Society was founded to bring organization to the trialing world and to "improve the breed of the collie with a view to the better management of stock." After World War I, the term, "Border Collie," was adopted to distinguish the working collie from the show collie.

American trialing began with Philadelphia's 1880 centennial year celebration. The first U.S. "official" sheepdog trial, however, occurred in 1928 in Bennington, Vermont where 1500 people gathered to watch a competition among seven dogs. Since then, event and attendance numbers have risen dramatically. Over the past twenty years, stockmen and spectators alike have discovered the challenges of the new sport. Across the country hundreds of trials are now held throughout the year. The National Finals, sponsored by the United States Border Collie Handlers' Association and the American Border Collie Association, is run annually to select our country's champion herding dogs.



About Rural Hill

Rural Retreat, as it was first established, was the homestead of Major John and Violet Davidson. John Davidson served in the American Revolution and was one of the original signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. The small homestead ultimately developed into a thriving plantation. Today, Rural Hill is a restoration in progress. There are 265 acres of magnificent rural vistas, farm animals and walking trails throughout the site.

Rural Hill is open to the public Monday through Saturday and offers a variety of activities such as guided tours, self-guided walking tours, many education programs and our two and a half mile hiking trail. Reservations are encouraged. *Please note:* These activities may be suspended during our special events that are held throughout the year.

For a complete calendar of events, please visit us at www.ruralhill.net. or give us a call - 704.875.3113.

Rural Hill

SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL SHEEPDOG TRIALS AND DOG FESTIVAL



BEST EVER!

Saturday and Sunday
November 12 - 13
8am - 5pm
Pets Welcome!

SATURDAY

8 AM - Gates Open. Sheep Dog Trials - Open Class Competition all day

8 AM - 5 PM

Hayride around the site (\$2 per person). Punkin' Chunkin,' cornfield maze and logic mazes. Dog Sport Demo Field. Davidson 1760's Rural Hill Homestead and Living History demonstrations.

SUNDAY

8 AM - Gates Open. Sheep Dog Trials - Open Class Competition all day.

10 AM - 5 PM

Hayride around the site (\$2 per person). Punkin' Chunkin,' cornfield maze and logic mazes. Dog Sport Demo Field. Davidson 1760's Rural Hill Homestead and Living History demonstrations.

4 PM - Sheep Dog Trials Competition Concludes

5 PM - Site Closes

Historic Rural Hill



Celebrating 250 years in 2010-2011, Rural Hill is located at 4431 Neck Road (off Beatties Ford Road) in Huntersville, 28078. The former homestead of Major John and Violet Davidson, the 265 acre site is maintained and promoted by Rural Hill, Inc. and features annual events such as the Rural Hill Scottish Festival and Loch Norman Highland Games, the Rural Hill Amazing Maize Maze and the Rural Hill Sheep Dog Trials. Rural Hill, Inc. is a non-profit organization supported through membership and donations, and with proceeds from its events utilized for the preservation of historic Rural Hill and its education efforts. For more information on events or for financial support accepted securely online, please visit www.ruralhill.net.