

# THIS ONE'S FOR ALL THE DOGS



PHOTOS BY KEVIN JOHNSON — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Dogs large and small perform tricks with their owners during a Santa Cruz Dog Training Club presentation at Soquel High on Sunday during the annual C-DOG Spring Dog Festival.

Annual event offered demonstrations, games while promoting creation of off-leash exercise options

Events -

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**SOQUEL »** After countless pre-dawn walks and thankless covert poop-scooping off neighbors' yards, more than a thousand area dogs returned the favor to their owners on Sunday.

Capitola resident Sandy Rich even called the Spring Dog Festival a "date" with her 7-year-old bluetick walker hound Rome.

"This is a beautiful place, and I live in Capitola and like to support local (ventures)," Rich said while she watched dogs and humans dancing to the latest hits

during a Santa Cruz Dog Training Club presentation.

The annual festival — a sort of dog owners' social where canines large and small mingle — drew thousands to the fields behind Soquel High School under sunny skies. A chain of information booths shared space with three large enclosed rings featuring dog herding, lure coursing and dog obedience demonstrations. The most coveted event, lure coursing, had first-timers and more experienced canines chasing a rag around a ring like it was the largest, juiciest steak they had ever seen.

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Four-year-old pit bull Minnie chases a lure around a makeshift track at Soquel High on Sunday afternoon during the annual C-DOG Spring Dog Festival.

**"It's the United Nations for dogs. ... This is for people who don't do trained sports. This is for the pets."**

— C-DOG president Sandi Pensinger



# Dogs

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While many queued up for the race course, the 1,500 dogs expected to turn out for the event trotted nearby in various states of dress, like their human companions — some casual, others all decked out.

Toffee, a 2-year-old Jack Russell mix rescued from San Francisco had the hair on his back dyed in rainbow shades. Human companion and groomer Mel Lion from Watsonville said Toffee takes the dye-job as a treat, because he gets to sit through a dedicated session with the heat dryer.

In addition to Toffee, accompanying Lion were fellow small dogs Henry, wearing a kerchief and sparkling collar, and Penguin, a toy poodle going milky-eyed and blind from age, and missing his left foot from his puppy mill days, Lion said.

"I come here every year," Lion said during a break from her browsing. "I like the lure coursing a lot, and the photos and just walking around and mingling with people and their dogs. It's a nice way to get with a lot of other dog-friendly dogs and people. This is more of a social for humans."



KEVIN JOHNSON — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

A dog performs tricks at the C-DOG Spring Dog Festival at Soquel High on Sunday.

Event organizer, the Capitola-based Coastal Dog Owners Group (C-DOG), uses the festival to forward its stated goals of helping to preserve and create off-leash exercise options for dogs. Sunday's festival also offered opportunities to show off dogs in need of adopting, photo opportunities atop grounded surfboards, obstacle courses, a kissing booth and more. The fundraiser also will funnel some

of its proceeds into area nonprofits like the Santa Cruz Library's Tales to Tails Literacy Program that bolsters children's literacy.

C-DOG president Sandi Pensinger said donations are made by way of "volunteer equity" with greater proceeds going to organizations with the greatest involvement at the festival.

"We have a system where people can interact and play

all day," Pensinger said of the latest iteration of the festival, which includes stamping "passports" at each of the vendor booths, many with international themes. "It's the United Nations for dogs. ... This is for people who don't do trained sports. This is for the pets."

For more information on the Spring Dog Festival and C-DOG, visit [coastaldogs.com](http://coastaldogs.com).