

## WELCOME TO HAUTE DAWGS!

<http://www.hautedawgs.org/>

Haute Dawgs Agility Group began in 1990, when a number of people who trained together in obedience became interested in this new sport of agility and came together to “play”. Many of these charter members were also into the sport of tracking and incidentally liked to eat. After obedience class one evening they gathered for dinner and Betty Blake asked if those assembled would like to join a new agility club so that they might put on an agility trial. The discussion then turned to what to name the new group and with the group’s fondness for both food and tracking, and hot dogs being the then most common food drop in tracking, someone suggested that it be called Hot Dogs Agility. Carol Foster thought the name should have a little more class than that, so she suggested that hot be spelled “haute”. Someone else, being silly, suggested that dogs should be spelled “dawgs” and a new club was born. Little did they realize that first night just how large the club would become and how fast it would grow.

Haute Dawgs first USDAA trial took place on a Saturday morning and consisted of only a Starters class. There were less than 10 entries. Our trials today take up an entire weekend and entries number in the hundreds. The group initially worked in Fair Oaks, moved to North Sacramento and subsequently found a home in North Highlands for more than five years. The club currently trains in Orangevale and other locations in the greater Sacramento area. In addition to Sacramento, active members come from a number of cities, not limited to Oakland, Vacaville, Dixon, Davis, Cameron Park, El Dorado Hills, Shingle Springs, Placerville, Somerset, Auburn, Roseville, North Highlands, Orangevale, Citrus Heights and Carmichael. Although diverse in area of residence, we all share a great love of dogs and the sport of agility.

As a potential new member, we are sure you have a number of questions. We hope that the following will provide information of interest to you. **(If your membership becomes effective after the 1st day of September, your dues will be applied to the following year.** Essentially, your membership is free for the last 4 months of the year.)

-Our bi-monthly newsletter, The Contact Zone is available to members only on our website. Submissions from the membership are always welcome.

-After you become a member, you will be given two yellow Haute Dawgs T-shirts. We ask that you wear these shirts to club trials so that you may be easily identifiable as a club member. If you consistently volunteer for club functions, the club will provide additional shirts at no cost as required.

-Each member also has the option of purchasing additional shirts (polo shirts, T-shirts, tank tops, long sleeved shirts, etc.) in a variety of colors at a predetermined cost. If you are interested in purchasing additional shirts, please contact our clothing chairperson.

-Each member has the option of purchasing a club jacket in the club colors at a predetermined cost. If you are interested in purchasing a jacket, please contact our clothing chairperson.

-Each member has the option of purchasing a club nameplate with your dog’s name for his crate or exercise pen. If you are interested in purchasing a name plate, please contact our nameplate chairperson.

-Each member may check out books, magazines and videos from the club library. A check for the cost of the item borrowed will be held until the item is returned. Check out is limited to 60 days. If you are interested in checking out a book or video, please contact the librarian.

-The club has a web site loaded with information. We encourage you to visit and learn more about our club. If you have any questions or comments about the web site, please contact the site administrator.

-Haute Dawgs has 4 general membership meetings each year, which you are encouraged to attend, typically scheduled one per calendar quarter.

-The last general membership meeting of each year is the annual meeting (also known as the holiday gathering). Hosted in November or December, participants bring a potluck dish and a gift for the Gift Exchange Game (if you want to play) and share in the celebration of the Holiday Season and the achievements of the members over the past year. At the party, the club gives out Annual Awards, consisting of a small brass plaque for agility titles earned during that calendar year. Those earning their first agility title as a member of Haute Dawgs also receive a 5 x 7 wooden (photograph) frame to which the title plaques can be attached. Unfortunately, dogs are generally not invited.

-Haute Dawgs offers classes from early spring through late fall. All classes are held in the evening. Preference is given over the general public to any member who desires to participate in training classes on a first come, first served basis. If you are interested in getting on the waiting list for classes, contact the training coordinator.

-Once you have completed a Haute Dawgs agility class (or equivalent) you are welcome to volunteer to assist with classes. Those who actively assist with training classes will have first priority to enroll in classes over those who do not assist.

-The club attempts to offer two USDAA sanctioned events (one in the spring and one in the fall), one event sponsored by NADAC, one event sponsored by CPE and two or three fun matches each year. The sanctioned events offer both members and nonmembers the opportunity to earn qualifying scores toward titles for their dogs and matches offer opportunities for additional practice on courses without the pressure of working for qualifying runs. Members are encouraged to volunteer to work at club trials and matches as they are wonderful opportunities to learn about the sport and get to know other members. If you are interested in working at a trial or a match, contact the trial chief ring steward, the trial secretary or the match chair (any of whom can direct you to an appropriate individual).

-The corporate powers of the club are vested in the Board of Directors consisting of five (5) Officers and five (5) Directors who are elected from the general membership at the annual membership meeting. In the fall of each year volunteers are requested to serve as President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Training Director or Director at Large for the following year. Descriptions of these positions can be found in the Articles of Incorporation and members who are interested in any of the positions are encouraged to contact the incumbent regarding responsibilities, requirements and time commitment involved.

-It takes more than just a board of directors to run a club. Committee chairpersons are listed in both the Contact Zone and on the web site and members are encouraged to contact them if they might be interested in participating. The more people that become actively involved, the less the burden falls on just a few individuals.

## Why Should I Join Haute Dawgs?

As an active member of the club people often ask me "why should I join Haute Dawgs?". Although there are a number of different answers to this question, one reason to join Haute Dawgs is the people. People who care, people who share, people who understand just how you feel about your dog. People who are willing to help and who make all the effort we put into this sport worthwhile. People who delight in your successes and victories, people who are just plain fun and know how to have a good time.

Some of the best friends I've ever had I've met through being a member of Haute Dawgs. Just think, you have at your disposal anywhere from 60 to 80 people who are passionate about this sport and are ready and eager to share their knowledge and experiences with you. Go to a match or a trial and there are any number of members who are willing and able to assist you through the entire process and who love to get together to work their dogs. They make for a tremendous support group. You receive information which is priceless and which is difficult if not impossible to find elsewhere.

However, there is another very good reason to join Haute Dawgs and that is a love of the sport of agility. If you enjoy classes, fun matches and trials then you need to support the entities that offer these opportunities - you need to join an agility club. Agility is a labor-intensive sport and volunteers are always needed and appreciated. Without the agility clubs, there would be fewer classes, matches and trials, fewer opportunities for you to do what you love - agility.

Back in 1996 I wrote that someone should join Haute Dawgs "so you can move heavy equipment; sand, paint and hammer; type, print, cut and stuff; make frantic phone calls; stay up half the night getting things done at the last minute; rise before 5:00 in the morning to finish what didn't get done the night before; operate at a run for days at a time; and load and unload the trailer at least 4 times within 72 hours". Although we've streamlined procedures quite a bit in the last 7 years and often don't have to work as hard as we used to, if we are to continue to enjoy this marvelous sport we need to band together with others who are willing to become a part of the process. The sport of Agility needs you and we hope you will consider joining Haute Dawgs today. (Membership application forms may be downloaded from <http://www.hautedawgs.org>. Just follow the links.)

By Donna D'Amico, President  
Haute Dawgs Agility Group  
<http://www.hautedawgs.org>