

Inland Empire Collie Club

Summer 2026

The TAILWAGGER



Robert Plant and his collie, Strider

About the Cover

Led Zeppelin built its reputation on thunder, myth, and menace. Yet one of the band's most endearing moments came in the form of a rock god writing a love letter to his dog—and setting it to music on an album that would sell in the millions. Beneath the foot-stomping, acoustic drive of the 1970 song “Bron-Y-Aur Stomp” lies a deeply personal story: Robert Plant's bond with a collie named Strider, whose name was inspired by Aragorn's early alias in *The Lord of the Rings*.

“Tell your friends all around the world, ain't no companion like a blue-eyed merle . . . One thing I am sure: it's a friendship so pure. Yeah, ain't but one thing to do—spend my natural life with you. You're the finest dog I knew, so fine.”



How Smart Are Collies?

By Emily Sowulewski

(Edited and shortened for the TailWagger by Sherry McCauley)

Every month, people ask Google, “Are Collies smart?” and “How smart are Collies?” The short answers are yes, Collies are very smart, and they are capable of learning and doing just about anything. Most people inquiring about a particular canine's level of intelligence really want to know how many tricks that dog can do, and if a dog is “biddable.” According to the American Kennel Club, breeds from the herding group (like Collies) tend to be more trainable than certain other groups. Trainability is great! Yet one professor of canine psychology, Stanley Coren, defines at least 3 kinds of intelligence in dogs.

When I asked Collie owners for examples of their dogs' smarts, I noticed a couple of recurring themes. First, Collies rank very high in emotional intelligence and the ability to read people. Second, many people had no idea how intelligent their dogs were until their Collies surprised them by seeing a need and taking the lead. As you read through the little anecdotes below, I hope you will gain a better understanding of Collie intelligence – an intelligence that is often practical and

instinctual, as it exists without the benefit of training. In dire situations, many a “Lassie dog” has literally made the difference between life and death for their people.

Comparing Cousins

Another favorite Google question is, “Are Rough and Smooth Collies as smart as Border Collies?” Border Collies are the workaholics and overachievers of the dog world. Most Rough Collies aren't about that competitive rat race. While they may be just as smart as Border Collies, Rough & Smooth Collies typically are not as motivated as their extremely high-drive cousins. One woman who owns both a Border Collie and a Rough Collie told me that her Border will consistently outperform her Rough, but her Rough definitely has the edge when it comes to understanding what is expected of her.

Selective, Not Stupid

Amelia the Rough Collie guide dog illustrated this tendency perfectly by her obstinate disinterest in learning to offer a paw and shake hands. Did that make her stupid? Of course not! Amelia was 1 of only 2 dogs in her class to

graduate from The Guide Dog Foundation. The rest dropped out. Yet Kolby, Amelia's blind handler, was often asked by the general public if her dog did any tricks. She told me with some exasperation, "I think being a guide dog is a pretty good trick!"

You'll see that some of the Collies in the stories below have won their trick dog titles, among other accolades. But more importantly, you may realize that your dog is smarter than you think. And one day – they may show you just how smart they are.

Brodie My boy Brodie was outside with my granddaughter. She only had one shoe on, so I told her to get it and we would go play. She was whining and complaining that she didn't know where it was, just causing a fuss. Brodie walked in the house, grabbed her shoe, and dropped it beside her. You could see him thinking things through. —Francine Andersen - Vancouver, BC

Daisy My rough collie Daisy, kept coming into my bedroom barking at me. I kept ignoring her till finally she wouldn't be quiet, so I asked her what was wrong. She ran into the living room and into the kitchen, stopping a couple times to make sure I was following her. When we got to the kitchen she stopped and looked at me. I had left the kitchen sink on and the kitchen was full of water and suds. She was so smart! Smarter than I was obviously! —Lori Scott - Fort Myers, Florida

Gustav Once Sir Gustav used his water bowl as a toilet rather than peeing on the floor. (I was late getting back from work one day due to car trouble. Please don't judge.) I can only assume that in his dog brain, Gus must have concluded, "Humans pee in a bowl of water, so if I also pee in a bowl of water – Mom won't mind?" I was speechless when I saw his very yellow bowl. Mind you, Gustav could have peed anywhere in the house, so aiming and eliminating into his bowl instead of against a wall somewhere was a

very deliberate choice. —Emily Sowulewski - Jacksonville, Florida

Juniper Sage My high-drive, Miss Independent pup (13 weeks) is already showing me just how smart she is, and I don't appreciate being outwitted by a baby lol! We started teaching her not to bark at our cats, so when she barked, we would redirect her with a treat and make her lay down. Well, this munchkin broke the system when she walked over to a cat, barked, and then plopped herself in front of me waiting for a treat. —Morgan Bauer-Descourouez - Jacksonville, FL

Glinda My Collie has the equivalent of what people call high emotional IQ. She is really aware of her environment, and she is the most balanced dog I know. She has good social intelligence with other canines and is especially sensitive with humans. She is perfect with children: it is a natural instinct. That is intelligence. Plus, she has beauty too. —Cris Chiaromonte - Richmond Hill, Ontario

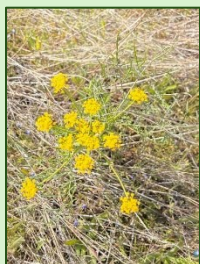
Simon One of my Collies, my tricolor Collie Simon, goes to the woods with me to check my deer cameras. He ALWAYS remembers where they are before I do. He lays down next to the tree until I get there. Simon always has to be with me. If a storm is coming, he doesn't want me out of the yard. He will nudge me with his nose hard to get me back closer to home. —Jessica, Illinois

Hap This past winter, I became very sick with a chest cold. The ordeal was harrowing for everyone in the household, but especially for my Collie, Hap. He would not leave my side, and at night, he slept as tightly packed against my body as he could get. His presence was an indescribable comfort, and his love is a salve to my heart. —Sherry McCauley, Washington

Emily Sowulewski is an avid writer, blogger, and Collie lover who collects and posts stories about Collies from around the world. Submit a story, ask a question, or just say hi; Emily would love to hear from you. www.colliechatter.com

IECC Tracking Test

By Suzanne Schwab & Sherry McCauley



This year's tracking test was met with blue skies and lovely, breezy conditions. Most of the better-recognized wildflowers were still a few days away from blooming, but if one looked closely, one could see the tiny

white flowers of desert parsley blooming everywhere, as well as some lovely yellow biscuitroot—another type of desert parsley, both in the genus *Lomatium*—for any science hippies out there.

The club's efforts were rewarded with three new TD passes. Two of these were local trackers Mike Hamilton and his Labrador Retriever Gator, and Jenny Sontag and her GSD Remington.



Mike and Gator, the latter being recently diagnosed with a serious heart condition, trained for several years for this title, and everyone

there was rooting for them. Most of their track, however, was out of view, and the anticipation of everyone waiting was palpable. Typically, the judges will blow a celebratory series of whistles when a team finds the glove, but this time there was only the ticking of time and silence. When Mike and Gator finally appeared up over the hill, he was simply striding back in his usual casual demeanor. Janet, his wife, finally yelled,

"Well?" He raised the glove into the air, and a broad, sheepish grin spread across his face to the cheers of all present.



glove was straight and to the point. It is rewarding to know they earned their title at our test.



The third TD pass was a young woman full of a rare kind of contagious joy. The picture of her holding the glove high with a wide smile with her golden by her side would be an amazing image silhouetted for a tracking T-shirt. She was a pleasure to have as an entrant in the club's test.

We almost had a collie pass the challenging TDX test, but alas he got pulled off the main track by that devious pair of cross tracks. Happily, that collie did pass two weeks later at a test on the coast.

Many thanks to all the club members and tracking supporters who came out in force April 25-26 to help us put on our spring Tracking Test. Tracking tests require the work

of more people helping at the test than can actually enter, and for the most part only non-exhibitors can help at tests. So, the dedication of our volunteers to put on the event is much appreciated.

Linda Ward hired judges (Lisa Klein and Cheryl Bavister) and arranged lodging, coordinated with BLM to use land for the tests, served as secretary, and was on hand all day for both days to make sure there were drivers getting judges and tracklayers and exhibitors to their tracks on time and being picked up at the end of tracks. Sherry McCauley recruited and organized workers, helped with driving, designed and assembled awards, and was the primary crosstracker for all four TDX's. Suzanne Schwab met with judges on Friday afternoon and gave them the grand tour of our site and was a TDX tracklayer. Teri Liechty was a TD tracklayer, Ric White was always where he needed to be to pick up and transport judges, and Sharen Hunley, Suzi Czarnek, Rain McCauley, were available Saturday and Sunday to drive and make sure no track layer was left behind.



In addition to our IECC members, we had great help from Bill Manion, Venita Aldrich, Tannis Witherspoon, Janet Hamilton, Frank Sommer, and Tanja Klagge as tracklayers and cross trackers.

Tannis Witherspoon also provided lunches for our judges. Mike and Janet Hamilton picked up supplies from Spokane Dog Training Club and assembled over 100 flags to be used for plotting tracks and then returned the truckload

of supplies to the club after the tests. After the tests, we had some delicious sustenance at our first potluck for several years organized by Jenny Sontag, the lovely local tracker who earned one of the TDs.

May all our good workers be rewarded with happy trails before them.



2026 Inland Empire Collie Club Specialty

In Memory of Sandra L Kirsch

Our Memorial Day Weekend Specialty had a healthy entry and gave our members and other collie fanciers from the Pacific Northwest a smoothly run opportunity to show off our many lovely collies. As chair of the event, Linda Ward hired judges, handled all the paperwork with our superintendent, with AKC and the Interstate Fairgrounds, ordered ribbons, transported supplies and challenge trophies and coordinated with the Sheltie Club to arrange judge transportation and hospitality. Caroline Baines put in a long day as ring steward for both shows and kept the classes moving efficiently. Eileen White worked with our trophy provider to put together a gorgeous set of trophies. Suzanne Schwab and Sherry and Rain McCauley were on hand to assist as needed at ringside and help clean up and tear down ringside after the show. Michael Hunley, Suzanne Schwab, and Teri Leichty along with Sheltie Club members Kathy Walshon and Marianne Diehl transported judges between airport, hotel, show, and dinner over the three-day course of their stay. We also appreciate Mary Jane McCall of the Sheltie Club providing lunches for our judges and workers. —*Suzanne Schwab, President*

As a newcomer to conformation showing, I'm still not sure it's for me. What I do know, however, is that our club is truly awesome. Amid the buzz and chaos of setting up grooming areas, preparing collies, keeping track of time, listening for Caroline's calls, watching the judge, and hurrying past one another, there is a tacit cohesion. That feeling comes from the familiarity and respect we share, even when we are standing together in the ring, each hoping our own dog will earn the blue ribbon. I appreciate the small moments of camaraderie and support: whispering to Ali or Chase, "Where do I go in the lineup?"; giggling together while we wait to reenter the ring; having Eileen and Sharen help me with grooming; Sharon Holden's quiet strength and gentle smile nearby, and receiving Caroline's ringside guidance. That spirit of mutual support was the part of the event I appreciated most. We could not do what we do without each other or without our shared love for the breed. Whatever differences may or may not exist outside the collie world, within it we are family. —*Sherry McCauley, Newsletter Editor*



2025 Good Sportsmanship Award

Spoken at the Specialty by last year's award recipient, Bobbie Graves.

Each year, the Inland Empire Collie Club recognizes one member who exemplifies the finest spirit of sportsmanship. In the dog world, a good sport is supportive of all participants in various dog activities, both during competitive events and behind the scenes, and always places the well-being of their canine partner ahead of their own competitive goals. Our recipient this year has embodied those qualities in every respect—through her assistance at events such as the tracking test, her service on the board, and her many contributions to the Collie Rescue. She assists fellow club members with her availability and skills to help us achieve our goals as a club. Her contributions have been recognized as a valuable asset to all of us. It is my pleasure to present Susi Czarnek with this medal of appreciation for demonstrating the spirit of Sportsmanship we all reach for.

Congratulations Susi!!



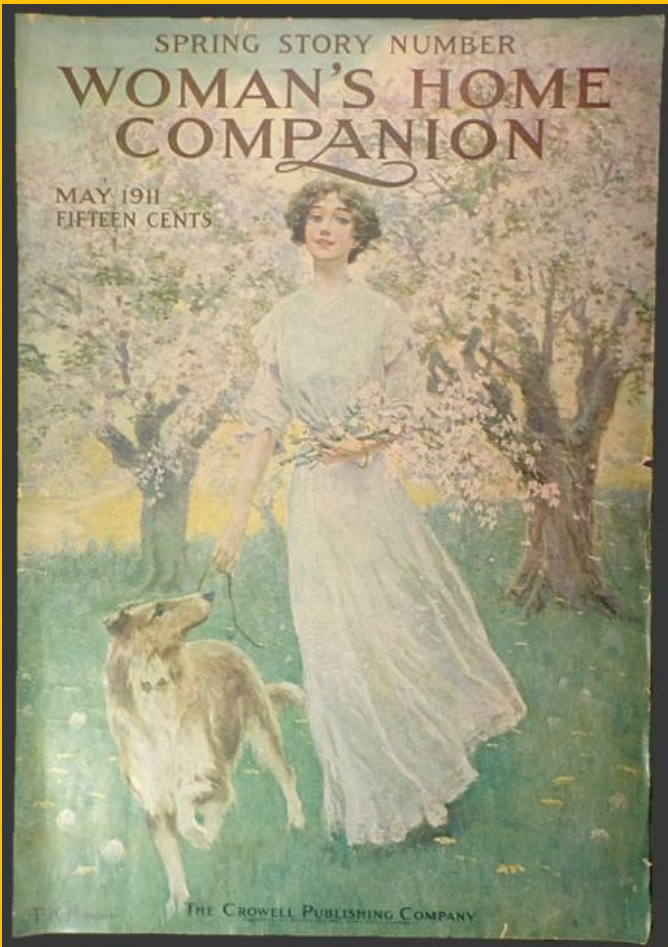
The following are the IECC’s 2026–2028 officers and directors, elected unanimously.

2026–2028 IECC Officers and Directors

President	Suzanne Schwab
Vice President	Sherry McCauley
Secretary	Ali Seeber
Treasurer	Linda Ward

Directors

John Czarnek	Susi Czarnek
Teri Liechty	



An eye for a dog is when you see one that gets your attention. It’s an arresting animal because it exudes beauty and correctness. Like a work of art. — Pat Trotter

A Snapshot of The National's Collie Champions Through the Years

*From the
Collie Club of America's Archive*

— 1905 —



Winners Dog: Balmoral Baron

— 1925 —



Best of Variety/Winners Dog: Treffynon Blue Sol

— 1908 —



Winners Dog: Southport Student

— 1930 —



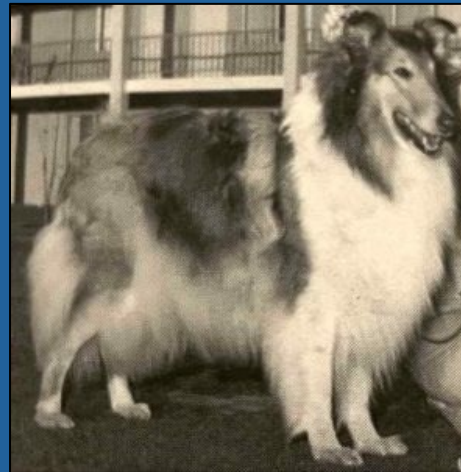
Best of Variety/Winners Dog: CH Lucason Of Ashtead O' Bellhaven

— 1940 —



Best of Variety/Best of Winners/Winners Dog:
Black Douglas Of Alstead

—1960—



BOB: CH Country Lane M'Liss

— 1950 —



Best of Variety: CH Hazeljane's Bright Future

—1970—



BOB: CH Black Hawk Of Kasan



By Clarence Underwood

-1980 -



BOB: CH Azalea Hill's Top Man

-2010 -



BOB: CH Fantasy's Rising Dragon, ROM

-1993 -



BOB: CH Pebblebrook Intrigue

- 2016 -



BOB: GCH Sealore's "A" List

- 2001 -



BOB: CH Caledonia By Candle Light

-2019-



BOB: GCHB Taliesin Fresh Powder O'Paray

BRAGS

For Teri:

“Kylo” got his Novice Container and Novice Buried scentwork titles at the CBDTC trial in April, and **“Bodhi”** got WD, BOW, and BOV at the IEKA show for his first 2 points!

For Eileen:



“Peg” completed her ASCA Started Trial Dog - Sheep. She ran 6 times. She qualified 5 times with a 3rd and a 4th place. One run I called the run because her listening ears had a malfunction.

For Kristen:



“Wesley” received his CD on 5/17 with a score of 196. He received his Rally Intermediate title on 5/15 with a score of 100. He received 2 legs in Rally Advanced A.

For Sharen:



“Keanu” Glenelg’s Dreams Are Twined STR got Reserve Winner’s Dog Gig Harbor Kennel Club Dog Show

“Bonnie” earned her Pet Partners Certification



For Sherry:

“Hap” and **“Poppy”** turned six years old!



For Barbara Flaherty:

CH Sinkona's Jazzman CDX BN RE HSAdS FDC OAP OJP XFP ACT1 SWE SCM CGC TKN FTI VX – “Louie”

Earlier is April:

Yellowstone Valley Kennel Club – Master Bured Q 2 times

Yellowstone Valley Kennel Club – Masters Interior Q

Yellowstone Valley Kennel Club – Master Exterior Q

04/25 Electric City Kennel Club – Masters Exterior Q

04/26 Electric City Kennel Club – Masters Exterior Q - SEM Title!



For Tanya:

CH UCDX RO2 Cairdean's Tsesit Stone Sinkona CDX PCDX BN GN GO RE OA AXJ OAP OJP OF NFP BCAT CGC – “Petra”

03/13 Columbia Basin Dog Training Club – Preferred Open Q – 1st Place – Preferred High In Trial

03/14 Columbia Basin Dog Training Club – Preferred Open Q – 1st Place – Preferred High In Trial – PCDX Title!

03/14 Columbia Basin Dog Training Club – Grad Open Q – 2nd Place

03/15 Columbia Basin Dog Training Club – Preferred Open Q – 1st Place – Preferred High In Trial

03/15 Columbia Basin Dog Training Club – Grad Open Q – 2nd Place

2026 May - Front & Finish 2025 All-Breed Top Ten Open A – Petra #4

05/15 Great Falls Dog Training Club – Agility – Excellent Jumpers Q – 1st Place

05/16 Great Falls Dog Training Club – Agility – Excellent Fast Q – 1st Place

05/23 Inland Gazehound Fanciers – Fast Cat – Q

05/24 Inland Gazehound Fanciers – Fast Cat – Q

05/25 Inland Gazehound Fanciers – Fast Cat – Q

05/30 Greater Spokane Shetland Sheepdog Club –
Agility – Excellent Standard – Q 1st Place & Excellent
Jumpers – Q 3rd Place

05/31 Greater Spokane Shetland Sheepdog Club –
Agility – Excellent Jumpers= Q 2nd Place - AXJ Title!

6/06 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Fast Cat
Q

6/07 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Fast Cat
Q



For Chase Richards:

Sinkona's Winter Thunderstorm CGC – “Remus”



5/25 – Coeur d'Alene Dog Fanciers – Judge; Debra
Long Gschwender – Winners Dog 3 Pt. Major

6/05 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Reserve
Winners Dog



Sinkona's Highland Sojourner BN CGC - “Strider”

04/25 Inland Gazehound Dog Fanciers – Fast Cat Q

05/23 Inland Gazehound Fanciers – Fast Cat – Q

05/25 Inland Gazehound Fanciers – Fast Cat – Q

6/05 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Reserve
Winners Dog

6/05 - Inland Empire Kennel Association – Fast Cat
Q

6/06 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Fast Cat Q

6/07 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Best of Variety, Winners Dog, Best of Winners 2 pt.

“Lyle” got his AKC CH, and Remus got his first major at the Memorial Day cluster!
Lyle and I also got a NOHS group 4 placement at the IEKA show last weekend!



For Ali Seeber:

Sinkona's Winter Rain CGC– “Rain”

01/24 Collie Club of Washington PM Show – Winners Bitch – 2 pts.

01/25 – Overlake Collie club PM Show – Reserve Winners Bitch

5/22 – Spokane Kennel Club – Judge: Rick Gschwender – Reserve Winners Bitch

5/23 – Spokane Kennel Club – Judge: Donna Buxton – Winners Bitch 2 Pt.

5/24 – Coeur d'Alene Dog Fanciers – Judge: Kenneth Buxton – Reserve Winners Bitch

5/25 – Coeur d'Alene Dog Fanciers – Judge; Debra Long Gschwender – Winners Bitch/Best of Winners 3 Pt. Major



6/05 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Reserve Winners Bitch

6/06 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Winners Bitch 1 pt

6/07 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Reserve Winners Bitch

For Linda:

CH UCD RO1 Sinkona's Black Magic CD BN RI HSAd OAJ OAP AJP OF BCAT CGC VX – “Ebony”

04/25 & 26 Inland Gazehound Dog Fanciers – Fast Cat Qs for BCAT Title!

UCD Sinkona's Mystical Vortex PCD BN RI OAP OJP OFP BCAT SBE SCN SIN SHDN CGC – “Aella”

03/13 Columbia Basin Dog Training Club – Novice B Q – 3rd Place

03/15 Columbia Basin Dog Training Club – Novice B Q – 2nd Place

04/11 Spokane Agility Club – Excellent Jumpers – Q 1st Place

04/11 Spokane Agility Club – Excellent Standard – Q 1st Place

04/25 & 26 Inland Gazehound Dog Fanciers – Fast Cat Qs

05/09 Spokane Dog Training Club – Agility – Excellent Fast Preferred Q 1st Place

05/22 Inland Gazehound Fanciers – Fast Cat – Q – BCAT Title!

Sinkona's Highland Winter Thunderstorm CGC – “Torrann”

04/25 Inland Gazehound Dog Fanciers – Fast Cat Q

6/05 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Best of Variety/Winners Dog/Best of Winners – 2 pts.

6/05 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Fast Cat Q

6/06 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Reserve Winners Dog

6/07 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Reserve Winners Dog



GCH CH Sinkona's New Beginnings CGC– “Kiki”

04/25 Inland Gazehound Dog Fanciers – Fast Cat Q

04/26 Inland Gazehound Dog Fanciers – Fast Cat Q

5/21 – IECC AM Specialty – Judge Mike Van Tassell –
Select Bitch 4 Pt. Major

5/21 – IECC PM Specialty – Judge: Daniel Wheatcroft –
BOS – 4 Pt. Major

5/22 – Spokane Kennel Club – Judge: Rick Gschwender
– BOS – 4 Pt. Major

5/23 – Spokane Kennel Club – Judge: Donna Buxton –
SB 2 Pt.

5/25 – Coeur d'Alene Dog Fanciers – Judge; Debra Long Gschwender – SB 2 pt. Finished Grand
Championship!

6/05 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – 6/05 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – BOV 3 pt.
Major

6/06 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Best of Variety 3 pt. Major

6/07 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Best of Variety 3 pt. Major

6/07 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Best of Variety 3 pt. Major

CH Sinkona's Finesse To Win CGC – “Bridger”

5/21 – IECC PM Specialty – Judge: Daniel
Wheatcroft – WD/BOW – 6 Pt. Major

5/22 – Spokane Kennel Club – Judge: Rick
Gschwender – Winners Dog/Best of Winners – 5 Pt.
Major – Finished Championship!

5/25 – Coeur d'Alene Dog Fanciers – Judge; Debra
Long Gschwender – Select Dog 3 pt. Major

6/05 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Best
Opposite Sex 2pt

6/06 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Best Opposite Sex 3 pt. Major

6/07 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Best Opposite Sex – Best Bred By Exhibitor 3 pt. Major

6/07 – Inland Empire Kennel Association – Herding Group, Best Bred by Exhibitor Group 4



Memorial Cluster



HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!!!!

