

Sisters celebrates dogs with a howling good time

By Jodi Schneider McNamee
Correspondent

Wagging tails and excited barks filled the Village Green in Sisters as dogs and dog-lovers gathered to celebrate the fourth annual Doggie Dash/Stroll & Festival presented by Friends of the Sisters Library (FOSL) and Furry Friends Foundation.

The new venue offered up lush surroundings where canines and their humans could mingle among friends, family and visitors ready to enjoy a day for the dogs.

The dog days of summer cooled down Saturday morning just in time for folks and their furry friends to enjoy the 5K run that kicked off the celebration at 9 a.m. A few minutes later the two-mile walkers departed. The dash/stroll route went south from the park onto Peterson Ridge trails and back to the park. The dash/stroll was open to all ages, with or without a dog. And 5K winner Zack Connelly was without one.

The park was packed with hundreds of dogs of various shapes, sizes and colors, including a hairless pink one that looked suspiciously like a pig. The unusual looking "dog" was, in fact, a three-year-old pot-bellied pig

named Zoey who might have thought she was a canine instead of a porcine. Her pet parents Robert Jeffrey and Robine Bot own Harmony Farms Sanctuary, a home for animals in Sisters Country.

Zoey's guardians for the day were Marieke Jeffrey, 11, and brother Lex, 8, and they entered her in the Best Trick contest.

"We rescued her and they told us she was a mini pig but she kept getting bigger," Marieke said.

The BrightSide Animal Center table was up and running with Sana Hayes, volunteer coordinator, at the helm. Three dogs from the center were at the event and up for adoption.

Delectable morning munchies were donated by Sisters Coffee Co., Angeline's Bakery & Café, and Sisters Bakery.

One of the highlights at the event was a lure-running course for pooches that love to chase things. It was ongoing, and any dog could try his luck at chasing the fuzzy lure that was strung behind a plastic bag that was attached to a long line on a pulley.

Owner of the lure, Jackie Koski, was on hand to explain what a lure course is all about.

"We travel all over the

country with our lure course and four silken windhounds that compete. The lure course is normally about 1,000 feet long and the dogs are judged on agility and speed and athleticism."

Mt. Bachelor Kennel Club offered an obedience rally for any dog that knew basic commands.

"I think this venue is great and more dog-friendly. We're doing our novice rally course for people to bring their dogs in so we can give them a little help with dog obedience," said Lori Nickerson, club president.

Bend Agility and Action Dogs (BAAD) were happy with the park area reserved for their agility course. They brought in dogs of all sizes and abilities that were cued by their pet parents as they maneuvered the course together.

"We really like the new fenced-in area, it's small, compact and just perfect for our dogs to go through the course," said Barb Brandt, BAAD president. "We have about 23 dogs that will be taking turns going through the demo course for people to watch."



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Sandy Schneider and Breeze, her Shetland sheepdog, impressed the crowd in the Best Trick contest.

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