

Jeanette Ennis is currently the WA State coordinator for Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue (RRRI), serves as a director on the current NWRRRC board, and is active in a number of competitive dog sports, including FastCAT, agility, trick dog, rally obedience and on occasion, barn hunt. She is also a member of RRCUS. Her current household includes five Rhodesian Ridgebacks and one Border Terrier. I sent her a questionnaire a couple of months ago and here is what I learned.

Growing up: I always knew I needed a dog in my life (who knew I would someday be wrangling six?) but my dad didn't want the responsibility of caring for a dog to fall on my mom. Eventually my siblings and I wore him down—it took until I was 16! He still had a list of requirements which he thought would discourage us. I dove in and we brought the perfect golden retriever pup home just weeks later. I only had a little over a year with her before I headed to college and my brother claimed her for his paper route. I wasn't to get another dog until graduate school.



Jeanette with Newton, her first RR

Ridgebacks: In grad school, a new roommate took one look at the rescue dog I had at the time and declared he was part ridgeback. This dog looked nothing like a Rhodesian Ridgeback. It did have some crazy fur that was even more crazy along his spine. What he told me about the breed piqued my curiosity. I did some research—a strong, muscular and active dog; handsome,

upstanding and athletic, capable of great endurance with a fair (good) amount of speed; even, dignified temperament, devoted and affectionate to his master.

I was an avid runner and hiker, and this seemed like a perfect breed for me. Even the stubbornness seemed more like a challenge rather than a negative. So, I bided my time until the stars aligned, and I was able to get my first RR, Newton.

Newton was the perfect intro to the breed—he loved coursing, where during the copious down time you can really get to know other sighthound people and develop lasting friendships; he trained for marathons with me (and, to my chagrin, had plenty of turn of speed to chase a squirrel up hill on the last mile of a 19 mile training run); and he hiked all over the PNW with me. He even saved me from being lost in the wilderness on one ill-fated backpacking trip.

Jeanette's Dogs: Since I am a scientist by training, each of my dog's names follow a science theme, and even my Border Terrier, and pack mascot, has the call name "Orbit." Here's Jeanette with her Ridgebacks:

Newton, DC Spring Valley's Sir Isaac, MC 2000-2009
Helix, CH Sweet Creek's Nobel Crick, MC, CGC 2006-2021
Doppler, GCH DC Sweet Creek's A Star In RedShift, RN, SC, CGC 2010-
Dolby, GCH CH Sweet Creek's He Blinded Me With Science, 2015-
HedyLamarr, GCH CH Java's Not Just A Pretty Face at R3, RE, JC, NA, NAJ, FCAT, TKA, VHMA, 2017-
Halley, CH Java's Once In A Lifetime at R3, BCAT, CGC, 2021-
Joule, Java's May The Force Be With You at R3, 2022-



Life, Training and RR Activities: Besides conformation, lure coursing, and the few herding instinct tests that seemed to be a requirement for the RR Fun Day years ago, I started experimenting with the versatility of this amazing breed. Some of my dogs were more easily engaged than others. Finding the activity they enjoy more than dozing in a sunspot is a fun challenge.

Dolby wasn't interested in much besides sleeping and watching the girls hunt. Then we discovered parkour. He put all the border collies and tiny dogs to shame by Navy-Seal-crawling under a setup barely higher than his chest depth. He could slowly and deliberately climb a length of 2x4 and turn around on the small platform at the top to come back down. Of course, I don't recommend this activity if you don't want to find your dog on top of your pantry!

HedyLamarr took to every activity I tried—the beauty pageant (conformation), lure coursing, FastCAT, agility, trick dog, rally obedience. She loves to perform and has a huge number of fairly impressive tricks under her belt (follow @rrelativityridgebacks on YouTube for a few of her favorite tricks, including reading). One of our future goals is to put a skit together for her Elite Performer title—stay tuned, hopefully at our next Fun Day. She is an obsessive hunter at home but thinks the rats in barn hunt are disgusting. I think what she leaves on my white rug or scattered about my yard is disgusting. We agree to disagree on that point. After all, she is a Hollywood diva.

I can't wait to see what the younger ones enjoy. I have learned that training RRs really involves convincing them that what you want them to do was their idea all along. I am lucky enough to be able to train at a facility in Maple Valley where I also teach agility, rally obedience, and trick dog.

Two games I want to try—[treibball](#) and dock diving (Halley's dad has a dock diving title in Germany).



Doppler at the 2022 Nat'l Specialty

It is hard to pick my proudest moments with my dogs (I hope there will be many more to come). However, Doppler winning Best in Show Baby Puppy over 126 puppies at 5 months old at the Portland show in 2011 and then winning 1st place in the 11+ veteran class at the National Specialty in 2022 at 12.5 years old is certainly up there.



HedyLamarr lure coursing

Because RRs are like Doritos - you can't have just one - I started to co-breed with Marykay Ligocki under her kennel name, Java Ridgebacks, tagging RRelativity Ridgebacks (R3) in case I am ever brave enough to go it alone. Watching your "babies" thrive in their loving forever homes makes all the hard work and heartbreak of breeding worth it.

Rescue: Retiring in 2021 has given me more free time. I reached out to Aubrey with the idea that I could occasionally help transport RRs for Rescue. She must have misunderstood me... as I became the WA state coordinator for RRRRI. Helping RRs in need find a forever warm sunspot or fireplace to enjoy is incredibly rewarding. Foster homes and rescue volunteers are desperately needed – please reach out to me if you would like to help – we need you!