

# FRONT & FINISH<sup>®</sup>



March 2019

The Dog Trainer's News

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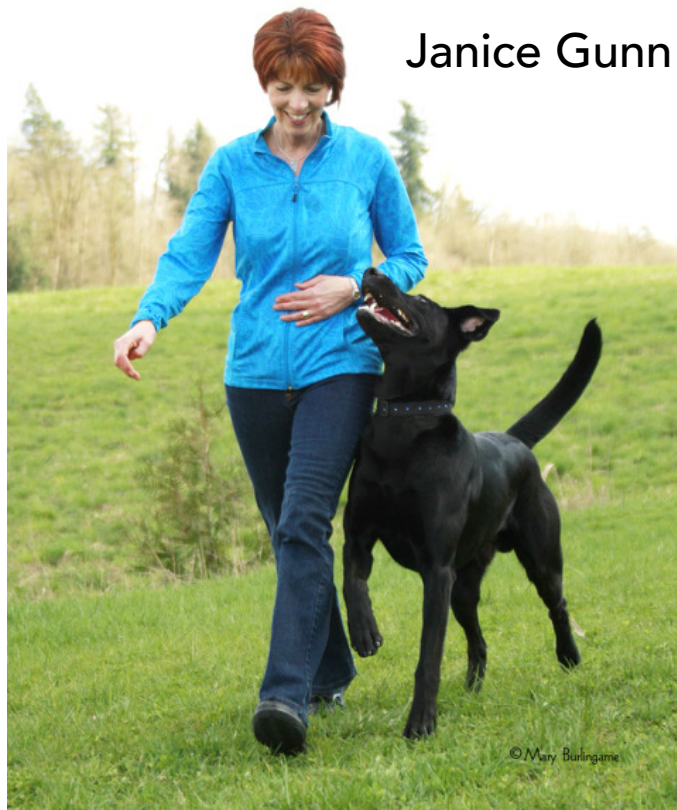
**2018 Delaney Ratings**  
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Directed Retrieve "Blind"

# Profile

By Joshua Wiggins

Janice Gunn



# 2000

I went into the Novice A ring at 14 years old, yes, a very, very long time ago! Prior to my parents allowing me to have my first dog I borrowed the neighbors dogs, walking them, training them and competing at local fairs that offered best trick dog and game events. My parents couldn't deny the fact that I would look after my own dog! When they finally granted permission I decided on a Dalmatian. My first Dal was a wonderful & willing partner, I had 4 over a period of years. 45 years ago classes were held by the local schools in the gym. Dogs were required to have a chain choke collar and a 6 foot leather lead. There was no food or toy rewards, just praise. The class instructor had competed to CD level with her Boston Terrier and she knew I had the desire so she did her very best to groom me for competition. My first Novice A round was a 198, and I became hooked on the sport. Along





with obedience, I earned conformation Championship titles but wanted to do more outdoor activities so I started tracking and got TD titles on my Dal's. Still I wanted more outdoor fun and that is when I decided to get a Retriever so I could try the working certificate tests, hunt tests, tracking and of course obedience.

24 years ago I met my husband John, whom owned Golden's and Labrador's. He was a firefighter by trade and he trained for and competed at Retriever field trials as a hobby, we met while out with a group field training. We married a year later and a year after that we built a boarding kennel and dog training facility called TNT Kennels & Training Center Ltd. We travelled the country (literally) competing in field trials and Field Nationals, we have some of the highest titled dogs in the US and Canada. I trained and trialed with the dogs in the field also while still training the same dogs for competition obedience. Many times they would compete at a field trial one weekend and an obedience trial the next, and they would often win at a field trial and earn a high in trial the next weekend.

I have earned 200 scores with EIGHT different dogs from the novice, open and utility classes, with two different breeds, Golden's and Labrador. I have titled eight dogs to AKC OTCH and eleven dogs to CKC OTCH. I believe this is a record! I have been invited to compete at the AKC NOC, NOI and to Westminster. Living on the west coast in British Columbia, Canada it is just not feasible for me to drive to the mid-west or the east coast and I don't fly my dogs. So unless they ever rotate back to the west again, I will unfortunately miss attending these prestigious and wonderful events.

My training has evolved tremendously over the years. I use a lot of engagement and motivational skills, drive building, and my focus is on positive reinforcement. It makes training fun for both my dog and I. I think when a dog makes a mistake handlers jump to the conclusion that the dog is misbehaving, I often find that it is more a case of the dog not understanding his job. Positive does not mean permissive, my dogs do not pull on the lead when walking and they behave themselves in public areas. Leadership skills are important



and that mutual respect bleeds over into our obedience.

I started my competitive training with AnneMarie Silverton. I arrived on her doorstep in California 30 years ago with my Dalmatian, a choke chain and 6 foot leather leash. I had only been exposed to the jerk and yank classes at the school gyms and I thank AnneMarie for taking such a

novice trainer under her wing. I trained twice a year with AMS for 10 years, until she retired. I have attended many, many seminars and each and every one I am thankful to the presenter for sharing their knowledge. I have attended Sylvia Bishop's seminars on and off for the past 25 years, attending my first one with my Dalmatian. Sylvia has had a big influence on my training. Over the past several years I have also been adopting methods that IPO trainers use, they are the very best at drive building.

I have been presenting seminars for the past 15 years. Anyone is welcome to attend my seminars, from the beginner Novice A trainer to an OTCH trainer. I think it is important we support and share with each other in every way possible, to help the sport grow and flourish.

I have produced 5 DVD's on competition dog training and I have numerous free You Tube videos available. I have so many exhibitors approach me at shows that tell me how much these videos have helped them and how much they appreciate that I share training tips, they were at a dead end in their training and now they have some new tools and a plan to move forward with. Positive reinforcement is very rewarding!

When I started out 45 years ago, all there was, was obedience, WC, conformation and tracking. Today we have agility, barn hunt, nose work, dock diving, trick dog, rally, WC, hunt test, and other sports for handlers to chose from. And in my opinion obedience is one of the most difficult and time consuming, and one that requires consistent training and relationship building, and thus it makes it the most intimate and rewarding sport like none

other. I find that competition obedience compliments my other sports and also a dog that I can walk thru a hotel lobby or down a busy street with and be proud of his manners. There have been some recent changes in the sport, mostly I feel for the better. I am glad the group stays are gone, but I wish the replacement exercise had more in it for the dog's enjoyment. Position changes are a high concentration, high focus exercise and really, not much fun for the dog to do, especially as they do a very similar exercise in Utility. We need to come up with an exercise that is challenging yet motivating and fun for the dog and handler as we have so many other venues now to choose from.

Thank you to Front & Finish for still going strong after all these years. You have kept up with the times and you are a great resource for the obedience community. Also, thank you for the opportunity to share my story!

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## **Front & Finish Would Like To Recognize You!**

Obedience training is a personal journey and we all have different goals. Have you reached a destination you're proud of? Is there a best friend that you'd like to share memories of? No personal achievement is insignificant if it carries meaning for you. We want to help spread the good news!

Just email a description of your personal accomplishment to us at [dogs@frontandfinish.com](mailto:dogs@frontandfinish.com). Pictures add a lot to your memoir so send those along too!

We'll follow up with a confirmation of your submission and let you know when it will be published. Don't let your accomplishment get lost in social media. Help us include your success in the historical record of Front & Finish!

