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Dogs, owners turn out for Woof Fest celebration

October 10, 2011

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VOLCANO - More than 200 people and their four-legged friends flocked to Mountwood Park Sunday for the third annual Woof Fest.

Volunteer group Friends of Mountwood organized the event, which featured contests, vendors and demonstrations by the Blennerhassett Kennel Club and Buckeye DockDogs.

"We couldn't have asked for a more beautiful day," said Peggy Squires, president of Friends of Mountwood. "This event seems to get more popular every year. It's a nice way to socialize your dogs, and it offers something fun that both dogs and their owners can do together."

Dogs of all breeds, some sporting Halloween costumes, participated in the tail-wagging contest while others tried the popular sport of dock jumping.

The Ohio affiliate of the national group DockDogs set up a workshop at Mountwood Park's handicap-accessible dock near the marina.

"Dock jumping is becoming a very popular sport," said Ginny Haas, with Buckeye DockDogs. "It's competitive, but it's also just really fun for them. Most dogs love the water, and it's terrific exercise."

Buckeye DockDogs, which was formed in 2007, holds dock jumping events throughout the region.

"If your dog has never been in water, it's a good idea to start slowly. Find some shallow water for them to wade around in and get their feet wet," said Haas. "If it's warm enough, I tell people to get in the water too. It makes your dog feel more comfortable."

Buckeye DockDogs competitions include three main events: Big Air, a measure of distance, Extreme Vertical, a measure of height, and Speed Retrieve, a speed competition.

"Often times, all it takes to get your dog in the water is his favorite toy," said Haas.

The Blennerhassett Kennel Club conducted a demonstration on conformation judging, in which dogs are judged by breed standards.

"Each breed has its own standard for judging," said Joyce Fortney, a judge with the club. "I have a lot of experience with the toy and hound breeds. At a dog show, I would look at things like coat quality, eyes, body angle, movement and ear set."

This year's event featured something new - a blessing of the animals. Both cats and dogs were welcome to participate in the blessing, performed by Pastor Damon Rhodes.

Several vendors, including Boxers Bed and Biscuits and Pet Supplies Plus, were also in attendance.



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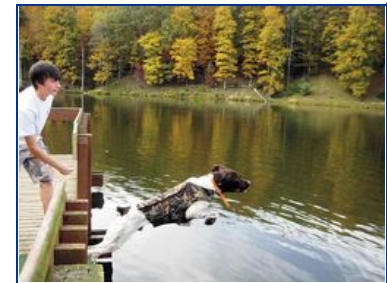
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