

Amy Coapman, Montague, CA.

I'm delighted to be one of the organizers of the 2018 Finals along with the amazing Geri Byrne. I'll be running Roy in Open.

When Ray and I were first married (1992) we decided it was time to get a dog. We were renting a little house on the edge of a 300 acre property in Pacifica. Ray had experience with Brittany spaniels and other hunting dogs, and he had lived with a blue heeler as well, so he thought a working breed would suit us. My experience was limited to mostly mutts and certainly nothing purpose-bred. After doing a fair bit of homework, we decided to look for a Border Collie because of their intelligence and athleticism. We looked in the San Francisco Chronicle want ads and found a Petfinder phone number which gave us 3 contacts to try, none of them in the Bay Area.

The first one didn't answer the phone; the second one was a guy in Rocklin who grilled us mercilessly about what we thought we were doing, getting a Border Collie with no 'job' for it. He didn't slam the phone down, however, and he did invite us out to meet the pregnant bitch and the stud dog and to see them work sheep. We never even called the third Petfinder number. We went to Rocklin, convinced the guy that we'd be a terrific home, put down that deposit on a pup, and within 3 years we were moving to a farm, we had our own sheep, and the rest is history. This is a tale told many times over in our sheepdogging world.

What do you do to prepare for Finals?

Round up volunteers and do what Geri tells me 🙏 Seriously, this will be my fourth trip to a Finals and my third with my Open dog, Roy, and we don't do anything special. Roy is close to nine years old, so keeping him fit and sound is my primary concern. We try to work sheep a little bit most every day, but at his level, it's not really training. He does have a couple of weak spots that I try to address from time to time, but he's the kind of dog that gets a bit worried if I try to make an issue out of things. I plan to trust him and hope for the best.

Roy's biddability is way up there. He's a great partner in that regard - we seldom have arguments, and on the odd times that we do, he usually is the one that's right. He tends to be calm in his work, and sheep of all kinds generally like him. I think he's got the right type of eye for most sheep, and he's learned to use it well. I have so much respect for him, and I'm honored to have this long partnership with him.

What advice or encouragement would you offer to anyone just starting out in trialling?

Enjoy yourself and help your dog. It's about the sheep, not about you. Winning doesn't always mean getting a prize or a trophy. Treasure the relationships you'll build with your dogs.