

# PULIK IN OBEDIENCE

"SALUTE TO A GREAT LADY WHO BROUGHT THE SPORT OF OBEDIENCE INTO THE UNITED STATES."

by: Julius Hidassy

I could not have a better occasion to start a column about Pulik in Obedience in Puli Parade then with the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Obedience Competition in the U.S.A. More than 100 leaders of the American Kennel Club and the Dog Obedience World gathered in Armonk, New York, to honor Mrs. Helene Whitehouse Walker, who introduced dog obedience training in this country.

Not knowing anything about dogs, - Mrs. Helene Walker and her father visited a Terrier breeder hoping to get some advice in selecting a puppy as a birthday gift for Helene's younger sister. They ended up with a brown standard male Poodle, Nympha Jason from England, as a perfect gift. Jason arrived in the U.S.A. in January 1931, and stayed with Helene, since her sister wanted rather a Samoyed puppy. Within a few months Mrs. Walker purchased two more Poodles and became a respected breeder shortly after. Her Poodle was the first Poodle to win the group at Westminster in 1933. With Jason's arrival, Mrs. Walker begun subscribing to English dog magazines, which had articles not only about conformation, but obedience tests as well. These articles caught her eyes, but her decision to get deeply involved in obedience training came after she became fed up with the funny remarks of her friends, such as: "Poodles are sissy dogs", now that did it! She wanted to prove to the contrary, and what would have been the best way to do it, if not with the obedience tests.

During the summer of 1933 she started to organize the first, "Obedience Test" in the U.S.A., which took place in October of the same year, with 8 entries; 2 Labradors, 2 Springer Spaniels, 1 German Shepherd, and 3 Poodles. The Judge was Mr. Robert Carr. Despite of the small entry the public interest was great, more than 150 spectators watched the test with great excitement. Mrs. Walker realized right there that the obedience tests can become a sport, the public will always love to watch them. In 1934 she held two more private obedience test, with limited entries, they have generated stronger and stronger public interest. She spent 6 weeks in England to further her knowledge in obedience. On her return to the U.S.A. she expressed her firm belief in the popularity of obedience tests, that it is:

1. an attractive sport for spectators,
2. a forceful influence on breeders to encourage them to breed for the original purpose of their breeds,
3. an inspiring compulsion on the every-day owner to learn how to train and handle a dog, and join a sport which gives lots

of satisfaction and pleasure.

In the Fall of 1934 Mrs. Walker started to introduce Obedience to AKC. The test were divided into two classes, Novice Class for the beginners and Open Class for the advanced ones. During 1935, there were six All-Breed Dog Shows, which offered Obedience Tests and the big push for the sport came about, when Mrs. Grace L. Boyd of England came and gave exhibitions with her three trained Standard Poodles throughout the North/West. These were the forerunners of today's Dog Training Seminars. Mrs. Walker published a 20 pages booklet in the same year: "Obedience Tests: Procedure for Judge, Handler and Show Giving Club." That was the first attempt to summarize and standardize obedience tests.

The AKC approval and recognition of the sport were granted and published in the April 1936 issue of the Gazette, dealing with three Classes, Novice, Open, and Utility. The first licensed test was conducted in June 1936 under AKC Rules at North Westchester Show on June 13, and the second Show on the next day at the Orange Show. That year produced 17 CD's and the first two CDX's. The seed what Mrs. Walker planted in early 1933, not only germinated, but during the years it became a fruit bearing tree. On September 13, 1937 the first Tracking Test was held under AKC Rules with 7 entries; it was the result of what she has started in 1934 on her estate.

On May 9, 1939 AKC dropped the word "Test" in a new booklet, the new title became "Regulations and Standards For Obedience Trials"

Mrs. Helene Walker didn't restrict the promotion of obedience just to the North/East Coast; in 1934, the late Miss Blanche Saunders joined her effort and the two worked together over a decade to promote the sport of obedience. In 1937 they travelled 10,000 miles in three months to give exhibitions, talks, to popularize the sport across the country. Her vision, foresight and dedicated work made a dream come true and become reality. Her contribution is really immeasurable.

Since 1933, millions have participated in Obedience Trials and many more have attended Training Classes. The Sport has gone through several changes during these 50 years, until the version, what we see today, was finalized. AKC soon realized the importance of standardized rules and regulations and, - more to speak of - standardized judging. To promote this concept, AKC Representatives started to visit different corners of the entire country, to meet, educate, and consult exhibitors, judges to be, or dog fanciers, with great success.

Similar successful contribution should be credited to the two leading obedience magazines: "Front & Finish" edited by Bob Self, and "Off Lead", by L.D. Arner, which came about in 1971.

The quality of obedience training has greatly improved and diversified as the years passed, not only through the excellent articles published in the above mentioned magazines, but by the

many obedience training books written for beginners, and advanced trainers and dog owners.

In the infancy years of dog obedience, AKC titles could have been earned only at All-Breed, or Specialty Shows, if obedience was offered. There were no dog training clubs in existence in Northern California. During the wartime, patriotism was the motivating force behind the formation of the San Francisco Dog Training Club in 1943. The founding members came from Mr. Clarence Pfaffenberger's "Dogs for Defense and Rescue" class, and Mr. James Fry was elected as the first President of the Club, who not long after the war years, became a highly respected Obedience Judge, and later, a prominent AKC Representative. Since then, nearly every large community, or city has dog training clubs too, besides their breed clubs, offering training facilities and trainers for members and for the public as well. These clubs are conducting annual AKC Trials, plus Fun Matches, which are guided by AKC Rules without offering titles, which are excellent practice grounds for exhibitors, judges to be, ring-stewards; giving opportunities to exhibitors, to try out their dogs, before going in AKC Trials.

Here I have to talk about the Gaines Competition. The Regionals and Classics were designed by professionals using AKC Rules, with some minor changes; and is partly financed by Gaines Dog Food Co. - It is not an AKC sanctioned event, but it is a very high level competition, since the requirements for entry are restricted to only high scoring dogs. The impact of these competitions were complex. Some of the changes in rules, even influenced AKC to alter their own rules; like single run-off; the judge has to inform the exhibitors, after each group exercise, about who did and who did not qualify. The second influence is equally important! That kind of competitions opened the horizon between East and West, North and South. Bringing high scoring dogs and excellent judges from all over the U.S.A. in one place. Local exhibitors, judges, dog fanciers and trainers had a quite unique opportunity to observe, learn, and exchange ideas.

The last impact, which greatly changed the obedience training in the West, was the introduction of training and working seminars. The very first one (what I remember was) was the late Jack Godsill Obedience Clinic, in 1978. His dynamic personality and training ability brought down the house - so to speak -. His successful first seminar opened up the door for several other successful trainers's seminars in the country, and in the Western Hemisphere too. I feel lucky to have attended the best ones, like Jack Godsill in 1978, Bob Self in 1979, then Barbra Goodman & Pauline Czarnicky in 1980, and Elaine & Bernie Brown in 1981.

These seminars were very informative and educational. Lately there are numerous seminars offered, but one must be really selective to attend.

In 1970, obedience training and showing became a highly

competitive sport. In Obedience Trials one could witness more and more perfect performances, the competitors were looking for a distinctive title which they can achieve after the U.D. title. Finally, AKC introduced in mid 1977 the "Obedience Trial Champion" title, which is more than the highest honor one can achieve in Breed: Best in Show.

Next issue: Training your Pulik.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### AKC 100th Anniversary Dog Show

Nov. 17th & 18th, 1984

Philadelphia, Pa.

Lou and Patti Giancaterino will be your hosts for this Anniversary show. We want to welcome all PCA members and friends to come and join us for this very special event.

The Monticello Motor Lodge is located in Bellmawr, just off the NJ Turnpike at Exit #3. It is newly renovated, has complete facilities, indoor pool and ample dog walking areas.

ROOM: Each room has two double beds, color TV, refrigerator, is on the first floor and grouped together.

TRANSPORTATION: Pick up and delivery to PHILA airport. Round trip service to show site both days. Airport and civic center are only 15-20 min away. Vans will be used to make both you and the dogs comfortable.

HOSPITALITY ROOM: Will be set up round the clock. Coffee, tea, wine and soft drinks plus different kinds of snacks and goodies.

BANQUET: Italian Festival (South Phila style) open bar, no speeches, music and dancing if you want. This is a party, live it up. A memento of your trip is included.

OTHER PLUSES: We are 45 minutes from Atlantic City and can arrange tours for those who want to gamble. We have three large malls for shopping close by. There are fast food restaurants and several fancier ones in the area. The hotel does have a nice coffee shop. My Vet will be available for emergency call 24 hours a day. Need anything all you have to do is call me and we will be there to help.

COSTS: Figures are based on a minimum of 30 people. Double occupancy total cost three nights, banquet, transportation etc. \$205.00. That's right for two people. For a single person same rooms etc. \$142.00. THIS IS FIGURED AS A PACKAGE DEAL.

50% deposit required by JULY 1, 1984. Balance due on arrival.

MOORE INFORMATION OR RESERVATIONS PLEASE CONTACT

Lou & Patti Giancaterino  
134 Mitchell Avenue  
Rummede, NJ. 08078  
609-939-3096