

## Dogtown's First Rally Championship Team Denise Welk & "Checkers"

### *Their Story...*

Checkers and I achieved one of our major goals on February 8th. We earned our ARCH title (a championship title) in APDT rally, which is a rally obedience venue that allows mixed breeds and purebreds. In itself it is important to us, but we are also happy for two additional reasons. First, Checkers will be going for FHO surgery soon, and we wanted to reach this goal before the surgery, just in case she doesn't regain enough strength in her leg to continue competing. Second, we earned this title exactly 2 years (to the day) after I found two straggly, underweight, and neglected puppies---one houndy guy, who was named Baxter, and one blue merle Aussie mix, who was named Checkers.

I had started going to dog training with another dog we have, Moonshine, so that she could be a therapy dog. Although the vet believes that she is a mix of Dobie/Rottie and Pitbull, with maybe a bit of Lab, she makes a great therapy dog. She loves visiting and is super sweet. However, she never enjoyed the training part, and it was like pulling teeth every time we trained. I never really enjoyed training at that point.

After Moonshine received her therapy dog license, I started with Rowdi, who is Border Collie mix. We started agility training. We still do agility training and we are getting better at trials, but Rowdi is very challenging for me and she tests my patience often. Rowdi competes in NADAC, CPE, and ASCA agility, which are all agility venues for any type of dog.

Then along came Checkers. Checkers taught me to love training. She was smart and fairly focused, and we have developed a great relationship. We trained in obedience, rally, and agility. She taught me as much, if not more, than I taught her. I learned when I was pushing too hard or not hard enough. Checkers started competition in obedience. Both UKC and ASCA offer obedience trials for mixed breeds. By the time Checkers was 1.5 years old, she had her novice titles in both venues. Then we started competing in APDT rally. Rally is a lot of fun. You may talk to you dog and interact much more than regular obedience, while incorporating some more interesting "movements." Checkers has earned her RL1X, RL2, and RL3 titles, and now her ARCH championship. Checkers started competing in agility, but before she really could train or compete much, she started limping and we discovered that she has hip dysplasia. Hopefully, she will be able to compete in rally once she is healed from surgery and we will set our sites toward the other championships.

Checkers taught me a very important lesson about 3 months ago. We were competing at a rally trial, and the bonus exercise was that the handler had to down the dog while heeling, go about 10 feet away, and then call the dog. The handler was not supposed to stop moving while downing the dog, but could turn around, walk backward, and try to get the dog to down. Checkers would not go down for me, so I turned around and walked backward, continuously told her to down, and bent over more and more, until I was almost at eye level with her. Checkers never downed and just kept walking toward me. When she got to me, she gave me a great big kiss. We didn't get any points for that bonus, but what I did get can't be measured!

I have two other mixed breed dogs with whom I have now done some training and am having a great time. Not only can mixed breeds and rescues compete in all sorts of venues, and competitively so, but they can teach us a great deal about perseverance, forgiveness, getting along with all types, and hard work.



*Denise Welk and Checkers, shown with APDT Judge*

**DOG TOWN TRAINING ACADEMY****2846 Rob Shepard Dr. Burlington, NC 27215****336-570-1144****www.dogtowntrainingacademy.com****isenhour\_long@bellsouth.net**

## Note Worthy News

Congratulations to Sandy Gunter and her Brittanys... On Jan. 2-4 "Monty" earned two Qualifying scores in agility. "Sarge" Q'd in seven classes and had perfect runs! On Jan. 18-19, "Sarge" Q'd in both Level 1 and Level 2 classes at the C2P2 APDT Rally trial, and "Lucky" Q'd with a 191 score in Level 1... his first! Monty also "Q'd" 4 out of 8 times and had the best run of his life in Snookers agility later in the month. In the February APDT rally "Lucky" Q'd with a 188. Go Lucky!!

Sharon Frampton and her Rough Collie, "Riser", earned their first leg towards their AKC - CD on Jan. 10th. Congratulations!

"Casey", Kristie Klein's Australian Shepherd, earned her AKC - CD at the Charlotte DTC trial on Jan. 31. Excellent!

Lois Miller and her Sealyham Terrier, "Jennie" earned a leg towards their Rally Excellent title at the Charlotte show... with a 3rd place win! Nice job!

Stephanie Thomas and "Talley" finished their U-CDX title on Jan. 18... and she earned a first place and the High Scoring Chesapeake (Bay Retriever) Award! Her young Chessie, "Niya", finished her APDT Rally, Level 1 title with high scores and a placement... her first title! "Sully" earned a second leg in Rally - Level 1, and "Talley" completed two of the five double q's needed for her ARCHX, APDT Rally title. Chocolate Lab, "Jake" earned two Rally - Level 3 legs, with placements, and two UKC - CD legs. Whew! What a great month!

Faerytail's Orange Crush, CD, RN, NA (Pumpkin) earned her CD in three days, Feb 13-15 at the Greenville, SC shows. She was High Scoring English Cocker Spaniel at the supported entry, Feb 13th, and was High Scoring English Cocker Spaniel at the English Cocker Spaniel Club of America Specialty, Feb 15th. "Pumpkin" is owned by Ann Cantrell and Mindy Bartholomew.



Pumpkin & her Prizes

"Charlie", another English Cocker, earned his Rally Excellent title!

Susan Morrill and her Rhodesian Ridgeback, Epic, earned their first Rally Novice leg at the Greenville shows with a third placement! Congratulations!

Cynthia and Darcy Wilson showed Ridgeback, Sonic at the famed Westminster dog show in New York to win a third Award of Merit, by Judge Frank DePaulo.

## Make plans to attend!

### Dog Days in the Vineyard

March 21, GlenMarie Winery

Join us at The Glen Marie Winery for a day of fun and games in their new dog park! For more information and directions...



[www.dogdaysinthevineyard.com](http://www.dogdaysinthevineyard.com)



12:00 – Welcome/Introduction/Agility Demo

12:45 – Introduction to Agility/Safety/etc.

1:15 – Agility Games

2:15 – Best Dressed Dog

Tallest & Smallest Dogs

Shortest & Longest Tails

Owner/Dog Look-A-Like

Best Trick

Tennis Ball Fetch

3:15 – Agility Demo

3:30 – Agility Free Play

4:00 - End



## Mark Your Calendars!

### Dog Day at Cedarrock Park

May 16, 10:00 am—2:00 pm

Another day of fun, games and demonstrations, at beautiful Cedarrock Park. Last year we had agility demos and free play, demonstrations in the wonderful world of dog activities and sports, and lots of games and prizes. More info to come!

## AKC S.T.A.R.

### Puppy Program Incorporated into Dogtown Training

Dogtown Training Academy will now include the new AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Program in their Puppy Kindergarten class! The new program is designed to reward responsible dog ownership and offer incentives to owners that take the time to put their puppies in a basic training class. To offer this, the instructor must be an AKC approved CGC Evaluator. The program is offered to pure breeds and mixed breeds after attending at least 6 weeks of training and meeting their "20 Steps to Success".

Upon completion, and passing the certification process, puppies are eligible to receive an AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Medal (for display) and a certificate, an AKC Puppy Handbook, discounts to enroll in the AKC Companion Animal Recovery Corp., and a monthly email newsletter.

Our first tests were offered and our passing rate was superb! All the puppies and handlers enjoyed seeing the positive results of their hard work and training!

For more information on enrolling your puppy into our training programs, please give us a call!