

GOOD NEIGHBOR NEWS



FEBRUARY, 2017

**Training Schedule:
Class Sessions Can Be
Found on the GND OC
Website**

**INTERMEDIATE & ADVANCED Classes are still
held on Saturday mornings. Space is limited, so
make sure to sign up for the classes you want.**

FEBRUARY – Blustery Winds? Train Inside!!

CLUB BUSINESS & MORE

**Annual Club Awards Lunch – Anthony’s Coal
Fired Pizza** on Welsh Road at Willow Grove
Pointe for **Sunday, Feb 26th**. The restaurant is
tucked in the corner near The Fresh Market in the
same shopping center where Toys R Us is located at
the other end. The restaurant opens at 11:30;
everyone will be responsible for their own meal,
and you can order anything from the menu.

Please contact **Andy Sklenar** if you plan to
attend. Her email is asklenar2@verizon.net and her
cell is **215-801-4067**.

We need a head count by 2/18.

**Information for new plaques or updates must be
given to Camille the week of February 12th.**

BRAGS

Andy and her Chessie, Rio, had their first
Utility “A” trial on January 22, 2017, and here is
Andy’s review of their effort:

“Well, we survived lots of fog, drizzle, cold
and rain. What we did not do was qualify today.
However, to Rio’s credit, she did a lot of very nice
things and I was pleased with her attitude (maybe
too much attitude). There are things we will work
on and I feel the remedies for these things are not
too difficult.

She was happy, friendly, attentive and with
me. We followed our established routine at a trial
and I still feel it works well for us. There was no
class in the other ring and the room was quiet. You

would think that would be a good thing and
normally it is.

We started off fine with our Signals. Her
Heeling was okay. She did not drop on my signal.
Maybe I didn’t hold my hand up long enough, but it
should have been long enough for her to drop. She
came in nicely and her Front and Finish were okay.

(HOW TO IMPROVE?) WORK ON DROP
and DROP QUICKLY.

As we were watching the steward put out
her articles someone in the hall was squeezing a
squeaky toy and she did an ‘Exorcist’ move, with
her head whipping around. She almost missed my
verbal to “Find It”. Thank you, Camille - putting
my hand in front of her nose probably helped
remind her what she was doing. She was a little
delayed going to the pile; I almost thought she
wasn’t going to go at all. She did, and she found
the correct article and brought it back. Her Front
and Finish were okay. The second article was dead
center and she stepped on it and sniffed it and then
brought back the wrong one. Again, her Front and
Finish were okay. Articles dead center has been
more challenging for her. (HOW TO IMPROVE?)
WORK ON ARTICLES IN DEAD CENTER OF
PILE. MORE AUDITORY DISTRACTIONS, i.e.
squeaky toys.

The Glove exercise was great. Glove #2, no
problem. Okay Front and Finish. Only lost 1 point.

Moving Stand was great. Okay finish. Only
lost 1 1/2 points.

Directed Jumping. Well, on the first Go Out
she couldn’t seem to find the station and she was
all around the jump. I did repeat my command and
she did sit and take the correct jump, but ticked the
solid. On the second jump, she had no trouble
finding the station and taking the correct jump but

she knocked the bar off. (HOW TO IMPROVE?) BEGIN JUMPING 26". CONTINUE TO REINFORCE "GO TOUCH" COMMAND.

Even though Rio made mistakes, a sure sign of a 'green' utility dog, she was able to collect herself and complete the other exercises with me. I have great faith in Rio and I know we can fix these problems. We have 3 weeks to another match at Colmar and 4 weeks to our next trial at just a small just obedience show only an hour away. Utility is known as "futility" for a reason.

The steward, who will be our judge in 4 weeks, was complementary on her attitude. She was "enthusiastic" and "happy".

Hard work and practice pay off.

Andy and Rio"

Andy, your commentaries on your experiences are always interesting to read, and maybe some of your suggestions will be helpful for those of us interested in Obedience trials. Thank you!!.....Ed.

Well, my Sheltie, Oskar, and I also entered our first Novice Obedience trials January 21st at the All Novice trial held by the Doberman Club of Tappen Zee in Flemington, NJ. I thought "Oskar is 3 years old, he's definitely a Novice dog, so, why not?" Well, spoiler alert – we did not qualify...in either trial. But I did learn a lot that I would like to share with you.

When we walked into the building, Oskar was already hyped up. He was straining at his leash, his head was nearly on a swivel, turning to see each person and dog. I put him in his crate to relax. He was quiet in his crate, but he didn't relax. We were probably there for only 20 minutes before it was our turn in the ring. *MISTAKE #1 – I did not give Oskar enough time to acclimate and settle in to a new environment. In hindsight, I probably need to give Oskar at least an hour to settle, which would include time to warm him up with some heeling and play.*

We were called to the ring and as we approached, Oskar pulled on his leash, still straining, still beyond excited, huffing under his breath, and unable to hear me to respond to my commands. Once in the ring, his Heeling was really non-existent. He forged ahead, spun around and barked. He couldn't Heel, he couldn't sit and he wouldn't shut up. The building had mirrors on one wall that went all the way to the floor, and when Oskar saw himself, he totally freaked out, barking and trying to get to the annoying Sheltie that was

barking and straining to get at him! In short, he acted like a dog that had no obedience training at all! I got flustered because he wouldn't listen to me and I couldn't do anything to correct him in the ring. As we left the ring, I was certain that people were wondering why I would bring such an untrained dog to a trial...*[MISTAKE #2 - I should have taken Oskar to more matches in different facilities for practice before entering the trials so we could work on some attention and coping skills in new locations.]*

I left the ring feeling very dejected, but also feeling that I was instrumental in setting my dog up to fail.

What could I do to possibly salvage this experience? We had a few hours until the afternoon trial, so I took Oskar outside to walk off a little craziness, do a proper warm up....and PLAY!

The first thing I did when we got outside was correct him for his out of control barking. When he barked, I had him lay down – right on the walk, right in the driveway, right in the grass – wherever we were– and then I had him perform a simple exercise he knew, either Sit, Come, Touch, etc. Once I had his attention, I did '2-Step' Heeling that Camille had just had us work on, keeping his attention for just 2 steps, then releasing him. Then on to the Play - there was a fenced area in back of the facility, and I was able to take him off lead and throw his ball and have him race after it. Then I had him sit, I threw the ball and told him to "Take it!". Then I did the same with his dumbbell. I switched back to the ball. Then I had him do some more Heeling. We continued this way for over half an hour, then I took him back inside to his crate. We repeated whole sequence again. *[Remember – when you end a training session with play, your dog retains 75% of what you were doing before the play!]*

When it was our turn for the 2nd trial, it was a different dog that I heeled into the ring. His attention was on me, his Heeling was really good and his attention was on me! He didn't move on the Stand for Exam, his Figure 8's were good, his Recall was wonderful. When we were finished, the judge came over to me and asked me jokingly if I had tied him to the car and driven down the highway to burn off some of his energy! Ha! So, if everything went well, why didn't we qualify?? Well, during the Sit Stay, I used a hand signal for him to stay that was too close to the hand signal I use for 'Stand', and instead of sitting, Oskar stood

up and would not sit. I gave him another command to Sit and that 2nd command disqualified us. As we left the ring, several onlookers actually clapped for our performance! And I was happy to show what Oskar could do when given the right exposure, acclimation time and warm up. Even without qualifying, I felt really good about our overall experience.

What did I learn?

1. Oskar needs about an hour and a quarter to get acclimated to a new environment. Of course, every dog is different, so learn what your dog needs.

2. Use some tricks to keep your dog's attention on you in a new environment. And when you have that attention, reward your dog to let her know you see it and appreciate it! Remember, always use your words first, touch second and then food/treats. Mix it up!

3. Don't set your dog up to fail. Age is not an indication of whether your dog is ready for the ring – ability and attitude are.

4. Enter more matches in different venues.

5. And in the words of Winston Churchill – never, never, never give up.

I sometimes think of dogs as aliens. They live among us, but they are a totally different species, and neither side can speak the language of the other. So, how can we communicate to them what we want them to do? Training in a way that is fair and appropriate. Patience to try other techniques if what you are doing is not working. Persistence to continue to train, because success does not necessarily happen on the human species timetable!

**KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, KEEP TRAINING,
AND DON'T FORGET TO
SEND ME YOUR BRAGS!!**

DOGNITION

There is a very interesting website that after you answer several questions about your dog, provides several games, the answers to which analyze how your dog thinks and how he learns and can help determine the best approach for training. Check it out at www.dognition.com. For anyone interested in signing up, contact Andrea – she has a 20% off code for savings. I signed up – it is interesting and fun!

**MAKE SURE TO CHECK our
Club Website for Class
Schedules, Club News, Closing
for weather, etc., etc.
Our website is: www.gndog.com**

Please feel free to send me any newsworthy tales, stories, jokes, articles (recipes?) or anything else you think may be of interest to our Members for inclusion in future newsletters! Emails are:
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