

## **Interview with Jacqui Webster**

A number of years ago I wrote a few articles for an agility ezine that Bud Houston put out. Some of the articles were interviews with well known agility handlers. One time I asked Bud if I could select someone myself for the interview so when he gave me the go ahead I spent some time corresponding with Jacqui and the following short article is what came of it. Since we all have been having a lot of conversation about Jacqui and the award that will be given in her honor at PCA next summer I thought I'd share this with you all.

### **Judy and Peabody**

#### **Interview with Jacqui Webster.....**

Modern technology has allowed us to become acquainted with fellow agility enthusiasts worldwide. I have been reading with interest, messages posted to the various e-mail communities by people from all over the world as they tell of their agility experiences. One particular person's writings always caught my eye. It was that of Jacqui Webster. I found her messages inspiring. She was always upbeat, especially if she were responding to someone else's less than positive stories. One time I was feeling particularly inadequate in my own agility capabilities and felt like I was never going to be a fast enough partner for my own dog. Then I would read some of Jacqui's messages and I would experience a renewed zest for the sport.

I really like Jacqui's outlook on things. She had the following to say about some of the things that have influenced her in life.. "There was a time in my life when I had a couple of bouts with breast cancer. Much to my surprise, it is not the end of the world. In fact, it gave me a better perspective on life. It is not forever, so if you want to do something, get busy and do it. This outlook has something to do with the fact that I started trialing Floyd so early in his career. I was undergoing chemotherapy for the second occurrence of breast cancer and not only was I in a hurry but it gave me the distraction I needed at the time. I would like to say that if I were younger, I would be more patient and wait until he was proofed better but I am not sure. I have always been a little impulsive and would dive into an adventure before I tested the waters. "

So if you are feeling old and creaky at 45 just look to Jacqui for inspiration.. She is 71 and training three dogs while maintaining a wonderfully positive attitude. I am always encouraged to run faster and try harder when ever I read messages posted by Jacqui.

I picked her brain a bit and asked her a few questions.

Judy: When you started dog training in what venues did you participate?

Jacqui: We started out in NADAC as I did not have any pedigree on my dogs (Bonnie and Clyde). I later got ILPs on them - miniature poodle and Cavalier King Charles Spaniel respectively. After that we do AKC and USDAA.

Judy: What breeds (if other than poodles) have you trained?

Jacqui: As I stated above, one of my dogs has an ILP as a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel but it is really a stretch and AKC has been very generous. He is a low, long, black and white long haired dog. He was actually my first agility dog.

Judy: What got you interested in Agility?

Jacqui: Again I have to go back to Clyde. When I adopted him, he was completely void of house manners so at the age of 65 I decided to sign up for our first obedience course. Before that I didn't think there was a need for formal obedience in a house pet. Clyde did very well in class and we thought it was fun. Because he was not a registered dog, we could not do much with obedience so the instructor suggested agility and gave me a lead to a class. I had not heard of agility at this point. (1965)

Judy: What was your most fun Agility experience?

Jacqui: I am having trouble selecting a particular experience. I will say that at one point, I was taking it all too seriously and was not having fun. We were not keeping up with some of the other dogs in the local area and it bothered me. I always wanted to be a top performer and get top grades. I had to learn to separate this fun activity from the more serious aspects of my life, like my full time job.

Judy: What was your most embarrassing Agility experience?

Jacqui: Pooping in the ring. Each of my dogs have done it once. Each time I found that I was not carrying a poop bag in my pocket. You can guess what one of our rituals is before entering the ring - check pocket for poop bag.

Judy: Where are you currently training and what training plan does your group use?

Jacqui: Currently, I am training with Ella Hoselton in Southern California. I am not too sure she wants this known after Floyd's performance at the last class.

Judy: How has Just For Fun affected your training program?

Jacqui: Mostly, it has been the monthly notebook that I read. I have hopes of forming a group in Southern California that would address the problems that Seniors (over 60) might encounter. I have been having a little trouble getting a lot of interest in this idea but I have a couple of enthusiastic people helping me. I have started an egroup on this and will see what happens from here. . I don't think that the older people in agility want to admit that they might have some problems. I know that I still feel that I should be able to keep up with the youngsters, although I do admit that I need to make some adjustments in my handling. Distance work comes in very handy when you are trying to run a fast dog.

Judy:.. What are your Agility goals, hopes and dreams?

Jacqui: I guess my goals and dreams are not to make the World Team. I would like to have the respect of my fellow competitors and to have reasonable success with my youngest dog, Floyd. He is a three year old miniature poodle that I rescued at the age of one. By reasonable success, I mean that getting all his NADAC Elite titles, AKC MX and MXJ and USDAA MAD is doable for him within the next year or two. I am 71 years old and have to admit to some aching of the bones and slowness in the reflexes so we have to

work with that. This year we unexpectedly qualified for the USDAA Grand Prix in Del Mar. We actually entered the regional just to get experience for next year. I guess part of our experience will be running in the Grand Prix.

This article would not be complete without mentioning her three agility partners. All of them were rescues and were none selected with agility in mind although some consideration had been given to that when Floyd joined the family.

Bonnie, CGC, OA, NAJ, OAC-V, NJC-V, NGC-V (Silver Miniature Poodle, 11 1/2 years old)

Clyde, CGC, AX, OAJ, OAC, OJC, EGC-V, AD (Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, 7 1/2 years old)

Pretty Boy Floyd, CGC, OA, OAJ, OAC, OJC, OGC, AD (Apricot Miniature Poodle, 3 1/2 years old).