



kingpin growl

vol. 1 no. 5

june 2001

imps spotlight alumnus of the month

by elizabeth treese



Willow doesn't run agility or excel in obedience. Willow has one trick. Does this make Willow exceptional? I think so, and here's why...

On August 2000, Jenny Sharpe and I met at a Cracker Barrel so I could pick up my two new fosters. She presented me with two very pretty, very scared little girls—Willow and Angel, as I came to call them. We think that the two of them had been puppy mill dogs but their past is unclear. After a very long day of driving, we arrived home.

I introduced them as I do all of my fosters. I placed them inside an ex-pen with the crate they had traveled in. I let my dogs out one at a time to inspect the "newcomers." When Angel and Willow finally peeked out of the crate it was clear that they were overwhelmed at the sight of my large backyard. "WOW... it's Australia" was the clear message. Angel immediately wanted out of the ex-pen to explore, but Willow remained inside the crate growling her little scared growly-growl. After about an hour, she ventured very cautiously outside of the crate and ultimately the ex-pen. I finally got a really good look at her. She was so thin that I could count each rib

and vertebra. She was dirty and smelly and her toenails were very long. A good gust of wind would have blown her away, so I named her Willow.

It seemed that Angel was her security blanket and she would run to her when she was frightened. Consequently I chose to put them together in the crate for feeding and sleeping. My mistake. It seems that Angel was consuming the lion's share of the dog food and she was clearly the "big boss" of Willow. After splitting them up, I discovered that Willow would not eat all of her food. Her stomach was so shrunken that she could not consume more than about a tablespoonful of food. I went on a quest to find something that would tempt her when she was full. You name it, I tried it. All of the healthy ideas that the list put out, I tried. Then one day I pulled a hot dog out of the freezer and decided to give that a try. I know it's junk, but she ate the ENTIRE thing! After a week of expanding her tummy, Willow was now packing on the pounds and eating her entire dinner. Of course she still loves hot dogs, but now they are just special treats.

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don't cross that threshold!

by donna luzzo

A dog that "bolts" through any open door is an accident waiting to happen. Teach your dog to go through doors only with your permission and keep him safe. Try this exercise on a door you can't see through. (It does not have to be an actual exit door.)

1. Put your dog on lead and walk towards the door. Do not coax the dog, just walk.
2. Open the door wide. When he runs out, close the door behind him. Be sure most of his lead is on your side of the door so he can't "explore." He should only be able to stand or sit there.
3. Leave him out there for a minute or so. Open the door, let him in and make a HUGE fuss over him ("Oh puppy, where were you? I missed you!! There was a party while you were gone!").
4. Walk away from the door, then back toward it and repeat the first steps. (If your dog goes back out, leave him out even longer.)
5. When you can open the door and the dog stays inside, or if he initially starts to cross the threshold and thinks better of it, praise and treat. Then tell him "Let's go!" walk out the door and have him follow.

Every dog is different. Some figure this out quickly; others can be shut outside the door a dozen times. If he goes out more than three times, considerably lengthen the time he's left out there. If your exit door is see-through, cover at least the bottom half with cardboard or newspaper so the dog can't see you. Remember, dogs don't generalize. Practice this exercise on every door you want your dog to "ask permission" to cross through.

So, you're wondering what the heck we agility folks are talking about when we brag (and whine) about our agility performances? Maybe I can help! Read on and I'll try and explain.

There are 4 main organizations in dog agility: **USDAA** (United States Dog Agility Association), **NADAC** (North American Dog Agility Council), **UKC** (United Kennel Club), and **AKC** (American Kennel Club). Each has its own style, regulations and equipment!

Jump Heights

USDAA has the highest in proportion to the dog. Twelve inches and under jump 12 inches, 16 inches and under jump 16 inches, 21 inches and under jump 22 inches and dogs taller than 21 inches jump 26 inches. The **USDAA** currently offers two programs: Championship and Performance. The above heights are the Championship Program requirements. The Performance Program allows dogs to jump one height lower with 12 inch dogs jumping 8 inches.

NADAC jumps are set up as follows: 11 inches or less jump 8 inches, 13 inches and under jump 12 inches, 17 inches and under jump 16 inches, 20 inches under jump 20 inches and dogs taller than 20 inches jump 24 inches. **NADAC** also offers a Veterans Program for dogs over 7 years old.

UKC heights are the lowest. Dogs less than 14 inches (Division 1) jump 8 inches, 14 to 20 inches (Division 2) jump 14 inches and dogs taller than 20 inches (Division 3) jump 20 inches.

AKC jumps are in the middle with dogs 10 inches and under jumping 8 inches, 10 to 14 inches jumping 12 inches, 14 to 18 inches jumping 16 inches, 18 to 22 inches jumping 20 inches and dogs taller than 22 inches jumping 24 inches.

Performance Faults

USDAA requires a clean (meaning perfect) score of 100 run under Standard Course Time (SCT) for a qualifying score. Each level has a different definition of faults, though. Starters/Novice does not call any refusals/run bys (dog runs past or stop before performing an obstacle). Advanced only calls these for contact obstacles. Masters calls them for everything! Weave poles are faulted in Advance if a dog misses a pole once he has entered the poles and in Masters they must be done correctly on the first try. Knocked bars are faulted, as are missed contacts (the yellow at the base of the up side and down side of contact obstacles), off courses and leaving the table before the count is finished.

NADAC requires a minimum score of 90 for a qualifying run earning 5 points and a clean run of 100 for 10 points. You need 30 points to obtain a title. Refusals are not faulted at any level; off courses are faulted 10 points. Knocked bars and missed weave poles are faulted 5 points each. Missed contacts (the yellow at the up and down side of contact obstacles) are faulted 10 points.

AKC requires a score of 85 to qualify. Refusals, run-bys and off courses are faulted at 5 points. You are permitted two refusals and one off course in Novice, one each in Open and no refusals and one off course in Excellence to qualify. Knocked bars and missed contacts will always get you eliminated. Weave poles are faulted differently in each level, too. In Novice you are not faulted at all. In Open you are not faulted for entries but are faulted for missed poles and in

Excellence you are faulted for entries and missed poles.

UKC requires a minimum score of 170 or better out of a possible 200. Refusals, run-bys and off courses are faulted based on judge's discretion as to the "severity" of the fault.

Time Faults

USDAA requires that courses be run under time in order to qualify.

NADAC and **UKC** assess 1 point per second for time over the SCT.

AKC varies the penalties for exceeding the SCT. In Novice, time faults are 1 point per second. In Open, time faults are 2 points per second and in Excellent it's 3 points per second.

Handling Faults

Although each organization has its own idea of what constitutes a handling fault, there are some that are recognized across the board. None of the venues allow handlers to "pop" the dogs' collars at the start line (where collars are allowed) and several frown on pushing your dog into position. Handlers are not permitted to hold or grab their dogs by the scruff of their necks, even to hold them at the start line! Once your dog has begun running the course you cannot touch your dog for any reason. At no time is any "questionable" attitude to the dog permitted! If you think it might look bad, it probably does and the judge will excuse you for it. Judges are even very particular about the tone of voice used on course! If it sounds like you're mad, you probably are and the judge will ask you to leave the ring and "cool off." A biggie is foul language—don't ever let even a little bitty "damn" slip out. If you do, you're outta there, with a reprimand!

Collars

USDAA and **NADAC** do not allow collars on course. In **AKC**, collars are optional and in **UKC**, they're mandatory. No attachments of any kind are allowed in **AKC** but the **UKC** allows a flat plate to be affixed to a collar as an I.D. The only collars allowed in both are flat buckle or snap

collars. Pinch collars, Halti or Gentle Leader collars and any electronic collars are not permitted on **AKC** show grounds. Pinch collars are not permitted in any ring, even to walk your dog in. Slip collars are permitted by all the organizations but must be removed before your dog runs the course.

Equipment

The standard equipment that you'll see at every trial is the a-frame, dog walk, teeter totter, open tunnel, closed tunnel (chute), table, weave poles, spread jumps and bar jumps. The **UKC** has some additional equipment that is very unique and challenging in its own way. They have a crawl tunnel (the dog literally crawls on his belly under a fabric barrier), deck jump (the dog gets onto a low "deck," sits, jumps over onto another deck, sits, then proceeds) hoop tunnel (yep, it's made out of hula hoops), swing plank (a wood plank is suspended between 4 corners of a frame and swings as the dog walks over it) and sway bridge (like the wooden, swinging bridges you see at playgrounds). The a-frame heights range from 5'6" to 6'3" in **USDAA**, 4'11" to 5'6" in **AKC**, 5'6" in **NADAC**, and 4'11" in **UKC**. Dog walks are similar in all the venues, as are the teeter-totters.

Hopefully this helps answer at least some of your questions. Happy jumping!



Nikki, OA, OAJ, NAC, NJC, NGC, AD (natural ears) and Jester, OA, AXJ, NAC, OJC, NGC, AD show their stuff on the agility course.



Robin's Murphy (front) and Millie hang out in a restored milk truck.



Paxton peeks out from inside of his comforter fortress (that he made all by himself!).

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Emme (top) and Niki chillin' around the condo.

willow, continued from page 1

Willow stayed in or close to her crate for the first week at my house, growling and fussing if anybody came near her. She cried and scratched all night wanting out of her crate. After a couple of sleepless nights, I put her in our bed. Well, you know the rest.

Willow was and is terrified of new things. The first time I put a collar and her IMPS tag on her, she flattened to the ground and refused to move. The jingle noise was more than she could handle. I removed the tags and went slowly. Everything was new and scary—baths, toenail trimming, phones, doorbells, strangers. Willow faces each new challenge with such courage. She wants so desperately to be a “good girl” that she will try even though she is scared. She still flattens out and cowers when she’s scared, but an encouraging word or pat on the head gives her the resolve to try again.

Willow had so much tartar on her teeth that it distorted her cheeks. I got out my scraper, toothbrush and toothpaste and resolved to clean her teeth. She sat so still and was so brave during her cleaning. Now she has pretty pearly whites when she smiles!

Time went on and the decision to separate the girls was made. It was clear that Willow didn’t need Angel to boss her around. A wonderful home near Atlanta was found for Angel. Willow seemed to blossom and thrive. Applications came and went for Willow but they were never good enough. Then one day I received the inevitable e-mail. The perfect home was found for Willow. I started crying right then. I e-mailed Lynn; I called Emily; I talked to Lonnie. And then I cried some more. I just didn’t believe that anybody else’s home was any better for her than mine. So I decided to adopt her.

So what to do with this little dog? I couldn’t show her in conformation; she is way too insecure for agility. So I took Willow along with me to dog shows as an ambassador for IMPS. What a



Willow “Takes a Bow.”

brave dog! She loves going to the shows, lets everybody pet her and walks nicely on her leash now. She still isn’t crazy about being crated or staying in the ex-pen. She’s much happier lying at my feet in my booth. I sell show clothing at the dog shows and Willow is the “booth dog” now. I also have the beautiful IMPS banner (courtesy of Toni Rhoadhouse) and display it along with Willow at all the shows.

Everybody that meets Willow loves her on sight. She actually has a fan club at each show. They remember her name and stop by to see her, often asking, “Where is Willow?” Lynn taught her “clicker”

after about 30 minutes at the show in Atlanta. She now will prick up her ears at the sound and we are trying to learn new tricks. Her one trick is “Take a Bow.”

On May 19 at the Ft Myers, FL dog show, Willow participated in the Parade of Rescues—a time for only rescue dogs to shine. She really seemed to enjoy the special attention. She went round the ring while the announcer read her story over the PA. And right on cue Willow “Took a Bow” to applause and laughter from the crowd. We are looking forward to more of these parades and hope that they have more. Way to go, Willow!

Why is Willow exceptional? I don’t know. Is it because she gives “special” kisses on your eyelashes if she really loves you? Ask Tracey (her official Godmother), ask Mary who drove three hours to the last show JUST to see Willow, ask the Pedigree lady from the last show who snuck outside to give her treats, ask the ice cream lady who came over with a small bowl of ice cream “just for Willow.”

Willow, my One Trick Dog. Love you, sweetie.
Take a Bow, Willow!

my name is moonbeam “mandy and jake” episode 2, part 2

by i. z. sakaal

One of the people started talking. She said her name was Mandy and the other person was her boyfriend Jake. They were on their way to Florida to work in the orchards picking fruit to earn money to live on.

They were only sixteen years old, just kids really, and had run away from their homes in Texas because they wanted to find some adventure and start a life of their own without the nagging of parents. They knew the police were probably looking for them so they had to stay pretty much out of sight and getting lost among the hundreds or maybe even thousands of migrant workers they felt would be pretty safe for them.

Jake’s old car had never run very good but it had gotten them out of Texas and into Arkansas. The problem was, the car had died and they had been camped here a couple of days trying to decide what to do.

Mandy said she had not been asleep all the way when Moonbeam had crept into the camp last night and once she saw it was a dog and not some wild animal after the leftovers from dinner, she had placed the plate out for her in the hopes that she would stick around and become friends.

Having a dog, even a small dog like her along would greatly increase their feeling of security. Moonbeam was thinking, “Fine, whatever, is there anything else to eat?”

They had decided to pack whatever they could carry and hike about a mile to the southeast, where there was a long uphill grade with train tracks, and try to hump a freight train east. They would be leaving with the coming night and she was welcome to come along.

They had been hiding in the trees a few feet from the train tracks for hours waiting for a freight train to come along. They were about halfway up the incline figuring the train would be going its slowest as it topped the rise and they could climb into an open boxcar relatively easily. At this point, the train would be barely moving before it started to pick up speed as it started downhill on the other side.

Moonbeam was in Mandy’s knapsack with her head sticking out. Mandy had worked with her all afternoon showing her that she had to be carried in the sack because Mandy would need both of her hands free to climb aboard the boxcar as it passed. Moonbeam had been afraid at first, remembering

the other sack, but Mandy was gentle—although persistent—explaining to her that it was the only way she would be able to get on the train with them without getting hurt.

It was a cold night and actually being in the knapsack was fairly warm, and at least she could stick her head out where she could breathe. Just before dawn, the rails started singing and far down in the valley they could see the headlight as a train snaked its way around a wide curve and started the long ascent uphill. Gathering their belongings, they prepared to jump into the first open boxcar that presented itself.

Mandy and Jake had been working picking winter oranges in a large orchard outside of Tyron, Florida for about a week. It paid twenty cents a bushel and was very hard backbreaking work. There was no automation in these fields. They would spend most of the day high up on a ladder clearing the tops of the trees. That’s where all the rookies started.

Between them, they only cleared about twelve dollars a day and this was barely enough to see to their basic needs. Somehow, after three and a half months and a half-dozen camps, their idealistic dreams were becoming slightly faded.

Moonbeam always stayed near the tree they were working on, looking up and watching them. As the long day wore on, their hands would start to cramp up and they would lose their grip on the oranges and they would fall to the soft sand mat the trees grew in. These were easy pickings for the ground pickers and they went from tree to tree and filled their baskets with the “drops” of the other pickers, which was a lot easier than climbing ladders.

All except for the tree that Mandy and Jake were working on. When they came around to collect the drops from their tree, Moonbeam would warn them in no uncertain terms that they were to leave well alone and go on about their thievery somewhere else.

When her friends dropped an orange, she would gather it up and place it in a pile so they could claim them at the end of the day to add to their amount. The first time one of her friends had dropped an orange, Moonbeam tried to catch it and learned the hard way how heavy and solid these oranges were. It hit her on top of the head and knocked her cold. When she came to, Mandy was cradling her and crying because she thought the orange had killed

moonbeam continued

her.

From then on, she made sure the orange hit the sand and had come to a complete stop before she picked it up and took it to her pile. Of course, the first orange to fall after she had been cold-cocked she attacked with a vengeance of righteous indignation just to show it she was still the boss here on the ground.

They made their camp in a clump of woods close to the orchard where they worked. There was always a small store close by where their daily pay would get them some canned food and sometimes even a treat. They shared their meager fare with Moonbeam and in the cool evenings, Moonbeam usually slept up under Mandy's chin. Mandy would cry in her sleep sometimes, and when she did, Moonbeam would always snuggle up a little closer and give her cheek and neck licks until her sobbing stopped.

When they had to move on, they always jumped a freight train to a new area where harvesting was still in progress. Moonbeam would sit in the open boxcar door and bark joyfully at passing trees, or animals or cars or people. Sometimes Jake would join her and they would both be barking at everything that passed.

After five months of this life, the bright silver dream was tarnished to a deep black despair. Jake wanted to go home but Mandy thought they should stick it out for a while longer—it had to get better. When they argued like this Moonbeam would always stay away from them. Sometimes these arguments got very loud and this distressed her very much.

This was not the adventure they had thought it would be; it was nothing like the movies and the television shows. Reality has an awful way of leaping up and biting a person very hard. The whole argument became academic, however, when Mandy discovered she was pregnant.

Sadly, Mandy dropped a dime and called her parents. She told them where they were, their situation and that she and Jake were ready to come home—would they please help them.

About an hour later, the Sheriff's car pulled up and the field boss pointed Mandy and Jake out to him. The Sheriff approached them and told them

that Mandy's father had called and would be there in a couple of days as he would be driving and had requested that they be taken into protective custody until both of their parents could get there.

Resigned to the inevitable, they went to get in the police car, Mandy reached down to pick up Moonbeam to take her along when the Sheriff stopped her saying that she couldn't take the dog and he would call animal control to come and get it.

Mandy then refused to get in the car without her friend and the Sheriff had to physically and forcefully place her in the back seat where Jake was already sitting. Seeing her struggling with the Sheriff, Moonbeam took this as an aggressive action to Mandy and in a blur of motion raced forward and sank her teeth into the Sheriff's leg.

The Sheriff howled, pushed Mandy into the back seat, slammed the door shut and pulled his nightstick to brain this aggressive, little dog. He kept swiping his nightstick and Moonbeam kept dodging and running in like a streak of lightning and biting again. The Sheriff finally threw his nightstick at Moonbeam, barely missing and went for his handgun.

Mandy and Jake were both screaming "Run, Little Girl, run!" So without hesitation Moonbeam took off for the shelter of the woods as fast as she could. She heard a crack behind her and something went whistling over her head.

Another crack and part of a tree to her right that she was just passing exploded into splinters. She entered the tree line still at a dead sprint and kept going, not looking back. She ran until she was ready to drop, and exhausted finally stopped, panting heavily trying to catch her breath.

Not knowing what else to do, after she caught her breath, she just continued straight on through the underbrush. She would circle back later and try and pick up Jake and Mandy's scent and follow them wherever they had been taken.

As she rounded a large stump she froze. She was staring directly into the yellow and green malevolent eyes of a noisy tail, coiled to strike. She saw the blur of the attack and the extended dripping fangs aimed right at her neck.

**Coming in the next issue! Episode 3 of Moonbeam's Adventures
"Butkus"**