

OTCH RUDY!!

by Gerianne Darnell

Hurrah, call out the airplanes and write it across the sky: My sweet Rudy is an Obedience Trial Champion!

It happened in June at the Iowa City/Cedar Rapids shows. Of course it did not lack drama! On Friday morning I showed Rumor in agility at the Des Moines show. The way the schedule was set up, I should have had NO trouble making the one hour, 45 minute drive to Iowa City in time for the obedience show that afternoon. Unfortunately, the agility trial started an hour late, and then the Jumps With Weaves course seemed to require a lot of tweaking by the judge. But, how could I leave, with a Double Q on the line? Rumor did qualify in JWW and picked up another Double Q towards his Master Agility Championship, and then I literally threw him and Rudy in the car to start our trek to Iowa City. I started out driving 70, then 75, and finally I was going 80 MPH thinking that a speeding ticket was not going to help my anxiety any. I also discovered on the way to Iowa City that I had left the directions to the show site back in Des Moines! but I was lucky enough to take the right exit and find the show site easily. I ran into the building, still wearing my shorts and T-shirt from the agility trial, to find there were four dogs left in Utility, and two of them were mine! and that they were getting ready to do the first set of sits and downs in Open. Since I was also showing Rumor in Open and Utility along with Rudy, I really wanted to split the dogs in the two stay groups. The Open judge, Chuck Bush, was so kind to let me literally toss Rumor into the Open ring and get in on the first set of stays. I then spent the entire three minutes of the sit stay apologizing to my fellow competitors for making them wait. Rumor had a nice run in Open, and then went right into Utility. I came out of the ring with Rumor, and then immediately went in to the Utility ring with Rudy, followed by HIS Open run and stays. I felt like I was meeting myself coming and going.

When the second set of stays was over, and the judge was tallying up the scores, I asked my friend Judy which dog she thought was better, Rudy or Rumor, so I could warm up for a runoff. She said, oh Rudy for sure, so I warmed Rudy up a little bit. Then of course Rumor got called in for a runoff! which I wasn't very prepared for. We went in for awards, and I thought, oh darn, we screwed up the runoff and won't be in on the placements now. And then the judge called Rudy's number for First Place with a 198!!! I was shocked, and thrilled, and just plain old delighted. Several of the top dogs in the country were in attendance, and I didn't think we had a prayer. The win was good for ten points, taking us up to 97 OTCH points. I was already plotting and planning the next weekend of shows in July and hoping that he could finish there, because how could lightning strike twice in the same weekend???

The next day we drove up to Cedar Rapids for the second obedience show of the weekend. The show was held in a delightful, cool, air conditioned building, what a contrast to the hot agility trial and warm conditions for obedience the day before. Rudy had a decent Utility run, but had a corner go out, so I knew we didn't have a shot at any OTCH points in that class. Rumor also qualified in Utility (a VERY silly run, he was actually chasing his tail between exercises at one point, sigh), and then Rumor had a very pretty Open run for his second UDX leg. Rudy then went into the Open ring and had what I thought was an OK performance, but not great, and I thought Rumor was better. When the class was over, I decided to warm up Rumor instead of Rudy. I was primed and ready to go in the ring for a runoff with Rumor, but he didn't get called in. We then went in for awards, and First Place was Gary Platt and Homer with 199 1/2. Then, shock, shock, shock, RUDY'S number was called for Second Place with 199. We had to do a quick count of dogs, and then figured out that it was JUST enough points to finish Rudy's OTCH!!! Hot Damn and Hallelujah!! We floated back to Des Moines that afternoon, we were entered in agility on Sunday. We had so much fun the next day at the agility trial

telling all of our Des Moines friends about Rudy's OTCH. I was already entered in the shows in Sedalia two weeks later, which I thought about skipping. I'm sure glad I decided to go, as Rudy was High in Trial both days, and also High Combined on Sunday, with a score on Saturday of 199 1/2! The prize for High in Trial on Saturday was a color television set; I finally managed to impress my husband with a prize I won at a dog show!

And then a few weeks after that, Rudy worked a lovely Open class at the Fort Dodge UKC shows, earning a perfect score of 200 while earning his UKC CDX!

Rudy is the son of my beloved little Zipper, whom I lost to old age a year ago. (Rudy and Zipper are the first father/son OTCH TDX Papillons). Rudy was truly a "love puppy", brought home to live with us solely because he was Zipper's son; he certainly wasn't chosen because he had some kind of great potential as a performance dog! My husband George fell in love with Rudy at first sight, and he has always been George's special pet. It was apparent to me early on that Rudy did not have much of an aptitude for obedience competition, but we loved him so much, I just started training him anyway. He was my main seminar demo dog for a few years, as I figured that could be his "job" in life, along with being a great therapy dog. We started to show, and earned some titles, and shortly after his UD he picked up his first ten OTCH points with a utility win. The judge that day said to me "Well, it looks like there's another OTCH in the making for you", and I was truly shocked at the thought! Since then Rudy has steadily picked up points, and never really had any dry spells; he was usually right in the thick of things. When he unexpectedly got his TDX this past May at the Papillon National, it finally started to dawn on me that perhaps I HAD underestimated what Rudy had to give me. Or maybe love and persistence and a lot of help from a lot of people really does overcome great obstacles.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank a few people. First of all, thanks to my training buddy Julie Simmons. Julie has always been there with a helpful suggestion, a training or showing plan, or a kick in the butt if necessary. If Julie couldn't win a class, she was always thrilled for me if I did. Thanks, Julie! Also thanks to Gary Platt, who was most helpful with re-training Rudy's fronts and finishes, and was always one of Rudy's biggest fans. Thanks also to my friends Shirlee Jacobson and Phyllis Fleming, who patiently kept saying "Of course he will finish, of course he will finish!". Thanks to my mom, Gerry Forristall, who often kept my other dogs during my travels, to the point that they didn't want to come home when I would go to pick them up! Now, THAT'S a great place to leave your dogs! I'll always be grateful to my holistic veterinarian, Diane Simmons, who helped turn Rudy into a sound, flexible competitor, and became a friend along the way. Thanks to my partner in writing crime, Barbara Cecil, whose support always means so much and whose own accomplishments always inspire me. And of course thanks to my dogs' breeder and "Grandma" Lou Ann King, who has even learned how to say "Oh, he got an 8 today", instead of a 198. Special thanks goes to Judy Varner, my main travelling buddy, who keeps me laughing all weekend every weekend, whether we do well in the ring or not. I'd also like to thank my internet friends (you know who you are!) for always being there for me, in the good times and the bad times, too.

My biggest thank you is reserved for my husband George, who patiently had to put up with yet another OTCH campaign (my fourth), and being without his best buddy Rudy on the weekends. And, THANK YOU RUDY, for being such a good, sweet boy. To go from being lost in a cornfield for two days to an OTCH eleven months later, it just blows my mind. I'd say I was speechless but I doubt anybody would believe it!

What's next for Rudy? Lots of loving and admiring, that's for sure, some UKC and CKC titles, finishing up his MXJ (he needs just one leg), and some VST tracking. Lots more fun and love on the

way. Until Rumor quits chasing his tail in the utility ring and being in charge of comedy relief, it will be awhile until we have OTCH number five.

Gerianne and OTCH U-CDX U-Ag2 Loteki Secret Agent UDX TDX MX AXJ,
OAC NJC NGC