

AKC JR. NEWS



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR THE AKC JUNIOR ORGANIZATION, VOL. 2, NO. 2 SUMMER 1998

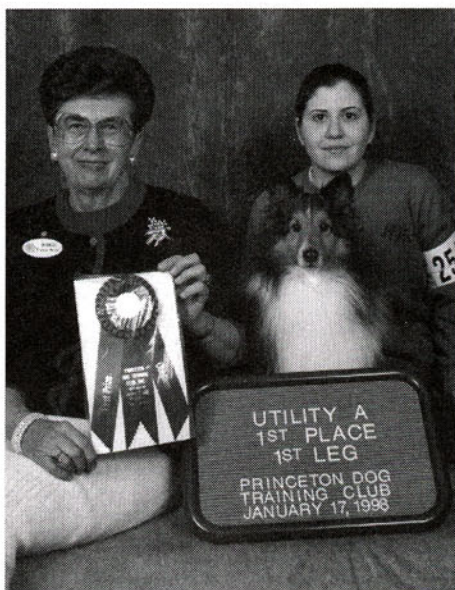
JUNIOR HANDLERS AND OBEDIENCE

BY DANIELLE ZEZULINSKI

Whenever I reveal the fact that I train and show my dogs in obedience to another junior handler, I usually receive a surprised, or even startled, look. For some reason, the thought of doing something other than conformation or Junior Showmanship is foreign to most juniors; indeed, I have only a handful of junior friends that actively pursue titles in obedience. It seems like the general consensus of those not involved in obedience regard it as more difficult and less exciting than conformation and junior show. But to those who do train their dogs in obedience, even just to the pre-novice level, find that it has definite rewards and benefits.

Obedience is the perfect sport for juniors because everyone is equal in obedience. A judge cannot qualify a friend whose dog failed an exercise; conversely, a judge can not deny a win to a junior because of the handler's age. The numbers tell the story, and if yours is the highest, the blue ribbon is yours. No variables enter the picture; the playing field is equal, so to speak, and it is not unusual to see a child as young as five or six years old in the ring with dogs — followed by older fanciers above age 70. Similarly, any dog can compete in obedience since conformation faults, coat quality, markings, and other faults are not considered. However, dogs entered in obedience should be in good health and maintain a low body weight, especially in the more advanced classes where dogs are jumping and stress is placed on their shoulders and elbows.

Junior fanciers are welcome at obedience



At right, Danielle and her Shetland Sheepdog earning qualifying leg in Utility. At left, Judge Patricia Scully, AKC board member.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Juniors Participating in Other Events:

Three of the articles in this issue have been submitted from juniors, or aged-out juniors, describing how their interest in dogs has allowed them to participate in different activities with their dogs. In Lisa Miller's case, she helped train a service dog to provide a handicapped individual assistance in life. It is hoped that these may encourage you to look into the other activities that you can participate in with your dog.

One of the goals of the National Junior Organization is to develop and introduce programs for juniors to participate in all AKC events. At this time we are still in the early planning stages and would appreciate any ideas, thoughts, and suggestions that you may have. What we hope to instill is responsible dog ownership and that there are many different ways you may compete with your dog. Please forward any and all ideas as to how you would like to be acknowledged, what achievements should be rewarded and even ideas for a Super Junior to Mari-Beth O'Neill, National Junior Organization Liaison, 5580 Centerview Ave., Raleigh, NC 27606-3390. ■

trials in many ways. Most clubs offer special prizes for the highest scoring junior handler, and welcome juniors into their clubs. Just like in conformation, many of the junior obedience competitors were "born into it" and have parents who are active in the sport, perhaps giving them an advantage in training and in the ring. However, anyone can train a dog to successfully compete in obedience. There really is no

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Danielle showing her Shetland Sheepdog in juniors. Danielle qualified for Westminster in 1997 and participated in the 1997 Pedigree Nationals.

such thing as “natural talent” in obedience; in juniors I have heard many times that so-and-so is “naturally” a good handler. It is my opinion that only people with a “natural” way with dogs are drawn to competitive dog sports, so all of us have it!

Obedience is a measure of how dedicated you are to perfecting your dog’s performance. Competing in obedience is not physically hard, it is mentally hard — it is a test to see how well your dog performs certain commands, which in turn is a measure of how well you have trained your dog. It is different from Junior Showmanship in the sense that you cannot take a dog into the ring cold, not having practiced in a week or two. In juniors, the handler can cover for a dog’s fidgeting of moving with bait and reassuring words. In obedience, however, there are no second chances. In obedience, you and your dog are working as a team in the ring — you nor your dog are solely being judged. The stress involved stems from

the necessary trust between handler and dog, and whether the dog trusts the handler enough to complete the exercise, but remember that the dog is under stress as well, and that goofs in obedience usually come from nervousness — just like the goofs that happen in Junior Showmanship, when handlers get really tense.

Try not to forget that the dog will try to please his handler in whatever he does. So if Rover just doesn’t get the hang of a finish right away, switch to a simpler exercise that he knows how to do and end your lesson. If you end on a bad note, Rover will worry about what he has done to upset you, and he will associate training with negative images of displeasing you. Don’t force the dog to learn a difficult exercise right away, but at the same time, don’t let him end the session by running off or quitting. Make sessions short and enjoyable; obedience should be fun for both the junior and the dog. Not only will the bond between the dog and his master grow

stronger, but this strengthening will be reflected in the juniors ring. Obedience instills confidence in the dog, and confident dogs sparkle in conformation and juniors. It is possible to have a “dual-ring dog” — or, for juniors, a “triple-ring dog”. It takes concentration, dedication, and love, but juniors already have those attributes. So try some obedience with your dog — you may be surprised by finding another hobby for you and your dog.

To Get Started:

If juniors want to become involved in obedience, first find a trainer. To find a reputable trainer, one who will teach you competitive obedience rather than “pet” or basic obedience, visit the obedience areas of the next all-breed show and ask competitors to recommend a trainer. Find out where the classes are held, what levels the trainer offers, and the credentials of the trainer. How many titles has that person put on the dog? How about the degrees — any CDs, CDXs, UD, OTCHs? Ask about the person’s personal relationship with the trainer — is the person happy with the training received? Is the trainer interested in being successful, or is the trainer distant? Choosing a trainer is like evaluating a vet; unless you have complete confidence in this person, don’t go. Like a veterinarian deals with your dog’s health, a trainer deals with your dog’s temperament and behavior. Beware of people who claim to be professional trainers, who only teach puppy kindergarten, socialization, and behavior modification. A good trainer will do more than that, including offering lessons through utility with titles to back up their methods.

Editor’s note:

If you wish to get started in obedience, contact your local obedience club.

Note eligibility for showing in Obedience: Chapter 14, Section 1 of the Dog Show Rules shall apply to entries in Licensed or Member Obedience Trials, except that an eligible unregistered dog for which an ILP number has been issued by the American Kennel Club may be entered indefinitely in such events provided the ILP number is shown on the entry form. ■

THINGS I HAVE LEARNED

BY DR. DONALD STURZ

In 1969, I showed our family's first Golden Retriever in my first Junior Showmanship competition. Twenty-nine years, many dogs and many shows later, I have been asked to share some of my experiences and my perspectives. To lend some credibility to the thoughts I express, it's important that you know that I actively competed in Junior Showmanship and was fortunate to have enjoyed the thrill of ranking as the Top Junior in the U.S. for 1974, 1975, and 1976. From age 12 to age 20, I apprenticed under a number of professional handlers. With my family, I bred, owned and exhibited all-breed and specialty Best-in-Show-winning Golden Retrievers. As a young adult, I bred, owned and exhibited all-breed and specialty Best in Show winning Pembroke Welsh Corgis. Throughout the years I have owned and exhibited a variety of breeds, with a particular focus in Poodles and sighthounds.

In 1984, I began publishing The Golden Retriever Review and shortly thereafter I started the The Labrador Review. Both were bi-monthly magazines with an international focus. In 1990, I began judging, being approved to judge Goldens, Labradors, Poodles, Pembroke Welsh Corgis, and Junior Showmanship. Presently, I am approved to judge Best in Show,

all sporting breeds, Afghans, Borzoi, Dachshunds, Greyhounds, Irish Wolfhounds, Salukis, Scottish Deerhounds, Whippets, Poodles, Pembroke Welsh Corgis, and juniors. Judging has taken me throughout the United States, Canada, South America, Sweden, and Australia. The obvious highlight for me was judging at the 1998 Westminster Kennel Club

show.

Clearly, I have been immersed in the sport of dogs for the greater part of my life. However, I had time to get an education. I earned my doctorate in clinical psychology, and work as a clinical psychologist. I also ride and compete on hunters and jumpers, play tennis, and I like to travel. I have been able to enjoy my family, create a home, and pursue a committed relationship. I highlighted my successes in dogs to establish credibility, but they are not what is most important. What truly matters to me are the things I learned along the way.

The first thing I learned was a sense of commitment and responsibility. The activity was one that mattered enough to make it a priority. Devoting time outside of school to improving my skill in handling and grooming and expanding my knowledge of dogs was an effective way to learn how to discipline myself and manage time. These factors became essentials in my educational pursuits and in my business and professional ventures.

I also learned how to handle competition. I learned that participating in competition was mostly about being aware of your personal best. If one puts forth the best effort, then that is what matters. What competition does is challenge people to keep raising their own expectations of their own personal best. If a person can keep that in perspective, it can be a great motivation for improvement.

Competition teaches a person how to be a gracious loser. To be able to look at the situation objectively and determine what one can do to improve the outcome the next time around is a good perspective to develop. Also, one should be able to see the qualities their competitors possess, whether human or canine, and admire them. Of equal and sometimes greater importance, one learns how to be a gracious winner. It means being appreciative, humble, and aware that the acknowledgment is of the immediate performance and not of one's self.

Junior Showmanship was the foundation for my judging interest in a few ways. It provided the setting for an appreciation of dogs across breeds. Being able to learn the nuances

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Donald Sturz as a junior showing his Golden Retriever in conformation.



Dr. Sturz judging a Best in Show in 1998.

of each breed, and what distinguishes one breed from another, is the cornerstone of my judging perspective. As a teen, my junior friends and I would organize mock competitions after each show. We all exchanged dogs and one of us judged. When handling my friends' dogs, I got hands-on experience with the conformation and character differences among breeds. In the role of judge, I got my first exposure to the challenge of organizing, evaluating and sorting. This shaped my goal for

my future involvement in the sport.

Lastly, I would say that the thing I am most thankful for is that participating in Junior Showmanship provided me the experience of being passionate about something. Having a passion in one's life is not something everyone experiences, but it is clearly a significant element when I assess my life. It allowed me to know what it feels like when something in life matters so intensely that you would feel an emptiness without it. It is how I've gauged the

significance of other factors in my life. I have never settled for less when assessing satisfaction, both personally and professionally.

This leads me to the point where I will close with these recommendations. Enjoy your youth and take all you can from the experience of being involved with Junior Showmanship and other facets of our sport. But set your sights high for your future. Allow yourself as many doors to open as possible. Pursue education, develop skills and experience the diversity that the world has to offer. The sport of dogs is a great activity in that it brings together people from all walks of life, providing an arena for sharing our appreciation and love for our animals and offers opportunity for sporting competition. It has been around for over a century and it will continue to exist well into another. Don't be afraid to step away and develop other aspects of yourself for fear of losing your status or just losing touch. All are welcomed back as if no time had passed at all. And if you fear that you won't have the ability or the passion in another area, consider that perhaps your experience in the sport of dogs may have developed qualities in you that you aren't aware of — qualities that will serve you well wherever you go. Then when you return to the sport, you will have all that much more to offer back. ■

ATTENTION:

Does your national breed club do anything for Juniors such as seminars, awards, or scholarships? If they do, please share them with us. If not, we have some ideas we could share with you.

Please send all ideas and requests to Mari-Beth O'Neill, 5580 Centerview Dr., Raleigh, NC 27606-3390.

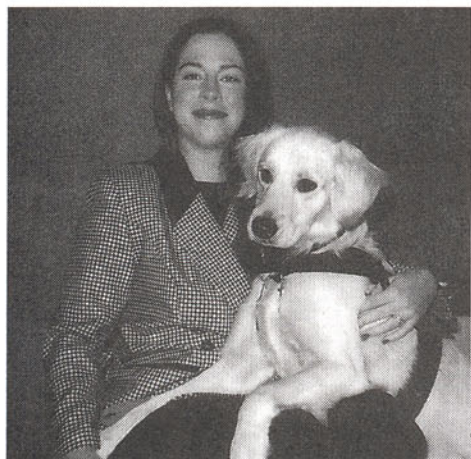


Pictured above are the Junior Showmanship winners from the Westminster Kennel Club 1998 Show. Congratulations to all of them! Angela Lloyd (center), 1st Place. Angela also took first place at Pedigree International, Best Junior Crufts 1998. Kristen Karboski (Left), 2nd Place. Jessica Plourde (Second from right), 3rd place. Brianne Major (Right), 4th Place.

TRAINING DOGS FOR SERVICE WORK

What began as a project for a technical writing class at Texas A&M University has turned into a great partnership with Texas Hearing and Service Dogs.

Lisa Miller, a junior in marine biology, took the lead and got this project underway during the spring 1996 semester at Texas A&M. She presented a proposal to the uni-



Above: Lisa Miller, shown here with Abby, competed in Junior handling both Rhodesian Ridgebacks and Pointers. Lisa was a 1994 Pedigree finalist, as well as qualifying for Westminster.

Right: Michael Douglas was the recipient of Abby, the service dog Lisa trained.

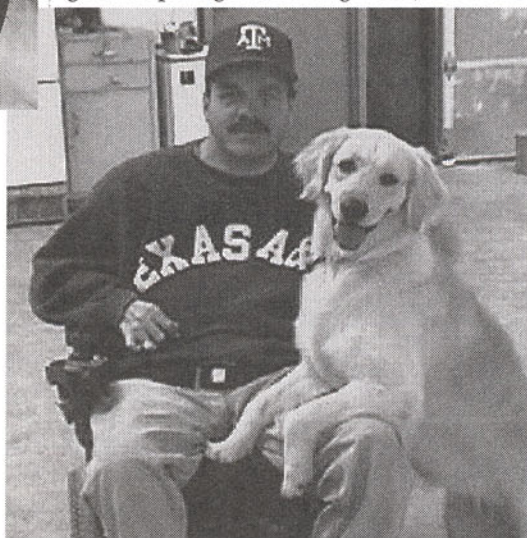
versity, asking that the university allow a dog to stay on campus, although the university had a "no pet" rule. She stressed that this dog would not be a pet, but a dog in training. The university approved the program for the fall of 1997 semester, and Lisa and Abby were the pilots for the program.

Abby, an 18-month-old Golden Retriever, arrived on campus to apprehensive fellow residents, but soon she captured their hearts. The campus setting was an excellent training ground. It provided the dog a chance to experience many environments that the dog could encounter once it was given to its final owner. Abby went everywhere with Lisa, from classes to the cafeteria. Lisa received support from her

roommate, and knew that her roommate would exercise Abby if Lisa wasn't able to.

Lisa had shown in Junior Showmanship and trained dogs for several years, but the method used by the program was different than what she normally used to train her own dogs. Before bringing Abby to campus, Lisa went to classes at the program's headquarters and kept in very close contact with the trainers all during this process. Using "clicker training" (a positive reinforcement technique), Lisa trained Abby to tug, push, and retrieve on command. An old tie, knotted in several places, was used to teach Abby how to open things. The same method was used for learning how to close things, except a dot was attached to be pushed.

According to Lisa, "Abby had gotten so good at opening and shutting doors, she would



be right there anytime either I or my roommate would go into the refrigerator [and] she was there ready to shut the door."

Before Abby could attend class, she was taught how to sit quietly for 30 minutes. Lisa accomplished this by having Abby sit by her side while she studied. This is where Lisa put her time management skills to good use. She was actively training while still getting her schoolwork done. Once Abby was ready to go to classes she would go with Lisa to all of them, except for Lisa's lab sessions. One area of the campus where Lisa had to work especially hard with Abby was around the pool.

Lisa said, "Her natural instincts would take over, and she would want to jump in, especially if she heard people."

Lisa worked with Abby through the fall semester and knew in December she would have to give her back to finish her training. When December came it was very hard, but Lisa knew that Abby was going where she was needed more. Abby would fine-tune her skills back at the Texas Hearing and Service Dogs center in Dayton, Texas. At the end of January 1998, Abby was united with her new owner, Michael Douglas, a quadriplegic. Michael works for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in College Station, Texas, and is a Texas A&M graduate. Each dog is customized to meet the needs of its new owner. Michael and Abby trained together at the center and Abby finally went home with him in the middle of March.

As for Lisa, she now has a new dog which she has been working with this semester. Patty, a Lab mix, is being trained as a hearing dog. Tremendous interest about this program has grown on campus. Lisa has another student who is helping her in training Patty. She hopes that this fall there will be two dogs on campus. Eventually, she would like to have a supervisor and two trainers on campus.

Lisa will spend her summer doing an internship at an aquarium in Niagara Falls, New York. She is also preparing to apply to veterinary schools. One thing is for sure, according to Lisa: "Dogs in some way will always be a part of my life." ■

For information about volunteering with Texas Hearing and Service Dogs, or to apply to have a dog trained for you, call (281) 497-2505. Leave a message for Angie Sumpter.

For general information about the program, call the group's office at (512) 891-9090. Leave a message for Shari Henderson. To find such an organization in your area, contact Assistance Dogs International at (610) 869-4902 or www.assistance-dogs-int.org.

Similar programs are conducted for Seeing Eye dogs.

WINNING IS NICE - SOMETIMES

BY ALEXANDER MOLINSKI

My name is Adam Alexander Molinski, I am 10 years old, and this is my first year as an AKC Junior. I've always been interested in dogs, horses and other animals, but for a long time all we had as a pet was a cat. When a neighbor asked my brother if he would be interested in learning how to show her dogs, I was eight years old and he was 12. Before he could even answer, I screamed, "I'll do it!"

The only problem was that my neighbor's dogs were Bernese Mountain Dogs and they weighed about three times as much as I did. At first it was frustrating because Jesse, the female, was very headstrong and everything was fine until she didn't listen to me. Then she would just pull me through the mud until I let go — but I stuck with it and earned a blue ribbon in the first Bernese Mountain Dog fun match that I went to.

It was the most amazing feeling. I felt so proud and happy. I had something special I could show all my friends. Nobody I knew had ever won a blue ribbon at a dog show.

I had asked Morgan, one of my best friends, to come with me to that first fun match. I was really glad I did, because it was so much fun that I wanted to do it again, and I wanted to do it with a friend. That's when I saw a poster that said the Shawsheen Valley 4-H Club Spring Dog Show was going to be held at the same fairgrounds the very next weekend. I asked Morgan if she'd do it too, with her dog, Calypso, and she said, "Yes."

The day came. We were both really excited and even won another blue ribbon. Then Jesse sat down and wouldn't move, so we lost out in the championship round, and Calypso got so confused that she wouldn't do much of anything.

At this show my mom met the 4-H leaders who organized the show. She found out that Shawsheen Valley 4-H leaders had a weekly dog training group, and Morgan and I were invited to join. Carpooling with Morgan once a week to go to 4-H training is one of my favorite days of the week.

After a few months of 4-H, I started tak-

ing care of my neighbor's male Bernese Mountain Dog, Babar, full-time. It's almost an hour drive from my house to the 4-H club meetings, but all that driving is worth it



Alexander shown here with Clipper winning 1st place.

because I learn so much. We learn how to clean our dog's teeth, cut their nails, and other grooming habits. At our meetings we practiced as if we were in a real show ring. We practice obedience, showmanship and conformation exercises. We also work on general dog knowledge, and go to as many fun matches, 4-H shows and AKC-sponsored events as we can.

Dot O'Connor, who is our 4-H group leader, is a great teacher. She is very patient with all of us, even when we don't get things right. I have learned how to be more patient

by watching her, and I have learned not to get upset if something doesn't go right. I just keep practicing.



Babar also has learned a lot. He has learned to be really proud of himself for winning ribbons. When Babar first came to stay with me, he was kind of sad and droopy, probably because at his real home he's with two other dogs that are much more dominant than he is. At our house he was the only dog, so he got more love and attention, and I think training really made him feel proud of himself. He knows when he does something right. I am proud of him too, because he has helped me win a lot of ribbons.

One day, Babar and I took the "Canine Good Citizen Test" at a fun match where he won a first place and a third place. The third place ribbon was actually more exciting than the first place, because it was in the Championship Round and it was a "Fun Match" for people to practice for AKC events. I was in the ring with many adults who compete in AKC with their show dogs. There were 10 adults and two older Juniors in the Championship Round, I couldn't believe I got third place! Afterward, a lot of people I didn't even know walked by and said, "Good job!" It made me think that sometimes it's not the blue ribbon that's the best.

After that Babar and I were called into the "Canine Good Citizen Test". Babar's owner, and even Dot, my 4-H dog group leader, said if I was nervous or Babar was too tired, we could just decide not to do the test at the last minute. It is a pretty hard test to pass and the testers are very fair, but very strict. I watched the person and dog ahead of me fail the test. Then it was our turn. Babar did everything perfectly! We passed with high marks. He has a special tag now that he wears on his collar. It says, "Canine Good Citizen" on it.

As we walked away it made me think that it was really awesome to be with a dog like Babar. It didn't really matter if he had blue ribbons or not. What really mattered was that he

was such a good, well-behaved, happy dog that everybody loved. I felt proud to be with him.

During a 4-H competition, I gave a visual presentation, "Alpine Paws", that won a blue ribbon. I researched and talked about the development of the Swiss mountain dog breeds, and the carting work done by the original Bernese Mountain Dogs. As part of my presentation, I brought Babar and a real cart. I showed how harnessing a dog and cart works. I explained how mountain dogs helped farmers by pulling milk carts up and down the mountain trails between the farm and the village. They do this all by themselves — without a person to guide or help them! During this presentation, I found out that I am pretty good at speaking in front of other people. That was very exciting, because I did well and I was hardly nervous.

Working with dogs and in 4-H has helped me at school, too. I have learned how

to work hard at something and be more patient. I learned that I can be good at something. Now I am much more excited about raising my hand in class at school, and when I have an idea I don't feel so shy about talking about it in front of other people.

By working with Babar, by going to 4-H meetings, and by going to shows and winning ribbons, I proved to my parents that I could be responsible enough to have a real dog of my own. Last June I went to pick up my very own seven-week-old Bernese Mountain Dog. I call her Clipper. There were 36 other people who all wanted this little puppy, and the breeder let me have her because I showed her what I had been doing for the last two years with Jessey and Babar in 4-H and at shows.

When I held Clipper in my arms for the first time, when she was seven weeks old, I thought about all the blue ribbons we might win — and then I thought, "... Maybe it's not

the blue ribbons that are most important. I want you to be the best puppy in the world, and the happiest, and even if you never win a blue ribbon I will love you so, so, so very much. Always and forever!"

Well, Clipper is almost a year old now, and when we walk down the street, people stop me and say, "Oh, my — hasn't she gotten big!" Then they smile and say, "...And she's sooo well behaved."

We've won our first blue ribbon — but when someone admires Clipper for her nice manners and her friendliness, that's when I feel like saying, "Well — that's my dog!"

Editor's note:

4-H Groups are in every state. If you are interested, contact your local Chamber of Commerce. With the development of the National Junior Organization, the AKC hopes to introduce more 4-H members to AKC events and vice versa. ■

WORD SEARCH

ALL THE WORDS LISTED BELOW HAVE APPEARED IN THE ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE.

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| 10. Junior Seminar | 21. Westminster |
| 11. Matches | |

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WANTED

- Articles profiling you as a Junior
- Articles about your outside activities
- Photos

- Puzzles and games
- Suggestions
- Ideas

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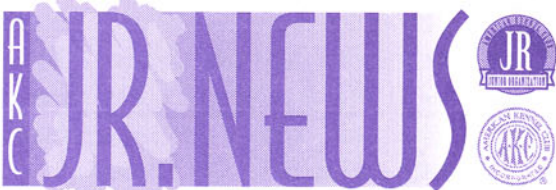
AKC JUNIOR SEMINARS

AKC will be holding two seminars for Juniors this summer — One in Tampa, Fla., in conjunction with the Cluster at the Fairgrounds, July 9, 1998, and the second in Waukesha, Wis., July 24, 1998 at the Waukesha County Fairgrounds.

Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. Topics to be covered in the morning will include: Basic Anatomy, Care, Conditioning and First Aid (presented by Dr. Patricia Haines, Westminster Junior Showmanship winner, and currently an AKC Board member). Additional topics and activities will include an introduction to the Canine Good Citizen program, an opportunity to test your dog, a discussion of other ways

Juniors can participate in clubs, Stewarding from a Juniors perspective, demonstrations of basic Obedience and Agility by Juniors, and in ring practice sessions. Lunch will be provided. The day will end about 3:30 p.m. or may go longer, depending upon the space and number of activities in the afternoon.

At both seminars you will have the opportunity to participate with your dog in the afternoon. Details on specifics for each event will be provided. Please contact Karen Reuter at 919-854-0195 to obtain additional information. Or e-mail info@akc.org (AKC through the Web) and request that it be forwarded to Karen Reuter.



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