



# Kiwi Dog Agility

**Tess ADX Gold, JD, FD, CGC Gold**



## Another Notch in Tess Baker's Collar

**16 May 2010**

Tess, myself and Christine Nielsen with Pete and Co left Hamilton at 6:00am and arrived at North Shore Dog Training Club at 8:30am, 16 May 2010 with nerves that were beyond belief.

We are going for Canine Good Citizen Silver with the hope of Gold. Rachel Butler had done an outstanding job of arranging venues, people, props etc for this to all happen. Laurinda Lewis and Nicole Fensom were to be our Judges. We were beside ourselves when we passed the Silver (5 people and 6 dogs went for Silver), but now "Oh Guacamole"

we now are going for Gold!! (3 people 4 dogs Christine Nielsen with Pete and Co, Brian Baker with Ceris and me and Tess) 1st we had to answer 12 questions correctly which were from the Canine Good Citizen (CGC) manual - "Responsibility and Care" it is hard to learn something that you do every day or should I say read something you do every day and get ready to be tested on it, TEST! being the operative word!! Then it was the dogs turn (nah the team's turn), we had so many things we had to do.

The exercises ranged from Heel work to send away's to retrieving to stays, outside busy shops to recalls with all sorts of distractions to meeting and greeting dogs and people, walking passed pushbikes, skateboards, you name it we had it, to walking around parks and shops and traffic - Yep Auckland traffic!!

On and off the lead, in and out of the vehicles and taking the judges for a drive to access the dogs behaviour.

I think the hardest was "Another person (other than handler) walking the dog in a public area, with distractions". At all times the dogs were to be on a loose lead, (this was all day regardless) this test was hard if I screwed up for Christine (as I was her nominated handler) it would cost her the Gold, and the same for her as Christine was my nominated handler with Tess.

I can tell you walking a border/heading dog is so different to a Sheltie and of course they are trained obedience dogs, at first it was get off my leg!! I thought ok I have to just deal with this and walk.

Our Judges were right there for us to the end, with all the support you could ask for - and thanks Laurinda "Hey guys don't knock the last rail" (I will remember those words forever).

The very last thing of the day was an out of sight down for 4 mins, the dogs weren't allowed to move, we had been going since 9am and it was now 2:30pm and we

all (dogs included) were absolutely over it. So off we went behind a car, the dogs were on a sports field with kids biking, skateboarding etc. We got told to return to our dogs attach the lead and "walk away in a quite manner" (won't forget those word either) we did it and the Judges just yelled, jumped up and down cuddled us all.

We had passed!!! Of course we also had a group hug Christine Nielsen, Brian Baker and me - and of course Tessie is barking with the excitement as you know she just loves prize giving - but we hadn't got to prize giving yet !! (Tess ssssh don't fail us now! LOL)

I am sure everyone on the sports field wondered what the heck was going on.

Those involved were: North Shore Dog Training Club, Rachel Butler, Laurinda Lewis, Nicole Fensom and all the helpers and members of North Shore Dog Training Club ■



Photo: www.equinepictures.net

## Eric Whitford

Auckland Canine Agility Club (ACAC) and the agility world in general lost one of their most passionate supporters when Eric Whitford died on 28 May 2010 after a short illness. Eric was one of the mainstays of our club, tirelessly working to make sure we had the right equipment, providing excellent training, and making sure we ran good shows.

Eric started agility in 1996 with Rosie, a steady Irish Setter who achieved ADX and helped him learn solid handling skills. After Rosie he felt ready to take on a Border Collie, with Rex who he made up to Champion in 2004. Then came Kaycee, another Irish Setter, recently retired after achieving ADX Bronze. And now there are the young ones Ben and Tess. Ben recently moved up to Intermediate at Ribbon shows, and Eric had high hopes of Tess going really well once she got to run as a midi after 1 July.

Eric was never content to just compete at the occasional show, or turn up to training from time to time. He was at training every week, and at pretty much every show in the upper north island. He has been on the ACAC committee for many years, is a Past President and was currently serving as Vice-President. He also looked after our training, our gear, our clubhouse, and in so many ways, kept the club going. He and his wife Marj took new members under their wing and nurtured their ongoing interest in agility with their friendship and enthusiasm. Our club won't be the same without him.

Eric was not one to mince words to spare feelings. He was very quick to tell any of us what we were doing wrong in the ring. However, if you followed his advice you did become a better dog handler. Eric had a very good eye and could immediately see what people were doing wrong and what they needed to do differently to get the best out of their dog – no matter what the breed.

Eric loved Dog Agility and its doubtful a single day would have passed when he didn't think about it - whether it was planning modules for club training, thinking about new ways to design equipment, planning which shows to get to, or working out how to get the best results for his dogs.

He will be sadly and sorely missed by the members of ACAC and many others in the agility world. ■

### Judges Profile

## Sharon Wagner

Hi, I'm Sharon Wagener. I was inspired to judge by my mother Noeline who has just retired from the senior agility panel. I saw how much she got out of judging. My younger dog Hope had just been injured and my older dog Molly is nearing retirement so I decided it was a good time to give judging a go. I would like to thank Karen de Wit and Paul Taylor for overseeing my probationary appointments and teaching me so much.

I was appointed to the Agility Panel in January this year and have enjoyed a few judging appointments so far. It's fascinating to see things from the other side of the fence. A nice course to run isn't necessarily easy to judge! It's important to be positioned to see the likely off courses, refusals and contacts. I have found that I really notice good and poor handling - much more as a judge than as a spectator. I enjoy designing courses that flow but still have the appropriate level of challenges to ensure that handlers have to "handle" and not just follow their dog around.

I have competed for 8 years with my black miniature poodle "Molly" who is now 10. She has achieved ADX Gold, JD, Zone 3 NDTA Novice team dog and nearly 700 clear rounds. Unfortunately my younger dog Hope had just started to do well when she dislocated her hip and has retired injured. I have a young poodle "M" who will be 18 months old just after the NDTA so she should be competing late this year.

My family has had miniature poodles since I was in primary school and I couldn't imagine competing with anything else. Initially I competed in obedience with my first 2 poodles. Zeta won special

beginners and novice and got CDX. Jake also got CDX although stays were always a challenge for him. I am a life member of North Taranaki Dog Training Club. I have also been Treasurer and President of the Poodle Club in Auckland and have bred or owned 1 WTCh, 7 NZ breed Champions and 2 Australian Champions. I still compete at Breed shows and "M" is well on the way to her title.

Agility has become my preferred dog sport as it requires a true partnership and understanding between the dog and handler for them to achieve their potential – and when it all comes together it's a wonder and joy to behold. ■

