



SPOTLIGHT ON RESCUE

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Reading Your Rescue: Obedience Talent!

by Guest Columnist Dean Lake

It's our pleasure to tell you about some of the rescued Golden Retrievers who have participated and excelled in competitive performance events. Thanks to their owners for telling us their stories and to Dean Lake for compiling the article below. CA

Reading Your Rescue: Obedience Talent!

by Dean Lake

Rescue dogs all come with some kind of baggage. From the sweet perfectly mannered two year old with just a quirk about hearing the doorbell, to the eight month old oversized, cheerful, go-get-um galoot ,who needs to see Emily Post.

The described causes of rescue dog mental baggage vary depending on the political views and level of experience of the rescuer. Radical animal rights folks would love you to think all rescued dogs were abused in their previous lives. But most rescued dogs suffer from neglect rather than real abuse.

Neglect isn't as newsworthy, but it has a more significant effect on a dog than many would think. Imagine growing up with no contact with humans in a back yard. A young dog left in complete isolation with no stimulation or interaction leaves mental scars bad enough to be mistakenly called abuse by the more zealous crowd.

A rescued dog in their first period with a rescue organization or foster home is a fun thing! Watching a dog mentally "thaw out" is one of the most fulfilling things rescuers get to do.

Fun things to say to rescue dogs their first few days:

You can pull on the other end of this rope and I will pull back and be very happy too!

Yes you can chase this ball and bring it back to me and I will actually throw it again!

You can get on my couch! You can live inside my house!

Watching them all wake up and smell the coffee is great stuff. They all change as they begin to live with people who

speak "dog." They are so delighted and grateful that a human understands their language and wishes.

Many dogs wind up in rescue due to too much energy and misplaced focus. Some dogs need a job. The fosters and owners of these rescues take pet obedience classes to work the excess energy out of the dogs as well as teaching them good behavior. It's one of the nicest things you can do for yourself and your rescue.

Some people really get involved with these classes, get the bug, and go on to compete in obedience and rally trials with their dogs. Rescue dogs show amazing talent in both these areas.

All of the national dog organizations allow unregistered dogs to participate in their events. AKC's PAL/ILP program is very prominent. UKC, NADAC, and USDAA are also wonderful organizations that allow purebred unregistered dogs to participate in a multitude of venues.

Here are some folks who have excelled with their rescues. Please let's give them the recognition they all deserve!

Lisa Mitchell and "Brinker"

WITRIN'S BRINK OF KNIGHTHOOD UD, RE, NA, OAJ

"Brinker" came to me as a foster dog from Golden Retriever Rescue of Central New York. My home was Brinker's second foster home and he was my eighth or ninth foster dog. They begged me to take him because he was so wild that no one else would take him and he needed my "boot camp" for Golden males. Reluctantly I said yes. (I had an ailing older Golden and really wanted to spend time with him.)

Lisa said Brinker was about a



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year old and had been tied up on a rope outside. The first month she was black and blue to the elbows from Brinker mouthing her. He would clamp on to her when she would arrive home, so she ignored him unless he settled down. Finally Lisa got it into his head that he got no attention with clamping and wildness.

Lisa realized Brinker didn't know what was wanted of him. Once he settled down he was saying, "What do you want me to do and how do you want me to do it?"

Lisa says, "It didn't take long before I knew this dog was meant to be with me. He has turned into a real mama's boy and works very hard to please me. Once he had a job and plenty of exercise, he got much calmer."

Patrice Hoerster and DUSTIN' FOR GOLD "Dusty" and HERON ACRES SAND DUNE HOBO CDX "Bo"



Patrice adopted "Dusty" through the local humane society. He was her first Golden and she enrolled in obedience classes with him because she felt he was dog aggressive. Later she decided she was just not controlling the situation very well. Dusty was totally cured by going to obedience classes with Connie Cleveland and went on to obtain his CDX.

Most recently Patrice adopted a male Golden from the late Betty Drobac through Connie's recommendation. Betty had privately rescued hundreds of Golden Retrievers during her lifetime and "Bo" was her last rescue. Bo is currently working on his UD title.

Patrice says to anyone interested in dog sports with their rescue, "Whatever level you achieve in obedience you will wind up with the best dog in the neighborhood."

Kathy Harvey and ROCKCREEK'S JUMPIN' JONAH "Jonah"



"Jonah" came from Foothills Golden Retriever Rescue, SC. Jonah originally came from a backyard breeder if one could call them that. His family owned him and a female Golden and every time she came into season she had puppies. They didn't care for the dogs and neighbors had to feed them.

When someone noticed there was no activity at Jonah's house, neighbors looked in and found the house empty of furniture. The people had moved away leaving both

adult dogs and their litter of eight pups up in the crawl space under the house with no food or water. The neighbors placed the dogs, but Jonah wound up in rescue. He had a previous placement that did not work out as he chased cats before Kathy got him at 15 months of age. Jonah has his U-CD, CD and RA titles. They are currently working on more rally titles.

Kathy Ambrose and MISTER NC THEODORE BEAR "Ted"

"Ted" was found in North Carolina on the street. His finder called rescue and said, "I have this nice little male Golden and we don't have any room for him right now, could you take him?" Tennessee Valley Golden Retriever Rescue picked him up. He was heartworm positive, thin, freshly neutered with a badly infected surgery site. The vet had to remove necrotic material from the wound and his foster mom had to use burn cream on the bad spots.



His fosters named him Ted because the husband was a pilot for United Airlines and they had just come out with the "Ted" program. He came with United Airlines swag.

Ted is short for Theodore, short for gift of God. Kathy says that is what Ted is to her and she gladly kept the name.

Ted was scared to death of everyone, especially men. He freaked if he saw cars, and would run and hide from them, or just stand there shaking. It's possible a car hit him. It took almost a year before he was confident enough to enter a show.

Ted is highly tennis ball motivated. He invented games to throw his own tennis ball and catch it.

Ted has a CDX and five RAE legs. Every CDX leg he earned included a placement as well.

Karen Stapleton and ANDIAMO'S NO NONSENSE "Dexter"

Dexter came from Golden Retriever Rescue of Wisconsin at about six weeks of age. He likely was separated from his mother and litter at four to five weeks old. His socialization was poor and he was guarding his food and his crate. He was fostered for a couple of months at GRROW. He really liked to use his nose and was focused, and Karen liked him when she saw him. He was four months old when Karen took him home.



Karen immersed Dexter right away in activities. He went to work with Karen and to puppy classes.

They joined a search and rescue group and he is now a search and rescue dog. He's certified with the North American Search Dog network in man trailing and is cross training as a cadaver dog.

Dexter earned his CGC and his rally RN. He's currently involved in agility classes at three years of age.

Karen trusts him absolutely now with kids. He's very gentle, loves people and loves cats. He'd rather do tracking than eat. He visits Karen's elderly mom and picks up that she's very fragile and is extra gentle.

Karen says to potential new dog sports people, "I think it's
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one of the most fun and most important things a person can do with a rescue dog. People want a well behaved dog and that's how you get a well behaved dog."

Leah Smith has had three rescue dogs in obedience.

"Casey" was 12 weeks old when Leah got her from the Douglas County Humane Society in Georgia. Casey earned her CDX title and at the 1995 Gaines Regional competition in New Orleans, LA, she qualified in two out of three runs in Open. Casey was retired due to an injury, so she didn't continue on to Utility. Casey was Leah's first Novice dog, so she made lots of mistakes and Casey was very tolerant of her.

"Brandy" was another acquisition from the Douglas County Humane Society at eight weeks old. Brandy got her CD and showed at the Gaines Regional competition in Louisville, KY, in Novice. She qualified all three times.

"Jake" was adopted at six months of age from Golden Retriever Rescue of Atlanta. People said he was too rambunctious and sure enough he was. Jake got his CDX and in his entire career only broke one sit stay. He was a counter surfer and ate socks, but nonetheless he is an amazing dog. He never did Utility because he couldn't figure out scent articles. He loves to hike and swim.

To new adopters Leah says, "Obedience adds to your dog's story. If the dog comes in with baggage, it's a credit to the owner that they look past the doubts and go farther. Get into an obedience school."

Suzanne Bolwell and "Sinjin"

Bought for a five-year-old boy who used him for a punching bag, "Sinjin" was five months old and living in a yard tied to a stake when Suzanne heard about him. A co-worker told her about him. Sinjin's family complained about Sinjin and wanted to get rid of him. Suzanne said, "Next time they complain, get him and give him to me."

And that's exactly what happened. When Suzanne got Sin-

jin, he would not allow her to touch him, but would just roll on his back and cry. He was quite hyper and bounced off the walls. Suzanne had gotten Evergreen Golden Retriever Rescue involved, but did not hand him in as she was afraid they would not be able to find a placement for him.

Sinjin checked out okay with the vet and Suzanne decided to keep him. It took a year to get him past his fears and gain his trust. Sinjin had trouble with stand for exam at first and would try to move away from anyone touching him.

Sinjin now has his UD and UDX legs, OTCH points and a Canadian OTCH. He received a 200 score in October 2007, at the Overlake Collie Club Show in Auburn, WA. He received a HIT at the Seattle Kennel Club show.

Suzanne says, "There's a huge range of things you can get involved in with dogs. Any dog no matter the breed is a happier dog if they have a job they can get into. It's good for the owners as well as the dogs."

Sallie Lennox and SAVANNAH JANE

"Savannah" came from Golden Retriever Rescue of Central New York, Inc. Savannah is nine years old and working on her UD. Sallie says signals are a chore. Savannah has arthritis in her spine and is on Cosequin for it.

Sallie feels Savannah and she are a team when working and are very close. She encourages adopters to enroll in at least one session of classes and have the whole family participate for consistency.

There are many obedience clubs that offer special awards for rescues.

Dog sports are fun – especially with Rally now as it is an alternative to the strict obedience routines. Rally allows you to talk to your dog. You don't have to be as precise.

Obedience gives the dog a job. Dogs need activity and to be challenged mentally. The camaraderie with other dog people is good. ❖