PURINA PRO PLAN

HERDING GROUP

of energy. Ellie would be part of Debbie's breeding program, so the Pratts planned to show Ellie in conformation as well as begin her career as an agility prospect. If she had herding instinct, plans were to train her for that venue.

Ellie's performance training was interrupted with planned litters, and herding was her second love. She went along with Jerry as he trained his younger Pembroke for herding. She grew less enthusiastic about sheep as time went on and was already 9. Ellie liked working ducks and helped Jerry learn the skills needed for Advanced level work. Their skills improved under the tutelage of Katherine Spence, and they started to earn championship points. When Ellie won a first-place major on a very hot day on a very difficult set of ducks, Jerry realized that a herding championship was a possibility.

Ellie still needed five more points for the HC. With the bird flu quarantine in effect in their home area in southern California, duck trials were very few and far between. So, they traveled. They earned the last two points in Arizona, just short of their 12th and 78th birthdays. They were truly the geriatric dream team.

Winning a herding championship was a dream come true. Ellie is now enjoying a much-deserved retirement. Jerry is now running his younger Pembroke in the Advanced herding classes.

Jerry said that the biggest challenge in herding is finding a trainer who is willing to work with you and who understands how a Pembroke Welsh Corgi herds. Learning the skills necessary to enter the Advanced class level is incredibly difficult, and even more so when you and your corgi are already very mature. It really takes time, patience, dedication, and more than a little luck to compete at the Advanced level. There is a reason why so many dogs are handled by professionals. Most of us do not have stock easily accessible and have not grown up knowing how to "read" stock in relationship to our dog. Jerry said he was lucky to have Katherine Spence work with him despite his many handling deficiencies.

The HC was never something that Jerry pursued until after Ellie earned that most difficult first-place major. It came as somewhat as a surprise as to just how much had to be learned to be competitive in this sport at the advanced level. He just loved having fun with Ellie and enjoyed being with her doing what she found to be as much fun as he did.

The best advice Jerry was given was not to think about titles or points but to enter the arena to do the best he could, and the rest would follow. He wasn't able to follow this advice all the time, but it did seem to work when he did.

Jerry's own advice to other Pembroke herders:

"The pursuit of any title starts at the beginning. Find the best instruction for you and your dog, and do not rush the basics. Building on a good foundation is far easier than trying to break bad habits. Enjoy the journey. Although herding is one of the hardest sports to understand, it is also the most fun you can have with your corgi." He is always amazed at what these remarkable dogs can do.

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Pulik

TURNING YOUR TRICKSTER INTO A TRICK STAR

The COVID-19 pandemic turned 2020 upside down and inside out, including for our dogs. Many of us who are used to leaving our homes for dog training classes, shows, and trials have instead found ourselves in lockdown, with much free time at home and a very happy dog(s) who needs to be kept busy. Now is a great time to strengthen and enhance the bond that you share with your Puli(k) and earn some official AKC titles, while you might be homebound. It can help keep the mind of the intelligent Puli challenged. Both physical *and* mental exercises are important for your dog's overall health. Keeping your dog mentally busy also often helps to alleviate some bad behavior that arises from boredom and instills (or reinforces) your dog's confidence. Also, if you are a member of the Puli Club of America, Trick Dog titles count toward earning a Versatile Puli title.

If your Puli does agility, there are already a handful of tricks that put you that much closer to the Trick Dog titles. There are five levels:

• *Novice Trick Dog (TKN)*—Your dog performs 10 skills from the Novice list. If a dog has a Canine Good Citizen (CGC) on record at AKC, he or she can do five Novice tricks (CGC + 5) to earn the TKN. See the list of tricks here.

• *Intermediate Trick Dog (TKI)*—Must have the TKN, plus perform 10 Intermediate tricks. See the list of tricks here.

• *Advanced Trick Dog (TKA)*—Must have the TKI, plus perform 10 Advanced tricks. See the list of tricks here.

• *AKC Trick Dog Performer (TKP)*—Handlers perform a short routine with at least 10 tricks, with at least three tricks using props. See the requirements here.

• *AKC Trick Dog Elite Performer (TKE)*—In the highest level of Trick Dog, the Elite

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Performers perform a routine that has a story/script. At least five props are used. See the requirements here.

Is your Puli a good candidate for the Trick Dog titles? Of course, you *can* teach an old dog new tricks. You can also start a puppy into training, however, beginning June 1, 2020, AKC has deemed that dogs under the age of 4 months may not receive a title for Trick Dog (or CGC) in order to emphasize AKC STAR Puppy and socialization. Once puppies reach 4 months old, they are free to participate in Trick Dog. Please note that if you do work with a puppy, some tricks might be less suitable, such as jumping (which can damage developing joints and bones).

There are currently 16 Pulik (10 males, 6 females) who are titled Trick Dogs, the first being GCh. Catsun Comanche War Drums, CGC, TKN ("Hector"), owned by Jodell Grandey and bred by Ian Crowther. Two of the 16 earned the TKI, and eight earned the TKA. No Puli has yet achieved the Performer title levels.

The AKC notes that trick-dog training for cinema dates back to the 1920s, and that in the 1940s, Mr. Rudd Weatherwax (who trained the dogs that represented the character of Lassie) wrote a trick-dog training manual that was based on the uncommon (at the time) training method of positive reinforcement and food rewards for correct behaviors.

Some good training tips if you want to teach tricks to your Puli:

- Use positive reinforcement.
- If you would like to start trick training with your dog but don't know how, work with his or her existing behaviors. If there's something that your dog just naturally wants to do, see if you can mold it into a trick.
- Start slow. Work in short bursts—no more than 10–15 minutes—and always end on a positive note.
- Don't get frustrated or mad at the dog: Patience is key.

In response to COVID-19, the AKC has opened up the Trick Dog titling program to be accessible via submission of videos that are reviewed and approved by CGC evaluators. As noted by the AKC, this time of social distancing is the perfect opportunity to get your dog involved in the Trick Dog program. For more information on Trick Dog, check out the AKC trick-dog page.

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Spanish Water Dogs

AND WHAT ABOUT TAILS?

In recent months, a subcommittee (of which I am a member) of the SWDCA has been deliberating potential revisions to the breed's AKC standard. "And what about tails?" asked one individual. Currently the standard reads:

"Tail is set smoothly into the croup neither high nor low. Traditionally docked between the second and fourth vertebra, some are born with a naturally bobbed tail, which can range from almost no tail to almost a full tail. Preference is not to be given to docked or undocked tails."

At the time of writing the original AKC standard, omission of detail regarding tail carriage was intentional because the Spanish had not (and still have not) addressed it in their standard, which reads as follows:

"Croup: Slightly sloping …Tail set at medium height. Docking must be done at the height of the 2nd to the 4th caudal vertebra. Certain subjects show a congenital shortened tail."

DAVID WOO ©AKC