

# Charter members reflect on the early days

In this inaugural edition of Mt. Nittany Dog Tales, we look forward to a new year, new officers, new members, new goals. It's also a time to look back and reflect on MNDTC's beginnings. So we look to our Charter Members: Carol Crouch. Vicky Dale. Bonnie Jacobs. Sandy Roth. Pat Welser.

As long as the rest of us have been around, we've heard of these folks. Not only for their past contributions, but for their present. They're working as diligently today as they did...back in 1975 and even earlier.

Carol recalls, "The official date for the MNDTC is September 10, 1975, but the real work began in the early 1970s."

Sandy chimes in, "The Nita Nee Kennel Club was

The organizational meeting for what was to become Mt. Nittany Dog Training Club was held September 10, 1975, at the home of Bonnie and Rex Jacobs. Also attending were: Vicky Dale, Joyce and Bill Gregor, Micki Lautzenheiser, Carol and Bill Lingenfelter (now Carol Crouch), Dolly Pegrum, Ann Rigor, Sandy Roth, and Pat Welser.

founded January 18, 1970. Many of its members were interested only in conformation. Obedience got very little recognition." Pat says they were all members of Nita Nee and participated in obedience classes and some also in the conformation handling classes. Carol was training director of that club in the early days.



*(From left) Pat Welser and Kirk, and Bonnie Jacobs and Della placed in the Utility class at an early club trial.*

Bonnie recalls the very basic beginnings of obedience in the Nita Nee Club. "We realized we needed equipment such as a broad jump and a high jump, including all boards. We soon found the AKC rule book describing what we needed. So at a club meeting, I think it was Carol, asked the club to purchase a set of obedience jumps for \$100. After much discussion, the request was denied. Since most members supported conformation, the group thought our request was unnecessary. A few months after that, Carol, Sandy, Pat, Vicky, and I decided to look into the requirements for starting an obedience club."

All remember 1972 when they informally started training together. By 1973 they called themselves The Keystoners. Their first two fun matches were at the Pennsylvania State Forest Nursery along Route 322. In November 1975 they moved in town to the vacated Thrift Drug Store in the West-erly Parkway Shopping Center, and at-

tracted more entries from other like-minded dog owners.

AKC nixed the name Keystoneers, as well as another (probably Central Pennsylvania Dog Training Club), and deemed Mt. Nittany Dog Training Club the official name of this fledgling group. Thus, there were two local clubs holding official AKC B Matches; then A Matches; and eventually accredited point shows.

The first MNDTC classes were in March 1976 at the Centre Hall Fairgrounds. Also, summer classes were held in Boalsburg at the 28<sup>th</sup> Division Shrine. Carol was the first training director. Most of the members attended various seminars to keep up-to-date on training techniques. Sandy remembers a 5-day seminar by Milo and Margaret Pearsall.

Not only did the Charter members train together, they shared dog families. Vicky explains, "Carol was one of my first instructors. I fell in love with her Border Collies. Retrieving and jumping! I didn't know there was such a thing as showing a dog to get AKC obedience titles. My own dog Bunki was mixed breed so I couldn't show him. Then I purchased a Border Collie puppy Kelly from Carol, who kept a puppy Brandy, and we started training together. About then I met Bonnie who had littermate Della and Joyce Gregor who had another littermate Gumby."

Pat laughs when she remembers the early days that involved so much travel. "We did everything together. If someone was going to a show, she checked to see who else was going. We either traveled in one vehicle or went in a caravan. I remember nights in motels with 4 or 5 people plus dogs in a single room.

Club names tossed around all included Dog Training Club (DTC). 7 Mts., Penn Center, Hemlock, Mid-State, Mid-Penn, Central Penn, Central Keystone, Keystone, Happy Valley, Keystone Country. Despite these suggestions, we became Mt. Nittany Dog Training Club.



*Charter members Vicky Dale (left) and Carol Crouch with their Brace Class teams at an early club obedience event.*

Hectic but fun. We enjoyed ourselves; we got titles; and I think we also considered how our actions reflected on the club."

Carol adds, "We would head out to the dog shows with our toddler children, using our crates as playpens when we were in the ring."

Vicky sums up the early days well, "The direction of my life changed completely by getting involved in the dog club and into dog training and showing." She, obviously, speaks for her colleagues who are still training; still showing; and still bringing home the ribbons and the titles.

Out of curiosity, we asked these friends about the

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dogs they had back in the '70s and what titles they achieved.

*Carol Crouch:* Border Collies Toni, CDX; Paco, UD; Brandy, UD, TD; Brett, UD; Tequila, CDX.

*Vicky Dale:* Border Collies Kelly, UDTX; Shandy, UDT.

*Bonnie Jacobs:* Miniature Pinscher Missy, CD. Border Collie Della, UD, TD. Shelties Molly, CD, TD; Jetta, CD, TD.

*Sandy Roth:* Miniature Schnauzers Gretchen, CD, CDX, TD, Can. CD; Clipper, CD. English Cocker Spaniel Banjo, CD, TDX.

*Pat Welser:* Rough Collies Kirk, CDX; Laurie, UDT.

*Sandy Roth watches the action at a club event back in the 1970s.*

## Recalls from the early years

Maybe training hasn't changed too much after all in these ensuing years. To quote Pat: "Kirk was not a good obedience dog. In fact, he taught me to swear. I did manage to get a CDX on him. When the club began, I was working him in Utility. Jumping was certainly not his forte. More than once he jumped the baby gates out of the ring in the directed jumping exercise. That was lower than the regulation jump, which for my Collies was 36". When I finally retired him, he became a great pet. My other Collie was Laurie. As an obedience dog, she was everything Kirk was not." More power to you, Pat, for persevering all these years.

If you're interested in more Early Days photos and articles, be sure to look at the MNDTC scrap book, which resides with Cindy Tier. You're sure to be amazed at what humble beginnings produced the MNDTC of today.

*As you reflect on your own early dog experiences with the club, send them to us at [news@mndtc.org](mailto:news@mndtc.org). We'll try to include them in future issues. Photos too, please. We love those double knit pantsuits! Oh my, is that stunning floral ensemble still in MY closet?*