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# National and Regional Obedience 2009:

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# A Tucson Recap

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Photos by Bob Cohen

**T**he Western Regional and National Specialty shows had a wonderful representation of exhibitors from across the United States and Canada. Folks came from Oklahoma, Washington, Pennsylvania, Oregon, Ohio, California, and British Columbia in Canada! Five dogs were entered in the obedience levels of Novice A, Novice B, Open A, Open B and Utility B, Veterans and Pre-Novice. In rally, there were five dogs exhibiting in Novice A, Novice B, Advanced B, Excellent A and B. The canine exhibitors' ages ranged from fifteen months to almost 10 years old. This certainly shows that your dog is never too young to start performing in these events, and an older mature hound can still show off its jumping, retrieving and heeling skills!

At the Regional obedience competition on April 2, judge Nancy Pollock tried to qualify everyone, but some of the dogs presented challenges that made her scoring pencil work pretty hard. In the non-regular obedience classes, Kristina Kriek's little girl looked at her owner very intently most of the time during the Pre-Novice class, but occasionally the ears were focused elsewhere. Kristina kept her calm, though. They will both be excellent competitors as Twizzler continues to mature. Ingrida's dog, Caffrey, missed qualifying in the Veterans class by not coming to her all the way for the recall exercise. And her dog AbraHam, usually a very steady competitor in the Open B class, missed the drop-on-recall exercise.



While Megan Esherick's Maya took first place in Novice B class, when the obedience competition ended, the High in Trial award and huge ribbon were presented to Rebecca Bellflower from Novice A with a score of 193 out of the perfect score of 200. Rebecca only started exhibiting in obedience within the last year; however, she's been a regular obedience spectator at the last few specialties, and finally convinced herself to step into the ring. As a Novice A exhibitor, she did show a few moments of anxiety, but that happens to every Novice A competitor. Rebecca, what a fine showing in your one-time-only Novice A career! Congratulations!

The rally competition followed obedience. The ring was quickly set up, with the rally and competition exhibitors helping the judge and stewards. Cathy Craft, Megan Esherick, Victoria Cantor and Juliet Franzen, all experienced obedience and rally exhibitors, quickly set up rally stations according to the judge's map. They then serpentine, halted, downed their dogs, circled with their dogs, made right and left turns, and so on. Welcome to the sport, Susan Coulam, with your dog Howie! Susan and Howie are Novice A exhibitors from Oregon. We wish you many qualifying green ribbons as you progress through the advanced rally titles!

On Friday morning, we all gathered again to compete for more legs and, hopefully, new titles. This day's judge, fellow PBGV-owner Mike Williquette, pulled out her judge's pencil instead of a leash to show her own dogs.

"I want to say 'thank you' to all the spectators who came out at an early hour to support the teams of PBGVs and their handlers. It was a good-size crowd who showed their appreciation with generous applause," Mike said.

Mike is a PBGV obedience and rally exhibitor, so she has a good understanding of the kind of training it takes to motivate and handle PBGVs in these sports. During a post-

competition interview, Mike commented about obedience: "Even though the qualifying rate [of dogs] wasn't as high as we would have liked, the dogs were working very well. I saw very nice heeling from the utility class through pre-novice. Ingrida and AbraHam had a wonderful run in Open B, with straight fronts and finishes in almost every exercise; this is difficult to achieve with a long-bodied breed. Sweet Pea is Rebecca's first obedience dog, so all of you that are starting in obedience classes have a goal to work for ... joining us in St. Louis for the national next year. And Kristina's Twizzler heels like an old pro when he's looking at Kristina."

The High In Trial trophy and ribbon were awarded to Ingrida and AbraHam from the Open B class with a score of 197. Ingrida gives a special thanks to club President Bob Cohen for helping handle one of her two dogs, Caffrey, during the open class group exercises.

All the rally exhibitors received qualifying scores on Friday. Way to go Susan Coulam, Victoria Cantor, Cathy Craft and Juliet Franzen! Special congratulations go to Megan Esherick, who earned two titles in two sports that day! Maya got her Companion Dog title in obedience and the RAE title in rally. RAE is achieved by qualifying 10 times in both the advanced and excellent classes at the same trial. Consistency of performance and training really shows when this RAE title is earned.

Ingrida notes there were a few folks outside the ring watching and asking questions about starting their dogs in new careers in obedience and rally. It's easy to get going in these two sports, and your dogs will love learning the skills and maneuvers. We hope to see you in St. Louis!

We invite everyone to see photos from the Tucson obedience and rally competitions on the PBGVCA website at <http://www.pbgv.org/Gallery/2009/09Ob-Rally.html>. ■

