

## Dog Show Business

### **Train dogs early for future success.**

*Anne Rogers Clark*

Posted: Thu May 26 00:00:00 PDT 2005

A recent "Annie On" addressed the breeding of the next generation with careful and intelligent perusing of the proposed pedigree as well as the first few weeks of the resulting litter. The following addresses the question of how to teach a puppy to show itself off to advantage.

I entered the sport full force when I had finished high school. I upset my father by refusing a scholarship for college why? So that I could begin in earnest to go to the dogs... breeding them, training them and trimming and showing them. I started with my mother's and my own dogs, and then began to handle professionally.

"Socialization" was an unheard-of term in those days. We did not realize that a puppy's mind and body were ready for training and fun very early in life, from three to four weeks onwards!

I had made up my mind that when my first brown Miniature Poodle was born (I had tried to breed one for a while, and then was lucky enough to have one just pop up!) he, she or it would be trained to be sensible, to listen, and to be a stand-up show dog with tail and head up no down on your knees, prayerfully propping up your show dog with a death grip on tail and head!

In those days (about a hundred years ago, it seems) Toy Poodles were examined on a table, but Miniatures were judged on the floor or ground. My 'Sudsy' (alias Int. Ch. Norcrest Surrey Sahib) walked into the ring, even as a young puppy, and stood there like a Wire Fox Terrier, up on his toes, tail bang-up (a little too bang-up, in fact), alertly and fearlessly looking around at what was going on! Everyone was amazed, as the usual was occurring in the judging ring most of the time handlers and owners kneeling in the grass in hopeful positions.

Training Sudsy the way I did was not something that was written in a how-to-do book. This was me, determined to have a good show dog, and practicing very early on with Sudsy to lead break, acclimatizing him to car rides (not just to the vet's), and having him play fetch not as an obedience-trained dog, but as a fun-and-games thing to do. He was born in the house, in my bedroom, had a name almost at once, and a nickname as well. He was picked up, hand-weaned, posed, clipped, and had his nails and ears done religiously from the start (and to the end of his life!). He moved into the house kennel where he had a Standard Poodle-sized wire crate and a long, pebbled run to exercise in. He learned to love life and to react wonderfully to all sorts of people.