



Below is the next in a series of Random Tidbits of information (from me) in regards to the AKC Obedience Regulations. Knowledge of the Regulations provides you the power for...

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Today's Random Little Tidbit Is - [Honoring the Memory of Nicklus](#)

**AMAZING** - how one dog can change our lives and send us down a new and different pathway...

For me it was Nicklus, the Saint Bernard who lead me down a life's path one could only imagine. HAPPY Birthday Nicklus, who would have turned 54 this month (12-13-1969).

**FLASHBACK:** Once Upon A Time (1969) I was in the U.S. Coast Guard Reserves, plus I had more time on my hands with very few commitments. I decided I wanted a Saint Bernard. Large breeds of dogs have always appealed to me, plus I had heard Saint Bernards had wonderful personalities (joyful clowns). So what does one do to find a Saint Bernard not knowing anything about the breed? Well, look in the classified ads section of the local newspaper, right? I did just that and went to a "kennel" not too far away. Was that ever an eye opener! They were aggressive dogs with poor, unstable temperaments, plus not looking like I "felt" a Saint Bernard should look. I had no idea there was a Standard for the breed, but in retrospect I was pretty much on target. I left that place a little discouraged.

Then I heard about "Cherryacres" Kennel in Sumner, Washington owned by Charlie and Eve Rankin. I traveled what seemed like a great distance back then to look for a dog, 60-miles! Eve was a member of the Saint Bernard Club of America and informed me of the breed Standard. I was able to interact with the dogs at the kennel and liked them and their temperaments. She also mentioned a litter was due in 60 days so I "placed my order" for a longhaired male! On December 13, 1969 I received a note from Eve; five puppies were born and only one male in the five, and a longhaired.

When I picked up my brand new puppy, Eve mentioned to me this will be a VERY BIG dog and you really need to take him to an obedience school! I was not sure if enrolling this dog in school was even necessary; after all, I had trained my Collie to flip cookies off his nose, plus roll over. What else is there? At a Coast Guard reserve meeting I mentioned to a buddy I had bought a Saint. He mentioned he had one too and we should enroll them in obedience classes. So we did.

In a 10-week Novice class at Washington State Obedience Training Club is where I learned about AKC obedience trials. So after 8 weeks of training I entered him in a show (Whidbey Island KC). WTH! He was doing okay in class, why wait? As dumb luck would have it, he passed with a 193, and won Highest Scoring Saint Bernard! The Companion Dog (CD) title came in three trials; 193, 178, 194! After that we wanted to go on to the next level, a Companion Dog Excellent (CDX) title. I enrolled us in an Open class and after 10 weeks we earned the CDX title with a three-score average of 190.83. Next, we set our sights on a Utility Dog (UD) title. In seven trials with a three-score average of 190.17, we did it!

The next question on my mind was how many Saint Bernards had earned a Utility title? After some letter writing, and my own research, I found out there were only 7 UD Saint Bernards from 1936 to when Nicklus earned his UD in April 1972. Nicklus was number **8**! No complete sets of records were kept back in the day by the national club. My curiosity turned to finding out who, and how many different titles were earned, which spurred me into developing The National Saint Bernard Archive in 1975. In that timeframe there were only four "obedience" titles CD, CDX, UD & Tracking Dog-TD. Take a peek to see what has been accomplished over the last 48-years.

<https://saintbernardarchive.com/>

Nicklus' AKC championship followed in 1975 as did a Canadian championship and Canadian Utility title – all owner handled. We continued to compete over the years earning 7 combined scores in the U.S.A. Not bad for the first time out (knowing almost nothing) having a purebred dog: Am/Can CH Cherryacre's Nicklus V Hyden Am/Can CD, CDX, UD, plus OFA hips (#901).

Nicklus is still remembered to this day in the Pacific NW for his antics in the Utility ring. He would stand over the utility articles scratching his head. Just as a judge was about to end the exercise (he seemed to know), he would grab the correct article and saunter in. Next was his Directed Jumping routine act (see photo above). He strolled back on the Go Out taking glances back at me, and sat. Then he would saunter right up to the 32" jump, looked at it, backed up a step or two, let out several barks at the jump, and literally lifted his 175-pound body up and over the jump from 2-feet back. It was all done for laughs from the audience that crowded around knowing what he was about to do --- as I stood there as a straight man in his act. My thoughts at the time were, why rock the boat, he qualifies!

I was encouraged to apply to become an obedience judge in the early 1970s. I had to give that some very serious thought before making the leap. I applied and judged my first show in 1978 (Whidbey Island KC, once again). My judging has been going on for 46-years now. Where did that time go? I will tell you, it went well and sent me to where I am at today. I am in the same breed and now a lifetime member of the Saint Bernard Club of America – 55 years this January. It has been (and continues) to be a good life meeting folks (and my wife, Suzanne) through AKC's world of dogs. This journey of mine can all be traced back to entering my dog in an obedience class, and from there entering a dog show.

In reflecting back and talking to other judges (conformation and performance) I have found many entered this sport of dogs through the doors of Obedience. They trained their first dog(s) in an obedience class and learned about the AKC and dog shows. Never underestimate where the obedience ring may take one and lead them down their life's path never before envisioned. I for one will always support the sport of obedience and the AKC for that reason alone!

Nicklus, you single "pawed" me down a life's path one could only imagine. It happened to us together as we entered this sport through the doors of Obedience. **Random Little Tidbits #100 is in your honor and memory.** Thank you, buddy, I sure do miss you and your son Freddy (Am/Can Utility & Tracking Dog {UDT}).

I am willing to bet each and every one reading this Tidbit has their own story to tell about how a dog led them down a new and different path in their life. It is imperative we continue to support Obedience and *especially* the new Novice handlers. They are our future exhibitors, Show Chairman, Supertendents, Trial Secretaries, Judges and maybe even future employees of the American Kennel Club. **Fact:** Dog Shows (Westminster KC) are the second (only to the Kentucky Derby) continuously running sporting event in the U.S.A. since 1877. Let's keep that record going with those we encourage, mentor and support!



The real essence of this article is about all the \*people\* in our sport. I started out in our sport of dogs in Novice A Obedience, knowing almost nothing about training or showing. My journey was not by me alone. Many, many (and I mean *many*) folks helped me along the way. First came the breeder, then the class instructors, classmates, judges, volunteers, and other kind folks at the shows offering support and sharing knowledge. Never, never (and I mean **never**) underestimate the act of kindness given to one in our sport, regardless of the venue! Kindness and a helping hand will help shape an exhibitor's future. It did mine. Lack of it can send them in a different direction. In the World order of things this is just a DOG SHOW, a SPORT, a place of common ground with others sharing our passions. **Do your part in being a ray of sunshine** to inspire exhibitors and spectators along their journey. Let's not eat our young, it will leave a bad taste in everyone's mouth, plus it is a poison to our sport(s)!

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