

THE GLOVE COLLECTION

by Lee Netzler

Occasionally I question the practicality of the exercises which my Scottish Terrier “Andy” so diligently attempts to learn. Take, for example, the “Figure Eight” exercise in the Novice Obedience class. He has been making circles around people, posts, pillars, and potted plants for several months now. After happily discovering that stationary objects are really fun to walk around, he is a little less enthusiastic about plain old heeling straight ahead. Consequently, it is a little unnerving when we are on the street and he tries to make a U-Turn around every light pole and every standing pedestrian.

But, I am consoled somewhat, knowing that he doesn’t learn every lesson nearly so well. In fact, he has developed his own rules for the “Stand for Examination” exercise. He will perform this exercise only for obedience trainers and qualified judges. I suspect the reason for his behavior dates back to the time he stood on command at the veterinarians. Still, it is awfully nice to know that if we invite a judge to dinner my dog will stand tirelessly at the table through our entire meal.

The “Broad Jump” is another exercise which I seldom use outside of the obedience ring. I find few daily opportunities to exhibit my dog’s skill at this maneuver. It is comforting to know, however, that if we should chance upon a stream exactly 32 inches wide, I could always stand crossways in the middle and direct my dog to jump safely from one bank to the other.

The obedience exercise that I really wonder about is the “Seek Back” in Utility trials. It requires the dog to be sent out to locate a glove the handler has surreptitiously dropped while they were heeling in normal fashion around the ring. Perhaps I am overly sensitive to the value of this exercise, but that is probably because he has been stricken with a peculiar affliction while repeatedly practicing his “seek back” skill performance. He will only retrieve left-handed gloves. In fact, he will now retrieve *every* left-handed glove that he can get his teeth on. We have had considerable difficulty with complaints from our one-gloved friends and neighbors because of his passion for absconding with their left-hand gloves. There seems to be no way to cure him of this vice, and I am not quite certain if I want him cured, because he always performs the exercise without fault in the obedience ring. We do have a small problem at home, though. I have to figure out what we are going to do with this closet full of left-handed gloves.