

Dena, (OTCH Echo's Dena Vom Lin-Denn Haus BH, UDX, Can. CDX) finished her OTCH on May 21, 2006 at the Wyoming Valley KC trials of Western NY, winning UB under judge Jeff Showman...The day was very cold and stormy and Dena, as usual...was flying high! I had felt her run was a bit too "loose" for a win and therefore was stunned when he called my armband # as the winning team!

First, a brief bio...I have been involved in dog obedience training since the late 70's. My Novice A dog was a wonderful red Doberman Pinscher female named Ta-Roo who I trialed thru Utility. We started obedience lessons because she was a difficult puppy...she got me hooked on obedience! I have trained 6 dogs to 28 titles to date, all are obedience or schutzhund titles.

I also train and trial in schutzhund (tracking, obedience, protection). My Belgian Malinois male, Cajun (R-Echo's Cajun du Ceil Rouge BH, SchH3, FH1) is retired from schutzhund competition, we will compete next in AKC obedience. I have a bright young GSD male Gino, (bred by Debra Zappia) in training for schutzhund. Dena will be going 'up north' this September to earn her Canadian UD, this will be her swan song...she will be retired from obedience after that weekend.

I am married to a wonderful partner Roland, and am a "stay-at-home" Mom for our daughter Christina. I am an artist working from home; creating portraits, dog theme trophies and special gifts. I also have an online art gallery as part of my website. (www.EchoRidgeEnterprises.com) I teach small competition obedience classes and privately. Recently we built a large heated training building complete with natural rubber mats, it's a joy to skip out there to train whenever I want!

Dena is my 3rd German Shepherd dog, all our dogs were bred from imported working dogs. Through competition she has brought me to many "first experiences" in obedience...she is my first dog to compete in championship tournaments, we enjoyed Novice at the "Classic", Open at the "World Series" and Utility at "All Star." Dena placed at 2 of these competitions. Dena is my first UDX and OTCH dog. Along the way she earned 4 Dog World Awards, numerous HIT's, HC's and was honored with an invitation to compete at the AKC NOI in January 2006.

In the "good ole days" we sought only to qualify and earn the title. I became driven to strive for higher scores and placements after attending different obedience seminars by top competition trainers. The most influential person in my obedience training career is Debra Zappia, a remarkable innovator in training and an international schutzhund competitor. I have been a student of Debbie's for the last 14 years and consider her a close friend and mentor. Dena gained a strong foundation in obedience from our lessons. Thru Deb's uncanny ability to read dogs, we brought out the best in Dena, capping her drive and achieved control over her *kinetic* behaviors for competition. Dena has not been an easy dog to train or trial; she is independent and dominant, who's high drive is often a hindrance to learning and competing. On trial day, one question always remained...will Dena be under *enough* control today? Dena is a joy to watch in the ring; whether she qualifies or not...her speed, agility and drive is remarkable. Dena has been a marvelous

teacher to me...forcing me to rethink every exercise from Novice to her OTCH. Being a quick study she gets bored easily and can't keep still for a moment. She has kept me on my toes as I never know what slant she will take that day...One thing is for sure, Dena is always up for the game and likes to change the rules along the way!

I am also very fortunate to have the support and constant help from our local "Pick-A-Park" group of obedience enthusiasts; a tight knit group of high caliber trainers. Everyone in our small group has earned an OTCH or is well on their way to one...Our group represents nearly all the "akc groups" bringing to the table a wealth of knowledge and training experience from a variety of breeds. My best training buddy and fellow OTCH GSD trainer, Sue Pettit has been constant in her support, critiques and advice. Without her counsel and observations we would not have been able to complete this difficult title! Others who have help pave the way include training buddies Gail Binder and Jane Jackson offering unique training tips and critical evaluations. Terri Clingerman, who has an OTCH dog of similar ***Dena temperament*** has offered very timely insights into managing our independent charges! Linda Witkowski, a long time training friend, orchestrates the "Pick-A-Park" training schedule, keeping us all informed and connected! Other training buddies: Leanne Capozzi, Pat Bonino, Beth Telfer, Nancy Kennedy, Beth Durand and Julie Symons have been there for us along the way. There are numerous others, who train, show, help and critique. My heartfelt thanks go out to All of You ! These training friends are my critical eyes, emotional support and sounding board for continued growth in this sport.

Special thanks to Dena's breeders: Linda Nadeau and Debra Zappia.

Dena came to me as a "replacement puppy" for a previous female with severe HD. Linda's very nice West German import - Katzie (Elfi Vom Slybacher Wald SchH3, KKL1) bred to Debra Zappia's national competition dog - Danny (SG Dante Traho SchH3, FH, KKL2) a Czechoslovakian import. Danny was driven, very reactive and agile. Dena was independent and hyper active as a puppy; she grew up to be "Danny's daughter" branded with aspects of his unique personality, agility and drive!

With all her success we also encountered physical difficulties ...Last year, we discovered Dena has spondylosis - extra bone growth and bony bridges on her spine. She showed signs of severe pain while trialing a year ago last June. Ready to retire her at 69 points, we reconsidered and took most of the remaining year off. We have a local Canine Chiropractor and Dena also received an evaluation from a Veterinary Rehab. Specialist. Dena received multiple adjustments, ultrasound and was prescribed an exercise program to strengthen her back, hind quarters and increase range of motion. Without this medical intervention Dena would not have been able to finish her OTCH...Special thanks go to Dr. Heather Beaudry-St. Germain Canine Chiropractor and Dr. John Sherman Vet. Rehab. Specialist for helping me bring Dena back to competition fitness. Now its "4 on the floor" for Dena, no more leaps into finish or "big air releases" these activities can be harmful to her back.

Extra Special Thanks to my loving and unbelievably supportive husband Roland and our talented daughter Christina. They share my love for our crew of dogs and have endured my habit for dog sport!

Dena is a very unique dog. I am honored to have her in my life and to be able to share her unlimited drive and zest for life with others in this sport of ours!

