

[From Road Trips to Championships!](#)

We ended 2022 on a high note, and good things continued to happen in 2023. Hektor started 2023 winning the IABCA Grand Sieger at his first show of the year at the Peach Arch Sieger in Lynden WA.

A busy travel year already shaping up with Conformation shows and trials in both Canada and the US. There's nothing they love more than a hotel with an extra bed just for them! In the meantime we are getting one step closer to breed recognition in Canada; the Appenzeller is a ["Listed"](#) breed in CKC as of July, in the Herding Group. I like to think this is our reward for the time, effort and money well spent for the breed I love.

We also decided to give AKC Obedience a try, for a change of pace. Both dogs have AKC Rally obedience titles, and now that Bri has her CKC Companion Dog title, I entered her in her first AKC trial in May. It was a great weekend! Bri earned her first AKC Obedience title just like that! Onwards and upwards!

Meanwhile, I added tracking to their repertoire. Because Appenzellers have a tendency for over arousal, I avoid "chase" sports such as lure coursing and barn hunt. I prefer sports where my dogs have to be more thoughtful. Appenzellers are problem solvers and they find search and brain games highly rewarding. Tracking and scent work fit the bill. I have retired Hek from the rally and obedience game, and tracking and scent work suit him very well.

In between training my own dogs, I volunteer for my dog club and teach rally obedience classes. It's something I really love! I'm happy to share my experience and knowledge of the sport, and it also gives me the opportunity to use my own experienced dogs as "demo" dogs. The bonus of volunteering my time is I get to take a class with my own dogs in exchange! Fair trade as our club has many experienced handlers in many disciplines!

As summer approached we were invited by the Tacoma Kennel club to participate in their "Meet the Breeds" program at their annual dog show. We'd missed the previous 2 years due to COVID so I jumped at the opportunity! I also entered my own dogs in some of the events offered. Hektor won a Best in Open show, and Bri earned 2 legs towards her AKC Open Obedience title! Bri's brother Koda came to visit us too which was also fun. Not often we get the chance for Appenzeller meet ups!

Next up was the UKC Western Classic and once again both dogs did well in the Conformation ring. I had entered Bri in UKC obedience, and while she didn't qualify, it was good ring experience for her, in a very challenging environment.

We continued our training over the rest of the summer and into fall with a couple of scent trials at home in Canada. Bri finished her Rally Master Excellent title, and we continued our obedience training.

Happily, Hektor and Bri earned their Canadian Rally Brace Championship title in the fall; a huge accomplishment for any breed!

Our last event of 2023 was our favourite: the UKC New Years Bash, where once again both dogs performed well! Now nine, Hek is still proving he can win group placements. Bri finished her UKC ALGrandCH, and on that note, I decided that I could happily retire my dogs from the Conformation ring! Both dogs have excelled in that venue...ground breaking in fact, for the Appenzeller breed and it's time to pass the torch in hopes that more Appenzellers will make the leap!

My focus in 2024 will be on tracking, obedience and scent work, plus continuing to teach classes. We may "dabble" in Conformation...I never want to close the door completely on a sport that we all still love!

"No road is long with good company".

Turkish Proverb

