

**Today's
Earth Dog Training**
By Cyrille A. Young

Well, today was Knickers' (a.k.a. "Rat-Trap" see photo at right) third time at an ED training event. Her first time was in Canada last July, and the second time was June in New Hampshire. I packed up the Golden Retrievers and the Parson and headed back to NH, 4.5 hours down the road, to let her torment rats!

One of my Golden friends, Jim, came along for the ride since his wife went to visit her parents and look their dogs. Therefore, with no dog to train, he thought it would be humorous to watch the screaming Parson! I picked him up at his place near Portland, and down the road to NH we headed.

Last time we went, there was no one else there since it had been raining so much. This time, however, there were quite a few people. Only two other PRTs were present, but a variety of other terriers from Scotties, to Norwich, to Border Terriers were there. Apparently most of the doggie group there was all fairly new to this, like Knickers. Unlike Knickers, however, they were quiet, docile and well-mannered!

We got out of the car and Knickers immediately recognized the area and what we did there the last time! She started pulling at the end of the leash trying to drag me over to the tunnels. I made her stand there and watch as one of the dogs dove into the tunnel entrance and disappeared into the dark hole. My little "Rat-trap" was having fits watching this, knowing what was happening, what was

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at the end of the tunnel, and not being allowed to participate.

After the dog finished, one of the club members brought the cage out and put it down for her. Without a moment's hesitation, she was flipping that thing end over end, barking and digging.

The trainer took the cage, and after I extracted my Parson from it, she took it over to the end of the tunnel, so they could finish running the other dogs who were just beginning to learn this game.

Knickers went NUTS and started screaming at the top of her lungs like a banshee! Everyone was staring at her, so I picked her up and clamped my hand over her muzzle. I now have claw marks along both arms, my neck, back and stomach! She was beside herself!

She had to watch three more dogs work. (They were not as interested in this game, mind you). Another participant took the rats briefly and went

over to the 10 ft. tunnel. Knickers was MAD! Didn't everyone know it was her turn? Those rats were hers....hers....all hers!

Jim was standing between the dogs with the rats at the smaller tunnel and Knickers. She took a flying leap up to his waist. (She normally only leaps to my knees, or just above.) Apparently she did not get the desired effect because she then backed up, flung herself right at him, drove her feet into his legs, and then pushed herself off of him, landing far enough back that she could get enough momentum to punch him again! The dog was having temper tantrums!

**"Rats! Rats!
Get....me....RATS!"**

Finally, it was her turn! Thank goodness! I stood about six feet from the tunnel to make sure she went in since it was buried underground (about 20 feet with one 90-degree turn). Within an instant, that little PRT tush had disappeared! In seconds,



I heard her barking at the other end, working, and working those rats! Fortunately, this time she did a lot more digging than banging them with her muzzle, so she doesn't have a fat lip like the previous month!

The other people had more, or less, finished running their dogs and I wanted to try her on the 30-foot tunnel. One of the people took the rats and put them over by the bucket, instead of in the bucket, unbeknownst to me. I walked near the cage and bucket, waiting until we could go to the longer tunnel, and suddenly, I saw Knickers go around the bucket, and head-butt the cage. The rats flew about a foot! My friend, Jim, picked up the cage and put it back in the bucket, but not before Knickers managed to latch onto it with her teeth and toenails!

Patti came over to gather the rats and we headed to the back field for the 30' tunnel which also had three 90-degree turns. The first time I started her near the tunnel entrance, as we weren't sure if she would enter it properly. I placed her on the ground, unhooked her collar, and told her "Tunnel."

Gone in a flash! I stood at the opening, in case she got lost and came back. But, she got to the end so quickly, it even took Patti by surprise, especially when Knickers knocked the cage partly out of the top of the tunnel and about two inches further to the end. Apparently, earlier that morning a Senior dog had bitten right through a dowel so one was missing. But, she worked the rats really well. We encouraged her, and then pulled her out to try one more time, from 10-feet away. She was fabulous!



[Above: Cyrille documented Knickers' fat lip.]

I gathered my once calm, sweet, wanna-be-golden of a dog, who now had a little pink tongue three times its normal length, eyes bulging, and spit all down her chin! She looked like she should be committed.

When we got back up to the rest of the group, at least she had stopped screaming. The group seemed thankful for that. I asked Patti how to get that under control and she calmly stated... "They get worse." I know they are going to ban me from these events!

There was a little pool with water for the dogs to soak. I plunked Knickers down into it. She just stood there for a minute or two, and then leaned back against the side with her bum until she was just sitting there. A couple of other dogs came over to check her out. She had this look on her face like: "Do anything you want, you can even come in, but I am NOT moving!"

I dumped some cold water down her throat, and she finally came out of the pool. I threw her in the air-conditioned minivan with the Golden's.....and back to Maine we went! I think the Golden's feel ripped off!

Upon arriving home, I sat down to write

out my encounters of the day with my deranged Parson. I received the following e-mail in return from Knickers' breeder, Lissa Thomas:

At JTCA (Jack Russell Terrier Club of America) ED trials, they let the dogs yell all they want, and take the younger dogs over to watch and let them yell, too. (We were used to JRTCA trials which had about 250 Jacks and no other breeds.) Well, the first time I went to an AKC event, Orbit (my first Jack) started to scream. The AKC people VERY nicely asked me to put him into my van as he was making too much noise and distracting the other dogs. This was **soo** weird to me; I had never heard of one dog **distracting** another at Go-to-Ground by barking. It usually made the Jacks more anxious to get at the rats. So we patiently waited our turn. One lady who had a Welsh terrier came over and started bragging about how her dog made it down the hole in 20 seconds and was the leader so far. **WOW**, I thought, the tunnels must be longer than the JRTCA ones because that time wouldn't even **place** at a JRTCA trial. Then it was time for Sabrina to go; she was our old, slow lady at age eleven. She went down the hole and got to the rats in 10 seconds! All the rest of our Jacks were comparable, but faster. Then it was Oz's turn. I told the man who was at the box that he had better stand on the box. He didn't really listen, but just said that the box had latches.

OK, but he should **really** stand on the box. So the man complied. He weighed about 180 pounds. Oz was down the hole to the rats in six seconds, knocked the man off the top of the box as he broke the latches and grabbed the rat cage and would NOT let go. I thought that my dogs and I would be banned after that!

Also, one time at a JRTCA trial, we had a "trailing and locating" class. We decided to try it out on Orbit. The bad thing was that we were not allowed to have a live quarry (i.e. raccoon, possum, etc.) at the end like in some states. So all we had was a rock den with **lots** of scent, same as the trail.

WELL! Orbit followed the trail and made it in 51 seconds, got to the den (nothing there) air-scented down the canyon, ran 1/4 mile down the canyon where they were doing GO TO GROUND. Some poor dog and handler were waiting on the line to go into the tunnel. Orbit ran down the hole in front of him and to the rats in the tunnel. I heard on the loud speaker, "Would someone come and get this dog; it is illegally in the go-to-ground tunnel!" Hey, wait a minute, this is Orbit! Lissa Thomas **WHERE ARE YOU?** Come and get your dog!"

So see, Knickers comes from a **long** line of dogs that people want to kick out of trials--**BUT** you can't say that they don't have hunting instinct!

~Lissa

I think I might cry.

Respectfully submitted by Cyrille A. Young, with permission from Lissa Thomas.



Above: Knickers plays with baby Golden's.

Below: Knickers goes Best of Winners!



QUOTABLE:

"The old terriermen wanted terriers that would bark incessantly at their prey. The dog could then be located underground, and dug out if necessary. As a result, JRTs are most definitely vocal dogs."

~from Wikipedia on the Jack Russell Terrier