



# BORDERLINES

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**New AKC  
Quadruple  
Champion  
RICK**

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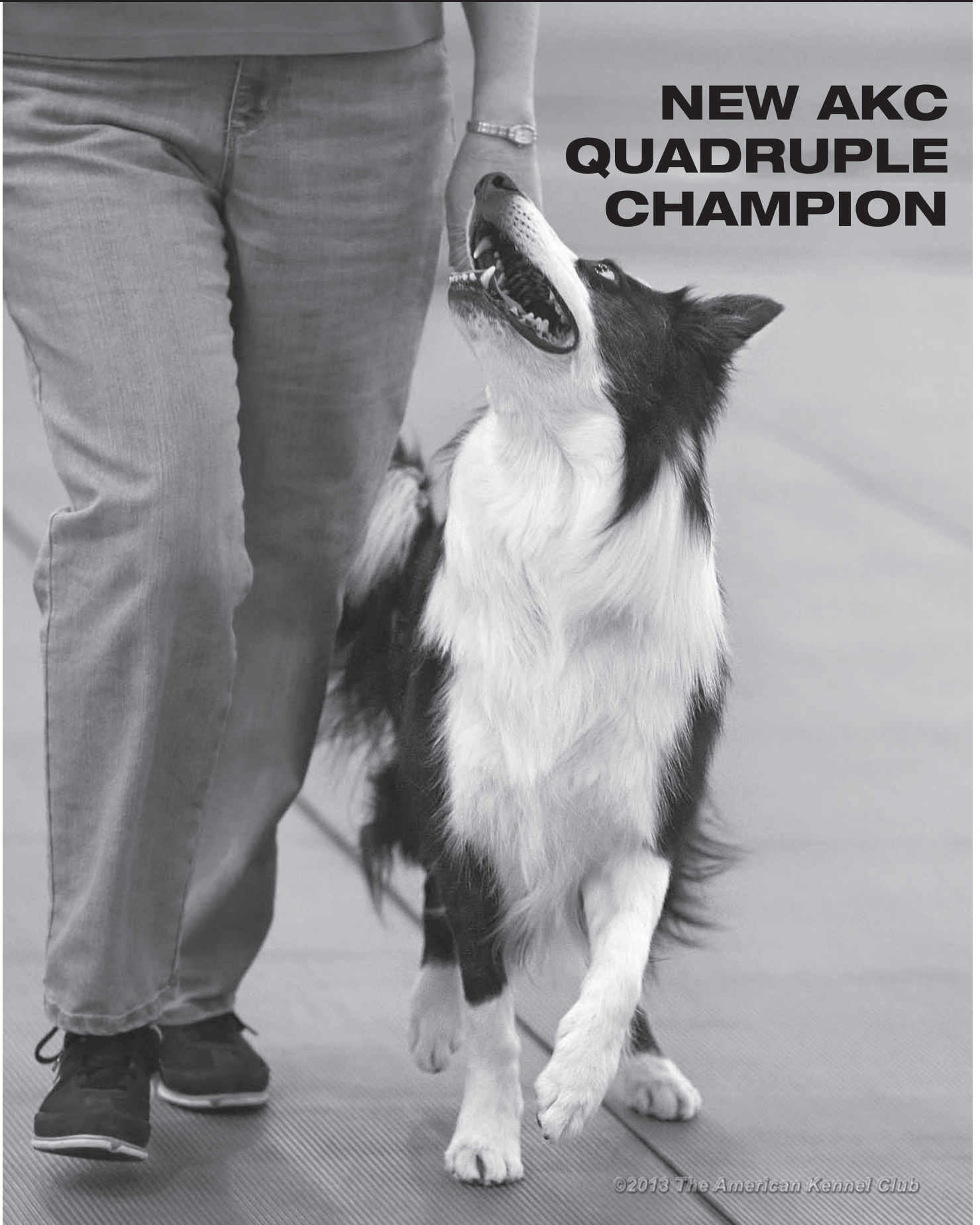
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# NEW AKC QUADRUPLE CHAMPION



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# Gerianne Darnell & Rick

This Conversation with Champions interview is with Gerianne Darnell of Council Bluffs, Iowa, and her Border Collie, CH OTCH MACH HC UCDX URO2 C-ATCH Skyland Ricochet UDX5 OM7 VER RE HXAsd HXBsd MXS MJB MFB T2B, EAC OJC WV-N TN-N NCC, RL1 – “Rick.” Rick is a **NEW AKC QUADRUPLE CHAMPION.**

*By Vanessa Kinsey Evans*

**Q:** How did you acquire your first Border Collie?

My first Border Collie was purchased in 1979 from Dewey Jontz of Runnells, Iowa. I had seen a little blurb in “Front and Finish” about a sheepdog trial at Living History Farms near Des Moines, Iowa, and my husband and I were completely enthralled watching the Border Collies herd that day, and that is where we met Dewey. Dewey was one of the pioneers for the working Border Collie in the United States. Dewey of course only raised Border Collies for herding purposes, but he was very proud of Skye’s OTCH (OTCH Schuyler King TD, Can CD, 1979-1992). Skye only saw sheep a few times in his life, as herding opportunities were few and far between back in the 1980s. Skye was followed by Riva in 1999 (CH CT OTCH MACH HC VCCH UCD UAg1 Outburst Chasing Butterflies UDX RAE TDX VST HXAsd HIBd HSBs

MXB NAP MJB OJP, STDsd, PDI, EAC EJC OGC TN-E WV-O TG-N ASCA RS-N, CL3-SFH) and Raymond (Rick’s sire) in 2001 (DC UROC URX UCDX Ettrick On Edge UDT BN RAE VCD1 HXAsd HXBd HIBs NA NAP NJP). Rick was born in 2004.

**Q:** What do you like most about the breed?

Do I have to pick just one thing? I guess if I have to pick just one thing, it would be their desire to WORK with me. I also think that Border Collies make amazing and loving housepets. I also love their looks; no matter how they’re bred, they are all beautiful.

**Q:** Is there anything you dislike?

Sometimes, I wish Border Collies could be a little less obsessive. But, sometimes I

wish that I could be a little less obsessive as well.

**Q:** What kind of evaluation methods do you use when choosing a Border Collie?

I’m not a big believer in evaluation methods or tests. I tend to pick with my heart from a litter that I really like both parents. I look for markings that appeal to me, and of course structure is important, especially a really nice front, because in my opinion that is what bears 75 percent  
*(continued on next page)*



Photo by Lori Herbel

## Conversations with Champions

of the impact of all of the sports I do. Now that I have a bunch of sheep, I am also looking for parents that come from proven herding lines. But I enjoy a good looking dog too, although I don't think the two things are mutually exclusive. An important thing for me when picking a puppy is eye contact. I want a dog that NATURALLY makes eye contact, it is a lot easier than trying to teach a dog to watch me.

**Q:** How did you get involved in herding?

My first Border Collie, Skye, was only able to herd a few times in his life, although we were able to attend a Jack Knox seminar WAY back, I think around 1982. When I got Riva in 1999 I knew that I wanted to herd, but I had NO clue what was involved (it was a Border Collie, didn't they just "do" it? HA!). When Riva was about 10 months old I was able to have a lesson with Kathy Knox, and then I began many years of private lessons and seminars with both Kathy Knox and Kent Herbel. Raymond (bred by Kathy) came along only a year and a half after Riva, so I was a beginner trying to herd with two VERY different types of Border Collies. Riva had a nice natural outrun, but she didn't like to stop in the pressure. Raymond had more natural "moves" than Riva, but he was SO much dog, really too much dog for a beginner. I'd so love

to have him NOW as a young dog. Rick was my third herding dog, and he would have been the perfect dog for a beginner, it's a shame I didn't get him first! Rick was always very quiet and kind to his sheep, and he has a beautiful feel for sheep and pressure; he is a fabulous farm dog. But sometimes Rick didn't have enough push and bite for some sheep, although he really did suit me more than Raymond did. I finished Herding Championships on all three dogs, and also got in to raising sheep. With my youngest Border Collie now almost 9 years old, I'm thinking of cutting back on the sheep for awhile until I get another pup.

**Q:** How did you get involved in conformation?

I have always been interested in conformation and I have enjoyed having the CH title in front of my dogs' registered names. I have finished three Conformation Championships on Border Collies and five Comformation Championships on Papillons, and I recently finished my first Grand Champion Papillon. I've also had several Group Wins and Placements in both the United States and Canada over the years. Rick had a Group Four from the classes in 2007 on the way to his Championship.

**Q:** How did you get involved in obedience and agility?

My husband and I picked up our first dog, a Basset Hound, on the way home

from our honeymoon in 1977. We were CLUELESS on how to housebreak a puppy, so off to puppy class we went. I immediately got hooked on the training, and that eventually housebroken Basset puppy became a UDTX, Can CDX TD, Ber CD. Agility, of course, came along much later. The first time I saw agility was in 1986 at a Gaines Classic in Houston. I saw some NCDA agility at a demo in 1989, and I still thought it looked interesting, but not something I'd probably get involved with, as I wondered how in the heck you could get all of that equipment. When the AKC started doing agility in 1994, I decided to take the plunge. I remember my very first agility class like it was yesterday, as I told the instructors that I would have to handle everything with the dog on my left, as he was a 6 ½ year old OTCH dog (Papillon), and I wouldn't be able to do anything with him on my right. I got over that really quickly! I soon had a yard full of makeshift equipment, and pap Zack went on to become the first dog to earn the MX title that started from the Novice A class. Back then there would be eight dogs total in the excellent class, it was amazingly different compared to what agility has evolved in to today.

**Q:** What was the first title you received?

The first title I ever earned on a dog was a CD on my Basset Hound in 1978. Rick's first title was a CPE agility title earned in the summer of 2006 when he was 19 months old.

**Q:** Did you work toward each championship simultaneously?

Rick did all of his training in the various sports simultaneously. But the only two Championships that we showed for at the same time were the OTCH (2012) and the MACH (2013). Rick had more than one weekend where he picked up OTCH points and a Double Q at the same time. As Rick got older, I rarely trained him in agility, but we trained in obedience a LOT



Photo by Rosemary Strasser



Photo courtesy of Gerianne Darnell



(still do!). He needed virtually no maintenance training in agility, which was a plus as far as keeping him sound. Rick's first Championship was in conformation in 2007, and he earned his Herding Championship in 2008. I have done very little tracking with Rick, and I am looking forward to starting that this summer.

**Q:** What is your training schedule like?

I try to train five days a week, but some weeks we don't make it. Most days I do some obedience training with Rick and my young Papillon Robert, and it takes me about 45 minutes to train both of them. When I am tracking with a dog, I will often lay a track and then train obedience in a parking lot while I'm waiting for the track to age. If I am actively training a young dog in agility, I try to train four days a week for about 10 minutes, but after my dogs are trained for agility, I tend to not do much agility training. I find that the obedience needs more maintenance than agility to remain competitive. Most of the time my dogs are training/showing in at least two venues, usually obedience and agility, but this year my pap Robert has successfully shown in conformation, obedience, rally, tracking, and agility. But then Robert thinks he is a Border Collie! I keep my training sessions short and meaningful, and if I were to embroider two things on a t-shirt they would be "Less is More" (if your dog does something great, QUIT, and move on to something else) and "It's all in the details." I tell my students it takes the same amount of time to train your dog to do something WELL as it does to let him develop sloppy habits.

**Q:** What was your greatest training obstacle with Rick? How did you overcome it?

My greatest training obstacle with Rick is probably also his greatest asset: his extreme desire to WORK WORK WORK. Rick has been described as a "lot of dog" when it comes to obedience and agility, and sometimes all of that drive and



Photo by ML Thorsteinson

desire does not translate in to a precise obedience performance! Rick is the most consistent, qualifying obedience dog I have ever had; his qualifying rate is just amazing. That said, I have never been able to get a consistent heeling performance from him. If you looked up "forged heel position" in the dictionary it would say "See Rick." As Rick can usually front and finish quite well, there were many obedience runs where we would get a 197 ½ with two points off on heeling, sigh. I also always found it interesting that the exact same performance could be scored a 192 ½ by one judge and a 197 ½ by another judge the next day! Rick seems to frighten some judges. So, I can't say that we ever overcame our biggest obstacle, but obviously we were able to get an OTCH relatively easily, so I guess it wasn't that big of an obstacle! But there would have been a whole lot more 199 performances if Rick and I had ever agreed on what "heel position" really meant!

**Q:** When did you know Rick would be special?

Rick was special before he was born, as he is the son of my beloved Raymond. I am Rick's co-breeder, and I was there when he was born. I remember as Rick came out I thought, "There he is!" Rick's

puppy name was "Baby Ray", as he looks a LOT like his dad. That said, he has an entirely different personality than his dad. He is much sweeter, much more easy-going as a pet, and he actually has a conscience – something Raymond never really developed! I must say, early on I made many comparisons of father to son, and as a youngster, I didn't think Rick measured up to Ray, as I wanted him to BE Ray. I will always be grateful to Kent Herbel who straightened me out one day when I was whining "But he isn't like Ray." Kent told me I had three options: get rid of him, send him off for training, or accept and embrace what RICK brought to the party. It was the best training advice I think I ever received. From that day on I trained RICK, not Raymond's son, but RICK.

**Q:** What is one of your favorite memories about working with Rick?

If I have to pick just one thing, it would be finishing Rick's MACH in May of 2013, which also finished his Quadruple Championship. Rick finished his MACH at my local club's trial, the Bellevue Dog Obedience Club of Nebraska, where I am a life member and the perennial trial chairman. (Just as an aside, Riva finished

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Photo ©PixnPages.com

her OTCH and her Quadruple Championship at the BDOC obedience trial in 2007, where I was ALSO Trial Chairman!). Rick went in to the three-day weekend needing two Double Q's, and when he Double Q'd the first day, it took a little bit of the pressure off. You could have heard a pin drop the second day when I started Rick's MACH run (except

the "aaaahhh" from the crowd when he almost went off course!). I remember as he got on the dogwalk with three obstacles to go thinking, ohmyGOSH, is it really going to happen? It was so wonderful to finish at home, with all of my wonderful friends in attendance who had all been on this journey with Rick and me.

**Q:** What has been the highlight of Rick's career?

I think the most amazing week I had with Rick was at the 2010 Border Collie National Specialty. Ever since I had heard of the Janet Larsen Versatility Award, I wanted to win it. I have always loved to cross-train in lots of dog sports, and I thought a competition like that was right up my alley. Rick had an AMAZING week. In the earlier part of the week he placed in Advanced A sheep, qualified in Advanced A ducks, had several Q's and placements in Excellent agility, and he won the Advanced B Rally class. As the week went on, Rick just got stronger. Saturday was also the first time I ever showed Rick in utility, and he darn near qualified, having a lovely run while only missing an article. Rick was also entered in Open B, but I really had no expectations, as it was only his fifth time ever in the Open ring, and there were at least 10 OTCH dogs in the class. I thought I had had a pretty good run, but I was amazed and overwhelmed when Rick won the class with a 199, and then went on to win High in Trial. Later in the day, Rick won the Herding Titled class in conformation, meaning he placed in every venue available that weekend. Rick went on to clinch the Janet Larsen award, and I will always remember that wonderful week.

**Q:** What has given you the greatest pleasure working with Rick?

Rick NEVER has a bad day. Ever. He lives to work with me, no matter what the venue. He is completely and totally devoted to me. And, I'm quite devoted to him as well! Rick also loves to snuggle. He is just a wonderful, sweet dog in the house; I think anybody who watches him work would never guess that as his performances can be so over the top. I am also now very much enjoying watching Rick's eight kids excel in herding, obedience, rally, and agility.

**Q:** Do you have a mentor(s)?

My obedience mentor was Kay Guetzloff, and I have had many agility mentors, including Sharon Nelson, Stuart Mah, and Ann Braue. In herding, my mentors were Kathy Knox and Kent Herbel.

**Q:** Do you have future plans for Rick?

Rick will be 9 years old in October. I am playing around in AKC preferred agility with no particular goals, just because he loves to show so much. In AKC obedience, I hope to finish Rick's Obedience Grand Master; he is currently working on his OM8, so I think that is realistic. In UKC obedience we are working on both his obedience and rally championships, and I am also working on various WCRL/APDT rally titles. My biggest plan for Rick is to get extremely serious about AKC tracking. Could lightning strike twice as Rick follows in the paw prints of my Quintuple Champion Riva? All I know is that I want to continue working with and showing Rick for as long as possible, as we both enjoy it SO much.

**Q:** Do you have any other upcoming stars?

Sadly, Rick is my youngest Border Collie, but after my older two are gone I am sure I will be adding another Border Collie puppy. That said, I have a wonderful young Papillon that just turned three years old. He is a Grand Champion, halfway to his MACH, has his TD, and is a multiple High in Trial dog in obedience in AKC, CKC, and UKC. I hope to make him the first Quadruple Champion Papillon.

**Q:** Is there anyone you would like to thank?

I would like to thank Rick's co-breeder Sheryl Day, as without Sheryl there would have never been a Rick. I cannot believe how fortunate I have been to have this incredible dog in my life. 🐾

## Titles Legend for Rick

**CH OTCH MACH HC UCDX URO2 C-ATCH Skyland Ricochet UDX5 OM7  
VER RE HXAsd HXBsd MXS MJB MFB T2B, EAC OJC WV-N TN-N NCC, RL1**

### AKC TITLES:

CH – Champion  
 OTCH – Obedience Trial Champion  
 MACH – Master Agility Champion  
 HC – Herding Champion  
 UDX5 – Utility Dog Excellent Five  
 OM7 – Obedience Master Seven  
 VER – Versatility  
 RE – Rally Excellent  
 HXAsd – Herding Advanced Arena Sheep and Ducks  
 HXBsd – Herding Advanced Field Sheep and Ducks  
 MXS – Master Agility Silver  
 MJB – Master Jumpers Bronze  
 MFB – Master FAST Bronze  
 T2B – Time to Beat

### CPE TITLES

C-ATCH – Agility Trial Champion

### NADAC TITLES

EAC – Elite Agility Certificate  
 OJC – Open Jumpers Certificate  
 WV-N – Novice Weavers  
 TN-N – Novice Tunnelers  
 NCC – Novice Chances Certificate

### WCRL/APDT TITLES:

RL1 – Rally Level One



**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Vanessa Evans has been involved with Border Collies since 2000 and is an AKC Breeder of Merit. She currently competes in rally, obedience, tracking and occasionally conformation.