



## “DCA Member Linda Davis & “Taco” “A Plastic Bag and a Pink Patch”

By Peggy Ann Strupp

It all started with a plastic bag and a Pink Patch. Linda Davis of Laurel, Maryland was already competing in Coursing Ability Tests (CAT) with her Champion Dalmatian, “Taco,” when she heard about the “Pink Patch Project,” where EMS/police/fire agencies around the US & the world partner to wear pink patches on their uniforms during October to increase Breast Cancer Awareness & raise money for research. Linda was a firefighter and her husband was fighting cancer. Linda decided to bring a little pink donation bucket to each CAT run they participated in where friends, supporters, & other exhibitors could donate money to the Pink Patch Project.

The money Taco raised while running CATs during the campaign was donated to the Laurel Police Department’s Pink Patch campaign for cancer research. But Linda & Taco didn’t stop there. “Taco,” GCH CH Snapshots Don’t Spill The Beans RN FDC

CAX24 DCAT SWE SCM SHDN RATO DN CGCA CGCU TKP ATT VHMA, who was bred, trained & handled by Linda, just kept running. AKC Coursing Ability Tests began in 2012, and most Dalmatians love the sport. In a CAT, the dog is held at the starting line until released to chase a plastic bag or “lure” over a 600 yard course. The event tests a dog’s basic “hunting-by-sight” ability, where the lure emulates the zigzagged way a rabbit scurries when being pursued. The dog pursues the lure and must finish the distance within 2 minutes; Taco usually finishes in about 31 seconds.

Dogs that pass the CAT three times will earn a Coursing Ability (CA) title from the American Kennel Club. Dogs that pass the CAT ten times earn the Coursing Ability Advanced (CAA) title, and dogs that pass twenty-five times earn the Coursing Ability Excellent (CAX) title. Each time a dog earns 25 more “pass” scores, the dog earns a new level of CAX.

Taco has earned all 3 titles and has continued to earn additional levels of the CAX title. Taco became the first dog (all breed) to earn the CAX10, but they didn’t stop there, either. On May 28, 2022, Taco became the first and only dog (all breeds) in the world to earn the CAX24. That means Taco has earned SIX HUNDRED “pass” ratings in a Coursing



*Dominic Palleschi Carota (center left), Vice Chairman of the AKC Board of Directors, presented Taco and Linda Davis (center right) with a Special Performance Award in celebration of Taco’s CAX24 achievement on 5/28/22. To Linda’s right stand Team Taco members Alyshia Funk, Miranda Thronberry and Diane Bruder. To her left are Bayshore Companion Dog Club Board Member Carolyn Carson, President Susan Soviero and Board Member Robin Salerno.*

Ability Test! Dominic Palleschi Carota, Vice Chairman of the AKC Board of Directors, traveled to Freehold, New Jersey to honor Taco and Linda for this special achievement earned at the Union County Kennel Club Cluster (see photo). The American Kennel Club presented Linda & Taco with a Special Performance Award. At age 10, Taco is still running strong. He is currently “chasing” the CAX25 title, and may well have earned it by press time. Taco is a Grand Champion in conformation and has more than 130 titles to his name. Taco is still considered a member of the Laurel (MD) Police Department. He and Linda have been featured on the AKC webpage and serve as remarkable ambassadors of our beloved breed.



*The Laurel, MD Police Department pose with Taco the Dalmatian in support of the Pink Patch Project for breast cancer awareness. (Bryan Sirotkin Photography)*