

Meet Your Breeders!

Linda Ehlers ~ Jerlin Basenjjs

1. How did you get started in Basenjjs?

My husband Jerry, is the one that researched the basenji and encouraged me to look for one. This was in 1970 and we were living in Tucson at the time. We did look at some 7 to 8 month old ones in Tucson but they were quite aloof and would not even come up to us. We decided to look further. My husband's mother found one in Colorado and shipped her to us. She was a red/white female (quite a handful). She taught us the ways of a head-strong basenji. When Korina was 4 months old, we found a tri female (8 weeks old) from a local lady in Tucson. I do not think that she showed so I assume she was classified as a back-yard-breeder. She let me have pick-of-litter but at that time I had no idea what to look for. I picked on cuteness and personality. We named her My Lady Ken-Tara and she ended up being my foundation bitch.

2. Why did you start breeding? When?

Jerry and I took our two female basenjjs to an obedience class in Tucson since these were our first basenjjs and we thought they needed basic obedience. Our instructor, Jane List, much to our surprise, used her tri basenji for demonstration. We were delighted that we had an instructor who also had a basenji. She was a great instructor and very nice person. She told us that her father, Dr. Newton Wessman, was a former President of the Basenji Club of America. Jane was very helpful to first-time basenji owners. We talked with her about breeding and she offered her tri male, Ch. Kazivaz Kemit, to use on Korina. This breeding produced an all-red litter born in 1973. We kept a red male and I attempted showing him at the Tucson show when he was a puppy. I think he was a very nice puppy with a very, very novice handler since the judge really tried to help me present the dog well.

3. What persons influenced you most strongly?

I do not think there was any one person who influenced me the most. I studied magazines; met other basenji owners and breeders. I did not have the influence or knowledge of any reputable breeder as I did not purchase my basenjjs from a "show breeder." Bob Mankey was the first "big breeder" that I had contact with and used his tri champion male, Ti-Zar, on my tri foundation bitch, My Lady Ken-Tara. I used his book (a little paperback) as my reference on basenjjs. At that time that was the only book on basenjjs available.

4. What have you seen improve in Basenjjs over the years?

I have seen the most improvement in the temperament. I think structure has been improved in some areas such as tail sets and feet. Movement overall has improved.

5. What do you think today's Basenji breeders need to pay special attention to?

Today's breeders need to pay special attention to health. We now have so much more knowledge than in the 1970s. At that time there were only tests for PPM, coloboma and HA.

Structurally I think the shoulders are getting too straight and set too far forward. This makes the basenji have no fill in forechest. Small ears are another thing we are losing. I am also concerned with the loss of bone in some lines.

6. What advice do you have to a new breeder getting started?

Constantly study the standard. Contact many reputable, established breeders throughout the country to get their input. Be prepared to hold onto puppies that do not sell. Be prepared to take your puppies back when the new homes do not work out. **MY MAIN ADVICE TO NEW BREEDERS IS TO TAKE YOUR TIME!!!!** Do not over breed in hopes that you will have X number of champions within a certain time period. I have heard rumored that "in five years, I want to be where 'so-and-so long-time breeder' is". It does not work that way. Most long-established well-known breeders paid their dues and gained their reputations over many, many years.

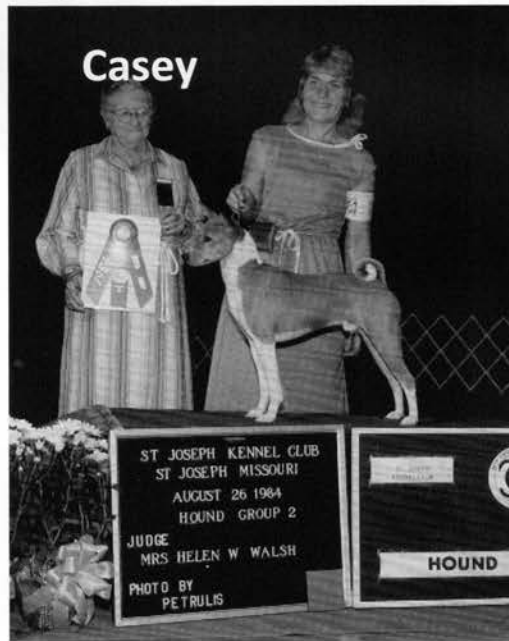
7. What dogs have you seen or owned stand out as outstanding examples of the breed and why?

There are many other breeders' dogs that stand out to me; to name a few, JR, Mamba, and Larkspur. I am sure that I have missed some that were a great influence on the breed. There are many other older ones that have been great such as Re-Up, Ti-Mungai and Spunky, but I did not have the opportunity to see these dogs in person.

Of my own dogs, my first Specials dog (and we learned together!) was **Ch. Jerlin's Mystic Mountain** (Ch. Vikentor's Lucky Mountaineer x Ch. Jerlin's Mystical Mandy). Casey was a wonderful dog for a first

special because he liked to show and made it easy for a novice to win with him. He was in the Top Ten for 2 years in a row all owner/breeder handled. Casey was used at stud some and produced 10 champions in his short life time. He was hit by a car at the age of four. It took me a long time to heal from this.

Of the dogs that I have owned, I would have to say that **Ch.**



Jerlin's General Patton (Ch. Jerlin's Starfire of Carmel x Ch. Jerlin's Haunting Hali)

who won Best in Sweeps at the 1990 Basenji National excelled as a showman (Top Ten for two years in a row, all owner handled) and as an ambassador for the breed. His consistency in producing



basenjis that had the same excellent qualities as his with all different types of dams was phenomenal.

Another dog that I bred and owned was **Ch. Jerlin's Giza Baruti** (Ch. Changa's Gala Celebration x Ch. Jerlin's Leather N' Lace) who was an



outstanding black/white male that produced some very nice basenjis that won in the conformation ring and some outstanding lure coursing dogs. "Flint" was Best of Breed at a Cincinnati Specialty Show and was Best of Opposite Sex at the 1990 Basenji National. I had fun specializing Flint, who had many Hound Group wins and Hound Group placements. During his time he was one of the top-winning black/white basenjis.

One of my "non" dogs is **Ch. Jerlin's Lyric in Black** (Ch. Jerlin's General Patton x Ch. AB Princess Chinyamarindi). Lyric won Best



in Sweepstakes, SWBC in July 2000, Winners Bitch/Best of Winners at the 2000 BCOA National, Best of Opposite Sex at the 2002 BCOA National, Award Of Merit at the 2003 BCOA National, Hound Group wins and multiple Hound Group placements. Lyric always entertained the crowd with her antics when I showed her.

My other "non" dog is **Ch. Jerlin-SS Special Forces** (Ch. Jerlin's General Patton x Ch. AB Princess Chinyamarindi). Beret was Best Of Opposite Sex in Sweepstakes at the 2002 GCBC Specialty, Winners Dog/Best of Winners at the 2002 BCOA National, Award of Merit at the 2005 GCBC Specialty and Award of Merit at the 2006 BCOA



National Specialty. He has been in the Top Twenty for two years, all owner/breeder handled. Beret is an easy dog to show and has beautiful movement.

8. What do you feel are your most significant achievements with the breed?

My most significant achievements with basenjis have been breeding dogs that are consistent in type and temperament. I feel that dogs that I have bred can compete in conformation, performance and/or be wonderful pets.

As a breeder, I feel gaining the respect and trust of my fellow basenji fanciers has been most rewarding.

9. Anything else you would like to say?

I think much of my success in breeding comes from knowing structure. I owned and/or raised American Quarter Horses long before I had even heard of basenjis. I think learning about the correct structure of performance horses has aided in my knowledge of the correct structure of a basenji.

I have really enjoyed the basenji breed and most of the basenji people as a whole are friendly and helpful.

10. What is your chosen kennel name? How did you choose this name? Why? Does it have a meaning? Any other information you would like to provide?

My kennel name, Jerlin, was chosen from my husband's first name Jerry and my first name Linda. There is nothing exotic about it or any hidden meaning.

I would not have been able to achieve the goals I have thus far without the physical and monetary help, encouragement, and advice of my silent partner. Thank you for your support, Jerry. ♦

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