

The First Annual African Match

L. Jane Williams
The Basenji, December 1994

A very special event took place on Saturday, September 17, 1994, after breed judging at the Lehigh Valley Kennel Club all-breed show. Out of a desire to showcase the dogs with the recent African imports in their pedigree, the sponsors of the 1994 B.C.O.A. National Specialty came up with the idea of an "African match for Basenjies."

In order to be eligible to participate the dog had to be at least one-eighth African. Classes offered were One-Half, One-Quarter and One-Eighth African Puppy Dog and Bitch and Adult Dog and Bitch with Best and Best Opposite Sex Puppy and Adult awarded. Also offered was a parade of Full Africans which was split into two groups: African Import and American-Bred from Strictly African Imported Stock.

The only recent import in attendance was Damara Bolte's Avongara M'Bliki. I remember seeing her for the first time at the 1989 National Specialty held in Washington D.C. She was a very pretty young lady...now she is seven and still looking good! There were a total of six in the American-bred from Strictly African Imported Stock. I brought one of M'Bliki's sons from her first litter and the other five were individuals who came from the breeding program of Brenda L. Jones-Greenberg and Karon A. Begeman from Arizona. These dogs are bred from African only dogs, some going back four generations of known dogs. To my knowledge, this is the only program of its kind at this time and its progress should be of great interest to us all.

As always with a new venture, the sponsors had no idea what the entry would be. They needn't have worried, because with a pre-entry of fifty-five and late entries it was quite evident that there was a great deal of interest out there.

Mrs. Deborah R. Lawson was very understanding of the fact that many of these puppies and adults had never been in a ring and she exhibited a great deal of patience. She took her time and did her best to judge each dog equally, sometimes laughing at their antics. **Congratulations to everyone!**

A match for "Africans Only"... Why? Why can't all the puppies be included? This match was one way for those who are interested in the newer Africans and their progeny to see several at one time, to see how the newest genetic material has combined with our "American" dogs, to put their hands on the dogs, watch them in action, talk to the breeders/owners about temperament, etc. How many opportunities are there normally to see so many "Africans" in one place? No, no I am not placing more importance on the "Africans," not at all...but I have to agree with one sponsor when they commented that it was hoped that this would become an annual affair ... I HOPE SO TOO!

There was a tremendous amount of effort expended to ensure this was a special event. Catalogs were printed, a great trophy table was put together – even those who did not place came out of the ring with homemade milk bone cookies from Kim Etherson, a sizeable ring was provided, rosettes were presented for the four top placements and each participant in the Parade of Full Africans received a rosette, and even the weather held off until breakdown time.



Best Puppy: POSSUM CREEK'S JUST MY LUCK
BOS: POSSUM CREEK'S NITRO



I would like to share a little bit of trivia with those of you who have not seen the catalog. While none of the puppies entered had completed an AKC championship (though several certainly will), the adults were another story. Out of thirty-three adults, fourteen had their AKC championships, three had earned their Junior Courser title, and one had earned Companion Dog, Canine Good Citizen, Temperament AND Therapy Dog titles.

This was an excellent time to take photos for the B.C.O.A. African Stock Project; unfortunately, I was unable to get one of each dog. I wish to thank those who came by and had photos taken. The Project has received one videotape and I would appreciate hearing from anyone else who is interested in donating a copy to the Project.

Watch your January 1995 "*The Basenji*" magazine for a pull-out flyer. I hope all who have a relative of these dogs will take the time to fill out one for each dog and return it to me. If you know of someone who does not subscribe, please pass copies on to them.

THANK YOU for your participation. I look forward to hearing from you...and seeing you at the next AFRICAN MATCH!



Best Adult: KAARJUKI CLASSIC EDITION
BOS: CH. AKUABA'S FREEFLIGHT TO KISA, JC

