How The Basenji Got Started

Minnie Hill

Early in the spring of 1964, Helen Longshore, editor of The Italian Greyhound, asked me if I wouldn’t like to start a magazine for Basenjis. I said, “No, that sounds like too much work.”

Helen wanted to be co-editor of another breed magazine – seems the I.G.’s didn’t keep her busy enough! She asked several breeders she knew to start a magazine in their own breeds with her as co-editor, but was unsuccessful. Later in the year, Helen again asked me and this time I said okay. Our first issue was July 1964 however I didn’t think we could ever get it out. Helen lived in the next town and we were using the same IBM Executive typewriter and other equipment. We
finally did get it to the printer though and began to get address labels together while it was being printed. We sent the whole issue free to all B.C.O.A. members and anyone else we had ever heard of who was interested in Basenjis.

We had a few advertisers and pictures in the first issue because we had called and solicited advertisements from some of the larger kennels. Bob Mankey and his Congo’s Moja of Cambria were on the cover. Moja and some of the other’s from the first issue are shown on this page as well. With this small beginning, the magazine began to pay for itself and continued to do so.
here isn’t much more to say for the beginning of The Basenji, except it was increasingly difficult to run back and forth to Helen’s to use the typewriter so we told her to buy Francis and me out or we would buy her out. We, of course, bought her out and began preparing the camera ready copy each month by setting up the ads and typing all the articles from October, 1964 through the August, 1978, issue when Jon and Susan Coe bought us out.

We bought our own IBM Executive, addresserette, light table and many other items we needed for the work. We devised a system of working which suited us right in our home. In January, 1965, we added the Egyptian motif to the cover design. We replaced the sepia ink with black ink starting with the June, 1965, issue and began using a second color on the cover to make each month distinct beginning with the March, 1967, issue. Jon and Susan bought most of our equipment when they bought the magazine and I understand that she now has a new computer to replace some of the old equipment. They have done a marvelous job with the magazine keeping up the quality at all times.

It was a joy to work on the magazine all those years, especially keeping in contact with many breeders. I have only one Basenji left now, 13 years old, but he is doing fine. Best regards to all Basenji fanciers and good luck at the shows!