

Gifted

J E A N F O U R N I E R



by Linda Ayers Turner Knorr

Presents come in many forms. Each of us in the dog world possess countless treasures that we can give away all year long. We need not wait until December to share our priceless gifts.

Experience gives us a wealth of knowledge to distribute to those in need. And believe me we have a lot of needy folks with big wish lists around our show sights.

Newcomers would appreciate very basic support information. What is the American Kennel Club? Why would I even need your American Kennel Club? What services and events are offered for novice folks with a curiosity for beginning a new hobby in dogs?

Beginners are brimming with questions. Giving them all of the answers they need requires us to give them our time. Time is a most precious gift!

Our sport has many fine examples of individuals who constantly give in a big way. Jean Fournier is a great example of this generous spirit. What began as a family activity has become for her a lifetime adventure.

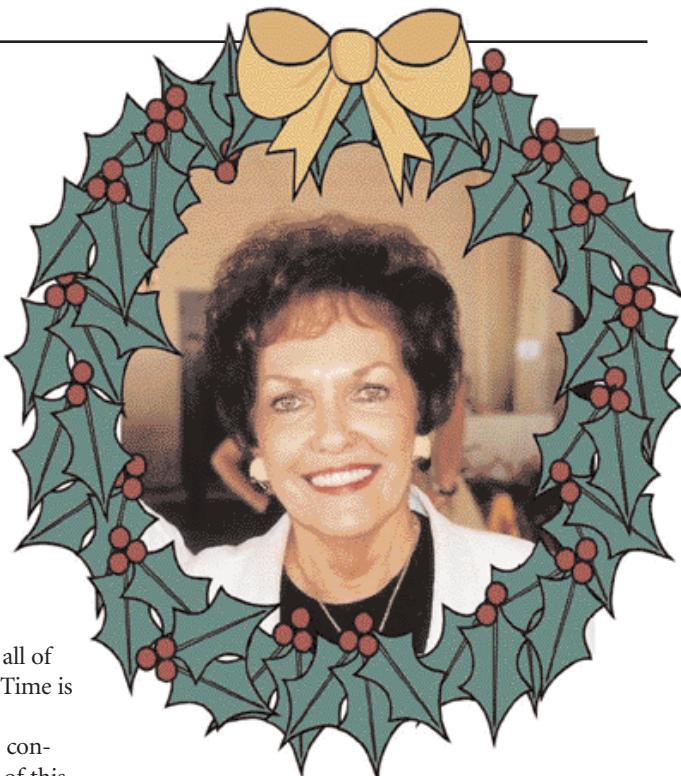
As snow is beginning to blanket many areas of the country, our minds wander dreaming of all sorts of things. As a child did you ever hook your pet to a sled on a snowy day pretending to own a team of sled dogs racing across the icy white wilderness?

Last month in South Carolina I stood under a tent covering the parking lot in front of our Greenville Hilton Hotel. Closing my eyes I imagined hearing the howls of wolves. Wow! what an incredible feeling! In reality I was passing through the grooming tent set up for this year's Siberian Husky Club of American National Specialty Show.

Inside the hotel at the Judges Educational Breed Seminar, I was pleased to find my friend Jean Fournier. There she was giving her time, sharing her years of knowledge with those of us hungry to learn.

These very unique Working Dogs bring lots of excitement to our sport. Let's face it, you can't mush with just any pet.

During the breed judging I stuck like glue to Jean as she worked like a dog as a ring steward for Judge Michael Jennings. Trying not to get in her way I had lots of questions and Jean was charitable with her time.



A breed favorite, Ch. Toko's Mr. Chip of Yago CD shown winning a BIS in 1981 with breeder, owner, handler Jean Fournier.

L I N E S F R O M L I N D A



Jean Fournier mentoring your author at the October Siberian Husky Club of America National Specialty Show.



Jim and Linda Knoor join Jean and an Australian Dog Fancier at the Siberian National Awards Banquet October 2004.



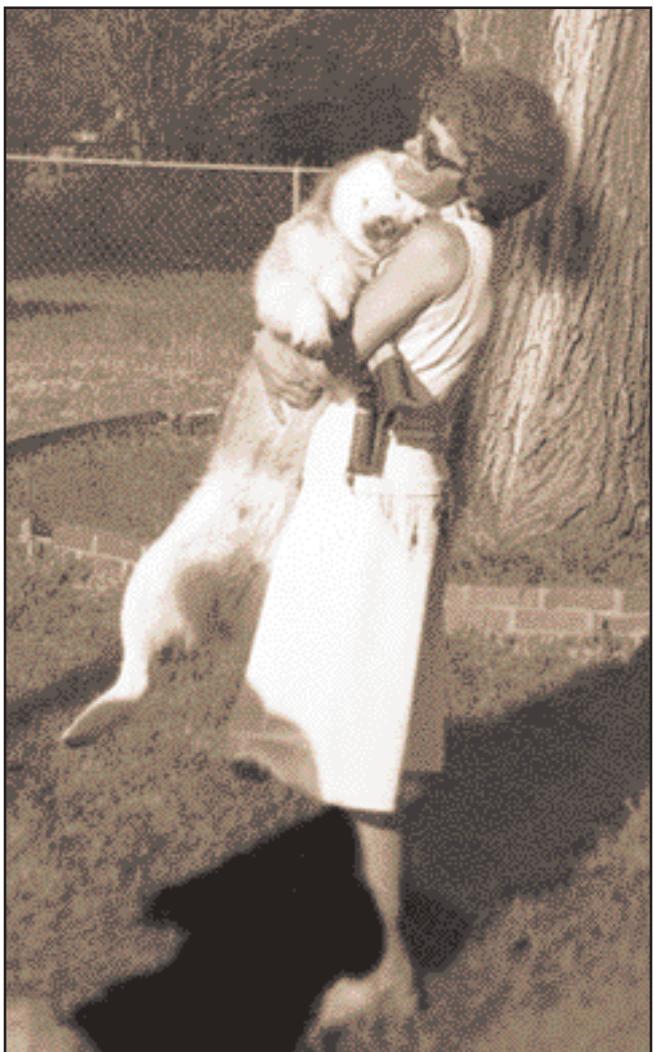
Jean and Sandy James congratulating Sherri French, owner of SHCA Top Twenty Award and Best Of Breed Winner Ch. Topaz Out Of Control. Beaming handler Charles Cooms.

At the club banquet Jean included my husband Jim and me at her table where we soaked up more knowledge of the activities of her favorite breed.

The room was buzzing with talk about the CD, THE SIBERIAN HUSKY created by Mrs. Jean Fournier. Jean had donated copies for the clubs rescue program as well as to help raise funds in the silent auction. Santa has copies and Jean's CD would be the perfect stocking stuffer for anyone interested in learning more about the breed. Contact S. Claus through his elf email at JeanToko@aol.com.

In this issue we celebrate owner-handlers. Jean Fournier has come full circle or imagine the "whole holiday wreath". From novice pet owner to... breeder – dog writer – multiple breed club officer – AKC delegate - working sled dog team racer – AKC judge – educator extraordinaire! Here's how it all began...

"When my first Siberian entered my world as a birthday gift and my family ultimately became intrigued by match shows, then

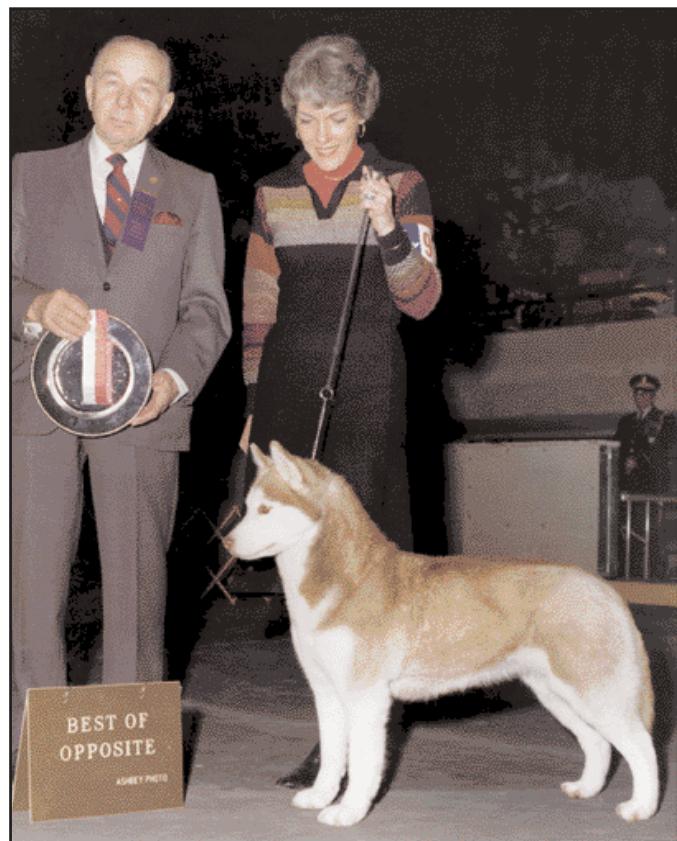


1980 - a favorite photo of Jean seeing her Ch. Toko's Four-Leaf Clover after spending a winter on a friend's dog team. Another bred, owned and always in BBE Siberian. Six siblings finished, also finishing their championships.

L I N E S F R O M L I N D A



Angela Porpora and Jean Fournier ring steward for Judge Michael Jennings at the Siberian National October 3, 2004.



One of Jean's favorite BBE, Group Placing Siberian bitches, Ch. Toko's Twenty-Four Karat Gold CD. The three-time breeding of her parents produced seven champions. Here she is with Judge Henry Stoecker at the Hartford, Connecticut show in 1976. She died at age 17 in 1990.



Westminster in 1975.

"real" dog shows, I was encouraged to take the next step by her breeder after my new young girl matured a bit. Our initial show was an October event in New Jersey. After "Toko's" bath, brushing, collar and leash, plus the family of four...we trekked off for a fun day on a new adventure. After a foggy time of not having a clue what to do, my dear Siberian and I followed good directions from other exhibitors and the judge. We exited the ring with Winners bitch and BOS which was a "major" (whatever that meant)!

My very astute husband realized that if we were to continue this new family "sport", it was most necessary that I learn the process and expertise of handling our beloved girl. Luckily, for us, he had also observed other show rings where tail-wagging dogs were accompanied by smooth running humans. He was particularly drawn to one man who seemed to get a lot of ribbons! We quickly hired Massachusetts handler Phillip Marsman, who after evaluating our gal, agreed to show her for us at Northeastern remaining shows for the balance of the year. And, right here is where the old adage is so true... a good dog is a good dog, is a good dog. Certainly, presentation is the first key to getting noticed, but in my opinion, the quality of the dog is the frosting on the cake. (I didn't totally know that then.)

LINES FROM LINDA



Jean Fournier's 5-dog team in March 1973 at the Mid-Atlantic Sled Dog Racing Association. Left lead - Ch. Fournier's Zachariah of Toko, right lead - Ch. Dovercrest Awsinée Pesna, left point Marlytuk's Caspera The Ghost (3 points), left wheel - Yeso Pac's Southern Belle (13 points), right wheel - Ch. Fournier's Tiffany of Toko.

Phillip's schedule didn't include one of the local shows during the next month, but we entered "Toko" anyway - she won another "major" with me handling. One must realize that Siberian show entries back in the early 70's were small by comparison. I recall that maybe 6 or 7 in one sex qualified as a major. Anyway, the next show was Boardwalk in Atlantic City and Phillip was there to take over. Results again: a third major which meant she had 11 points out of 15... a friend kept count while I was learning!

After the holidays that year, we heard of "big" shows in Connecticut and Massachusetts during February so why not try our luck? "Toko" was again handed over to Phillip Marsman who expertly finished her at the Hartford show with five more points and suddenly we had a "Champion" in our happy home! The family was thrilled and "Toko" seemed to smile as we headed back to NJ after a celebration dinner. This



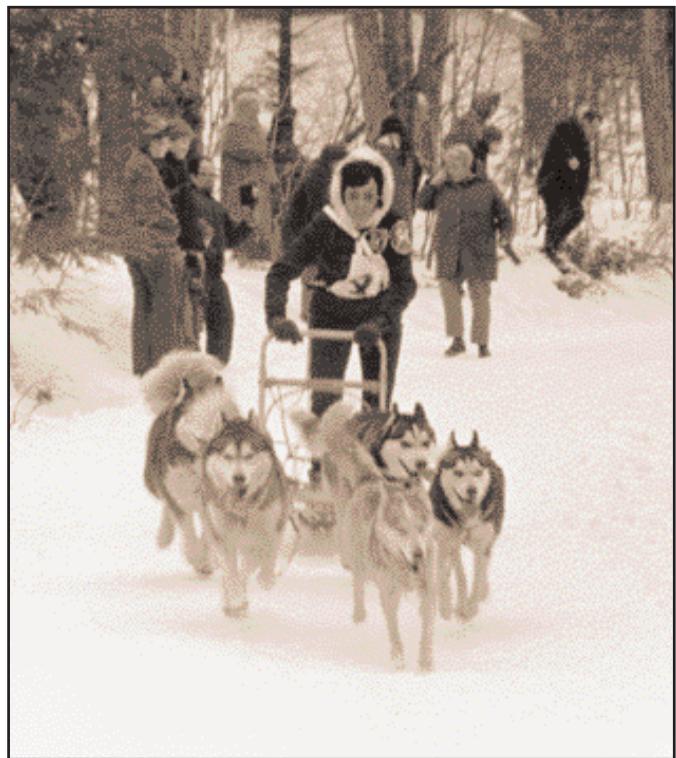
Givers - Siberian Husky National Judges Educational Breed Study Group Leaders. Jean Fournier, center.

was just the beginning!

I remember that early on at those limited dog shows that we attended with my first Siberian Husky that I was captivated by the Bred by Exhibitor class. My friends were few at the time because I was the

"new kid on the block" to the Siberian world. I had no idea what BBE meant, but because some very nice dogs (in my "green" opinion) with their owners walked into the ring to show their own dogs. Though I didn't realize it at the time, but

LINES FROM LINDA



very few Siberians in those days were "professionally handled". The entry numbers were few in most shows and the fancy's opinions of the breed were somewhat tainted as "wolves, wild and run-aways". The professional faces back then were Monroe Stebbins, Bob & Jane Forsyth, George Heitzman, Alan Levine and a few no longer around.

As time went on and my first litter faced the world, I was determined that if any hopeful "show" dogs" were decreed as possibilities by experienced friends, I was going to learn how to handle my own dogs to the best of my ability. I had watched Phillip's style and ability like a hawk, as well as many others but not necessarily the "pros". I was impressed at their communication skills, expert timing, grace and amiable attitude. They used their talents as well as the dogs' to often create a winning team. And somewhere in here, local handling classes consumed one night per week. With Phillip's guidance, I showed my gal a few times after her title, as well as having him for a couple of limited circuits. He has often commented that he taught himself right out of a job.

Dog shows were not our usual family venue back then, so when we did participate it was only when it fit into our busy



A thrill of a lifetime! Shown here winning the highly coveted Siberian Husky Club of America Working/Showing Trophy for the driver and team who had the highest points in racing and showing during 1973. Jean's team consisted of all champions, but one and most of them bred by Jean. On the left is then SHCA President L. Stewart Cochrane. Bowl presented by the 1972 winner Sy Goldberg.

lives.

The natural pattern was to join a local Siberian Husky Club, then the all-breed Monmouth County Kennel Club. Next came a litter of four in addition to about

five more adult Siberians. We were into sledding by this time which meant the garage housed not only autos but a sled, wheeled gig, harnesses, gang-lines and assorted paraphernalia.