



by Linda Ayers Turner Knorr

Unforgettable,
that's what you
are.....

Fanny

Ch. Ridgerunner Unforgettable

TOP HOUND 2000

PICTURED RIGHT:
DR. JACKLYN
HUNGERLAND WITH THE
UNFORGETTABLE TOP
HOUND TEAM FOR 2000:
BRUCE SCHULTZ, LORI
BURCH, JOHN AND
SUSAN HAMIL, GRETCHEN
SCHULTZ WITH "FANNY"
AND SHOW CHAIRMAN
ROY PRADO. FANNY'S
BREEDERS ARE BILL AND
ELAINE WOODSON.



What do FTD Flowers, Budweiser Beer, Geico Insurance and Pedigree Dog Food companies have in common?

If you guessed the family of "**Ch. Ridgerunner Unforgettable**," the year 2000's **Number One Hound**, you are wiser than television's idol Johnny Carson as "Carnac the Magnificent."

"**Fanny**," our nation's top Hound, is owned by **Susan LaCroix Hamil** whose Bloodhounds have starred in ad campaigns for each of those famous companies.

Fanny lives with **Lori Burch**, her co-owner. **Bill and Elaine Woodson** bred this fabulous **Bloodhound** and her loving handlers were **Bruce and Gretchen Schultz**.

Heroes of my childhood were cowboy boys. They wore high-heeled boots, sported tall hats and mounted beautiful horses. Roy Rogers, The Lone Ranger, Hop-A-Long Cassidy, Lash LaRue and John Wayne were my personal favorites.

To bring some of their television and movie images into reality for me my parents would take me to the Rodeo. At the Southeastern Fair in Atlanta, Georgia I caught my first glimpses of cowboys riding and roping.

Lash LaRue wearing all black invited us into his dressing room following one of his special appearances. I will always remember his giving me a kiss. But even at the tender age of seven I was keenly aware that his real attention seemed to be focused on an exotic dancer who also happened to be an admiring fan.

With the exception of Roy Rogers, I was privileged to get to know each one of those movie idols. Having a "Roy" as my father made up for not knowing the owner of the real Trigger.

Almost every child of my generation dreamed of owning their own horse. We asked Santa for cowboy suits with gun and holster sets. After Roy Ayers, Jr. was born, Santa brought him a Shetland Pony for his fifth Christmas. His Palomino named, you guessed it, "Trigger" followed. My Tennessee Walker, "Pepper" was accustomed to an English saddle but

somehow I felt "cooler" when I rode a Western saddle with sterling silver studs.

Bill and Elaine Woodson have lived the life of my all American rodeo heroes!

They grew up attending the same high school with both of them dating others at the time. They married January 20, 1959 in Lubbock, Texas, where Elaine was a "Bull Barn Boy." She took care of the dairy bulls and collected semen and used fresh and frozen semen to breed the college's dairy cows. Working together for the Central Ohio Breeding Association (COBA) Bill and Elaine were the artificial inseminators for Lubbock County's cattle. Elaine remembered, "It never failed that when we had a test to study for or finals the next day, we'd get several calls that a cow was "ready." I was pregnant by March. That summer it had gotten so that I couldn't "slip" through the openings to get away from the bulls. I'd have to climb over. We decided that it wasn't worth the risk to our unborn child, so I was the first "Bull Barn Boy" to have to quit because of pregnancy!

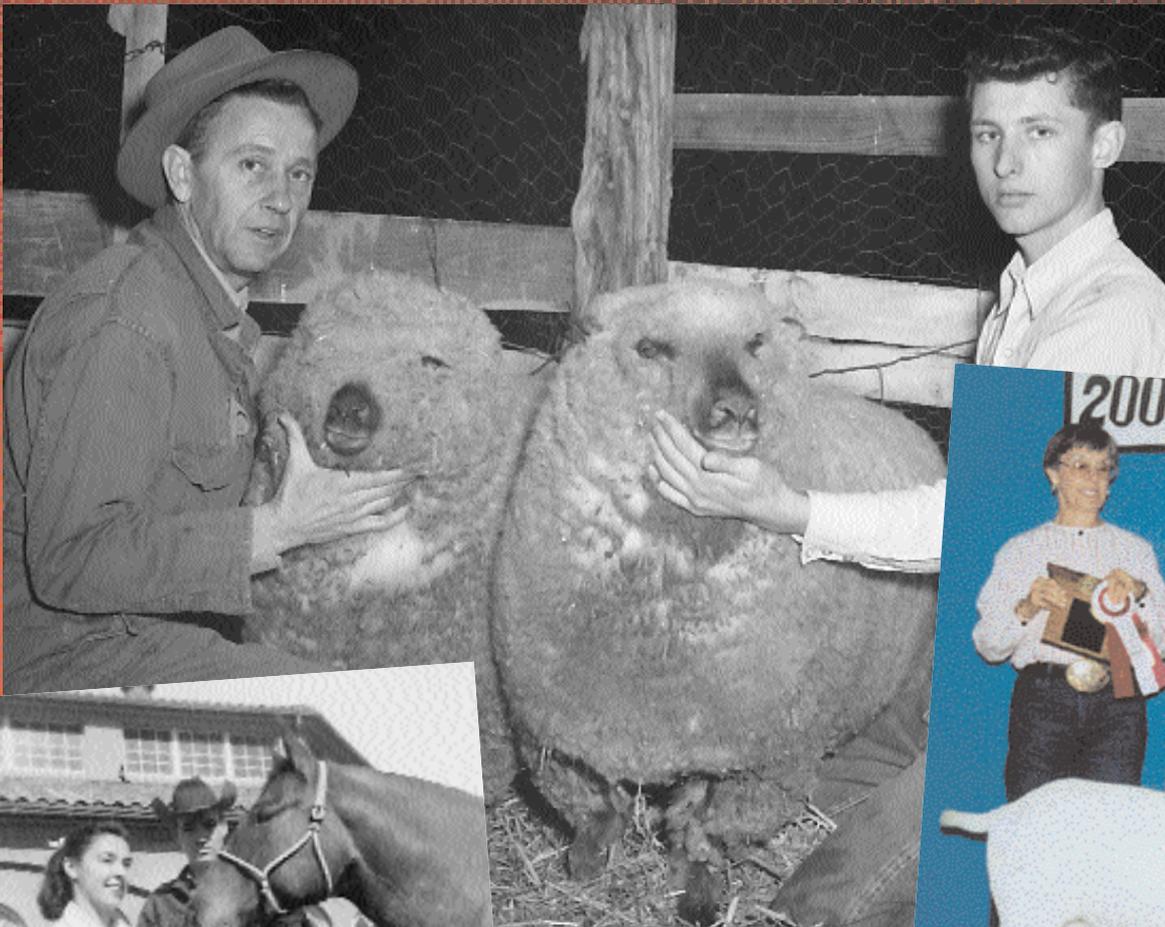
Our first home was a garage apartment where I fell through the landing while I was taking in my first bill of groceries. I cried because I thought I had broken all the eggs. I didn't. The second place we lived was a lot with multiple apartments. The further back you went and the higher you went, the cheaper it was. We were at the back on the top floor. The third place we lived was at some stables. The man raised fighting roosters and wanted someone to live there to keep people from taking them or doing anything to them at night. There was a one-room building where he kept his best roosters in cages. Well, we moved the roosters out, painted the walls, put down floor tile and moved in. This didn't last long and the man wanted a key so that he could come in any time. So even though it wasn't costing us anything, we left. The next place we roosted was a real house, though small, on a farm outside of Lubbock. Bill had a job breaking and training horses and the house was a perk. When we moved in we didn't

have enough money to turn on all of the utilities. We opted for electricity. Because all of the college farm workers got as much field corn as they wanted, we filled our deep freezer with corn-on-the-cob. I cooked corn in the coffee pot and that's what we had for three meals a day until the next month's paycheck came in.

Koi Zane, our first child, was born December 23, 1959 at Lubbock. Because most of the farm workers at the college wanted to go home for Christmas, Bill was left milking and working the horse barns and the hog farm. When he would have time to come see me, he'd be so tired he could hardly stay awake. I guess that was good training because, after Koi Zane came home from the hospital, we never got much sleep. He was three years old and had a little brother before he slept all night.

In January of 1961 when I was a Junior and Bill was a Sophomore, Bill's dad was killed in a car wreck. We withdrew from college and went home to help his mom gather their cattle out of the Fort Hood Army Reservation. We stayed out of school that spring, semester and summer. During that time, Bill was working at the local Boys Reformatory as a guard for \$272.60 month. That helped us to decide that we had to go back to college.

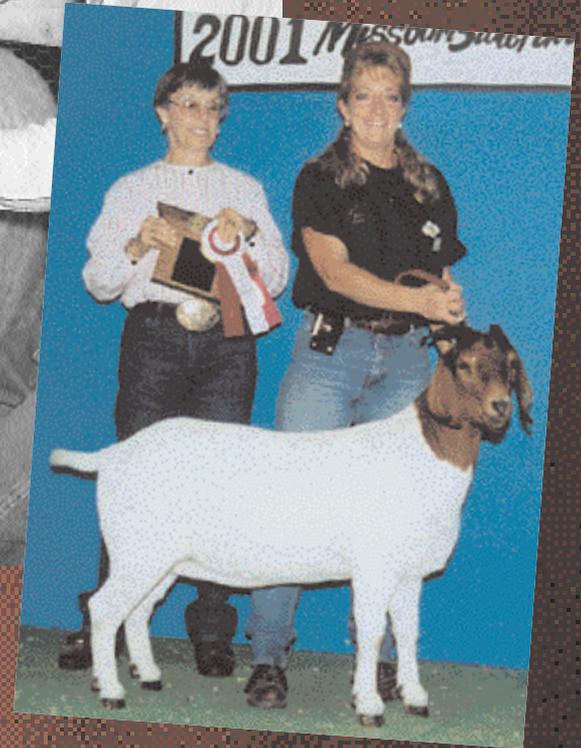
I called the Ag Department and told them that we were coming back and needed jobs. They had built a new housing facility for all of the college farm workers. One wing had a bedroom, bath, and small living room. The other consisted of rooms and a big common bath for eighteen boys. We shared a big kitchen and dining area. I got our room and board free for buying and cooking every meal for the boys except Sunday night. I bought most of the canned stuff at salvage freight, cracked eggs by the crate, missing parts chicken by the crate, and picked a lot of corn and peas from the fields. **I basically had to feed them on eighteen cents per meal.** Bill worked at a stable taking care of the horses and trimming feet, etc. I had already taken most of my required courses and could kind of pick and choose.



Left: In her Freshman year at Texas Tech University Elaine Woodson judging horses.

Above: Bill Woodson with his high school Ag. teacher showing his sheep.

Right: Elaine Woodson judging 2001 Missouri State Fair Boer Goat Show.



So Bill registered and I would fill in the blank times so that we did not have to leave Koi with a sitter. At the stable, they had a little donkey that had been on one of the kiddie rides. Bill would put him on the donkey and get the donkey started and he'd just go in circles. When he'd stop, Bill would throw another clod of dirt at Koi and he'd continue in his circles. We passed the year fine, but I've never really gotten into cooking, I wonder why?

At the end of the spring semester, I was pregnant again and Bill felt that he needed to be closer to home in order to help his mom. I still lacked two courses and was given special dispensation to finish by correspondence. So Bill transferred to

Southwest Texas at San Marcos. This was just two and one half hours away versus six hours away.

Bill worked on the college farm and we lived in an old Army barracks which had been moved out there. Tannon Shane, our second son, was born in January 20, 1963 the same year I earned my honors degree in Animal Husbandry. Bill and I have Indian blood, so each of our boys' first name is an Indian name even though they were blonde and blue-eyed. Their hair has gotten darker over the years, but of course, their eyes and fair complexion hasn't changed.

Bill had been sick for nearly a year before Tannon was born, but the doctors just couldn't discover what was

wrong. But like I've already said, he kept on going to school, working and rodeoing. He graduated in 1965 with a degree in Agriculture Education. As soon as he graduated, we moved back to Gatesville, Texas where Bill started working in the Horticulture Department at the Boys Reformatory. He had worked only a short time before he got so weak that he would have to crawl up the steps to our house. I finally talked him into going to my old family doctor. Our physician didn't know what was wrong with him, but felt that he was the weakest person that he'd ever seen still standing. Bill was six feet and weighed 120 pounds, not a pretty sight.

The tests never showed anything.

Based on symptoms, the doctors decided that Bill had a toxic goiter that had his heart rate going so fast that it was in the heart attack zone. They wanted to get it slowed down as they feared he'd have a heart attack during the surgery because of the flood of thyroxin that would be released. They tried several days to no avail and then just did the surgery anyway. Bill wanted a hamburger about three hours after surgery and has been eating ever since.

While Bill was in the hospital, I knew I had to get a job. He hadn't worked long enough for any leave and we had borrowed all the way through college. School had just started and Killeen thirty miles away had an overflow of students. So I was hired to teach four subjects at two different schools. I had two classes of modern math and I'd never had it, so the job was conditional on my taking the class at night and working towards a teaching certificate.

Bill started teaching Chemistry and Biology in Gatesville High School and I later started teaching math and later biology in Gatesville Junior High. Bill and I went to school at night and Bill got majors in Biology and Chemistry and I picked up majors in Math and Biology and a teaching certificate.

Bill had been out of school a couple of years when we bought our place, 165 acres on the Leon River. About a year later we built our house. We've since added another 100 acres. But it was a wonderful place to raise two boys. They've always had hills, valleys, and a river bottom for playing, hunting, fishing, and working. And if that wasn't enough, our place joined the Fort Hood Army Reservation where we ran cattle for many years.

Bill continued to teach for twenty one years but rebelled at some of the school reform and starting selling insurance for the Farm Bureau about sixteen years ago. I taught for about seven years and then to work Civil Service at Fort Hood. I was a Guidance Counselor for about seven years, getting my Masters in Counseling and I then went to work for the Comptroller's office as a

Management Analyst. I was there about twenty years. The last two years I worked, I was the Mobilization Planner for Fort Hood. This was a very exciting job but it took a great deal of energy and time away from home. I retired from this job almost two years ago and now I just work with my dogs and goats. And I love every minute of it!!

Bill's dad ran cattle in the Fort Hood Army Reservation which is over 200,000 acres with no cross fences. Bill started roping on the reservation to help his dad. When he was in Junior High Bill started roping calves in rodeos and continued all the way through high school and college. He also rode a few bulls and did a little dogging, but it didn't take him too long to wise up and stick to roping. Bill was on the Rodeo Team at Southwest Texas in San Marcos, Texas. He didn't do much roping when his sons were junior rodeoing. In the 70's, Bill returned to roping, but this time he was team roping steers. Bill had some pretty severe back problems and he ended up selling his horses, trailer, saddles, etc. Then he got on a different medication and was able to go back to roping calves in 1996 in the Texas Senior Pro Rodeo Association (TSPRA). Bill made the finals every year until last year when in April he tore his rotator cuff, front and back. After surgery in October of last year, a very painful rehabilitation, and with the help of God, he fulfilled his dream to be back at the Texas Senior Professional Rodeo Association finals last month."

What about your goats, I asked Elaine?

We've had goats for nearly twenty years. Our first grade goat was for milk for bloodhound puppies.

But as my nature dictates for the bigger and better, I soon graduated to registered Nubians, a dual purpose goat for meat and milk. I kept upgrading these until I was showing them, as well and the Bloodhounds and Abyssinian cats.

I bred my Nubians for meat more than milk as I was holding down a full time job and a whole herd is a lot to milk. About six or seven years ago,

the Boer goat, a strictly meat goat from South Africa, was introduced into the U.S. as an exotic at exotic prices. They were a large-boned white goat with a red head and can weigh over 300 pounds. We started bringing the Boers into our herd and now have only registered full-blooded Boers. Because the Boer is new to the US, there weren't really any established judges. So the American Boer Goat Association brought over South African judges to teach classes in order to have knowledgeable judges. They taught two classes, Level I and Level II. I passed both classes and have done some judging. However, the genetics and breeding the best is still my main goal."

"Ch. Ridgerunner Unforgettable's" proud breeders responded to my following questions:

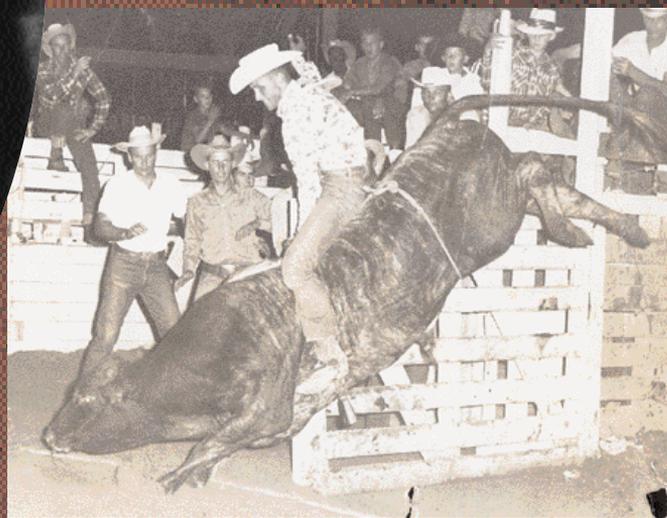
What reference is your greatest resource for solutions in solving genetic problems?

Elaine's first degree was in Animal Husbandry at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas. Several genetic classes were taken during the course of her studies. We've used Dog Genetics for Dog Breeders by Frederick B. Hutt. And of course, Dennis Piper's book Colour Inheritance in the Bloodhound is THE source for color genetics. This book was first published in April 1969 and the Bloodhound Club of South Australia published the second edition in 1980.

Elaine wrote a simplified version of this book for the Gazette's Bloodhound column when she was the breed columnist. This same article was republished in the Bloodhound bulletin some years later.

We've talked to everyone that we thought knew genetics and read everything available, including the Internet. We've had a lot of vets who have been willing to work with us on genetics. One of our favorites was Dr. Maggie Muller. We felt that we had lost part of our family when she moved away.

All of the information has been



Above left: Bill and Elaine Woodson's wedding day January 1959. Top Right: Ch. Ridgerunner Elijah with the young Bill Woodson. Bottom Right: Bull rider Bill Woodson in the early 50's.

helpful, but experience is irreplaceable. It proves the facts.

One of the genetic problems that we have not been able to find information on is gay tails. We are seeing gay tails from every line. You can certainly tell that it is genetic, but we're in the dark as far as mode of inheritance.

About what subject are most passionate?

Movement!!!!!! If a dog doesn't move correctly, then it isn't a sound dog, no matter how pretty he looks stacked. In fact, my dogs in the past, sometimes have not had as much breed character (skin, flews, etc.) as they should because we concentrated on movement more than type.

However, for the past ten years, we've really worked at putting more type on our hounds. If you have a dog with correct conformation, you can put skin and bone on in one generation. Vice versa, if you have a type dog with a short back, no rear angulation, etc., it can take many generations to correct.

How many litters do you usually have each year?

The most we have ever had was two. We usually have one a year, but sometimes like this year, we'll have none.

Bloodhounds are hard to breed. They have too much skin, can be rather clumsy, get over heated easily, and are pretty stubborn at receiving

help.

They are harder to raise. Most Bloodhounds are rather like hogs. They have such large litters and the bitches are so large that they have trouble getting down in the whelping box without laying on them. I usually stay with my pups twenty four hours a day for a week and I stay close by for another week.

And they are harder still to find good responsible homes. Bloodhound pups are precious. They're like a warm velveteen puppy. But they grow up fast, and in the process, they chew down trees, dig up your foundation, bounce off of your chest (if you don't teach them manners), and drool, drool, and drool. Drool is a powerful agent. It

can take the finish off of furniture, melt the vinyl in your car, but it does make a good hair mousse. That's a joke! We also have a lot of health concerns and it is a terrible responsibility to sell a puppy. I think that almost every conscientious breeder feels this way.

Name the health concerns most prevalent in your breed today.

We have a lot of health concerns and it seems that we get more every year.

Bites. We didn't have bite in the Bloodhound standard until just a few years ago. Up until then, I'd say that half of the top twenty dogs at any one time would be undershot. And because it wasn't in the breed standard, there were just a few of us who were really concerned. And there are still a lot who feel that bite is one of our lesser concerns. And I'd certainly rather have a tight undershot to crippling dysplasia or cancer, but it still is not a good thing.

Hip Dysplasia. Because the Bloodhound grows so fast and gets so big (we have some males up to 150+ pounds) hip dysplasia has been a problem for years. There have been Bloodhounds lost to anesthesia and some people use this for an excuse not to X-ray. We still use OFA, but we lean heavily on PennHip. We feel that PennHip is a more objective measure while OFA is more subjective. We know that there are thirty two pairs of genes that determine joint laxity, but we also know that it can be caused environmentally. When people push their pups growth with high protein or a vet recommends calcium supplements, not knowing the consequences in Bloodhounds, can actually be a precipitating factor. If pups are raised on slick floors, doing the splits can cause severe damage to the hip joint.

Allergies. Any animal can have allergies, but when you put all of that extra skin on them and during the summer, they stick their whole head underwater to blow bubbles, it keeps the wrinkles wet. Some dogs will seem allergy free in the north, but bring them to the allergy capital

of the world in central Texas and it will be clinically expressed. I think that, since allergies are one of the very worst health problems a dog can have. He itches, he has no hair, has scabs, and stinks. You're miserable around him and he is miserable all the time.

Entropion. Entropion is when the eyelid rolls up like a window shade. It is usually the bottom lid, but can be both. The eyelashes rub on the cornea of the eye. This, of course, makes the eye tear and causes a constant irritation that will lead to blindness unless corrected. All manner of animals can have Entropion, but Bloodhounds are basically bred for sloppy eye and I think that it is just not recognized or not corrected for various reasons. I prefer tight eyes even though that is not what the standard calls for. I just feel that it is a healthier eye.

Cancer. Cancer is having a very large impact on the Bloodhounds now. In our memorials in the bulletin, we are seeing that cancer is the number one killer shown as cause of death. In thirty five years of Bloodhounds, as far as I know, we have only breed two animals that came up with cancer. One was a seven-year old bitch and the other was a less than two-year old male. We've been lucky so far and we have tried to stay away from lines with cancer, but our gene pool is small.

Gastric Torsion-Bloat. We used to tell everyone that this was the number one killer of Bloodhounds. However, I feel that the cancer is probably very close or has surpassed bloat. Some people tell us that this is 100% hereditary. However, I don't feel this is true. I certainly feel that heredity plays a part when you see every puppy in a litter bloat and they're owned by different people and feed different feed. Certainly, we need to feed more than one meal a day. I feel that exercise is a main ingredient of a bloat free animal. I feel that the more exercise the animal has the more muscle and the firmer things are held together. We have two and one-half acres where our dogs all run together twice a day from three to six hours. We've

had very little bloat over the years.

Have you given your input to the AKC Canine Health Foundation?

Not directly. But I'm on the Health Committee for the American Bloodhound Club.

The AKC Canine Health Foundation has invited you to speak to its group of scientists. What would you ask from them?

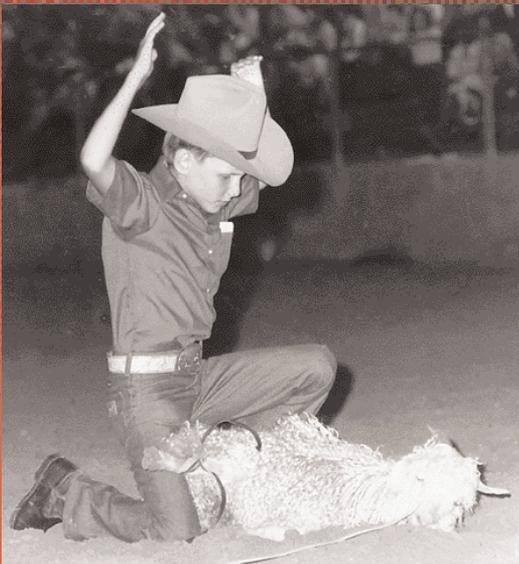
I guess the main thing that I would ask for is gene mapping. This is essential to help us find the answers and solutions to our genetic problems. I would like for them to push for open registries. I know that this will have to come from the breed club, but AKC could push it more.

Since you earned recognition as having bred the best, has your National Breed Club asked you to teach any of their seminars for judges?

Elaine has taught some in the past, but she hasn't been asked to conduct a breed seminar since "Fanny's" last win.

You are planning a seminar for novice breeders, what will be your most important piece of advice?

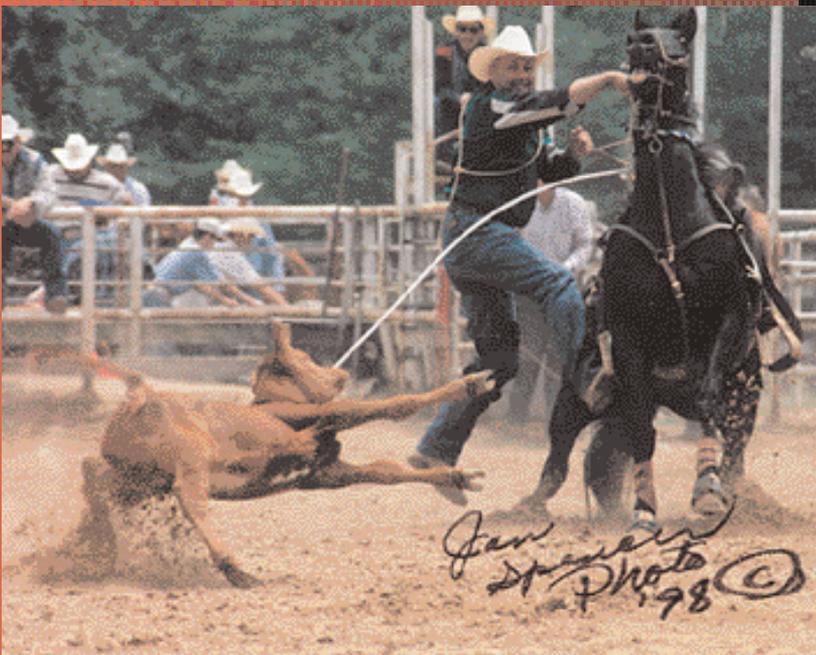
- Don't expect to make money.
- Talk to all the reputable breeders in the U.S. that you can. Take notes. Compare.
- Never, never, never buy two puppies planning on breeding them together.
- Buy the very best female you can find from reputable people.
- Establish yourself as a conscientious dog person by taking good care of your dog, showing, exhibiting good sportsmanship whether you win or lose. Become involved in the breed club and make contacts with reputable breeders.
- When your bitch is finished (If she isn't good enough to finish, don't breed!) and you feel that she is nice enough to breed, have numerous knowledgeable people evaluate her and have them tell you her strengths



Top Left: Koi Zane Woodson goat typing in the early 70's.

Bottom Left: "Blackie" and Bill Woodson roping — 1998.

Top Right: Tannon Woodson running barrels on his horse "Cindy" in the early 70's.



and weaknesses. Then with help from as many knowledgeable people as possible look for the best mate available. Borrow the money, if you need to, but don't breed to the dog down the road.

Who or what inspired you to enter your first dog show?

When we bought our first bloodhounds (the only Bloodhounds we have bought to date), we didn't plan on showing, but I wanted very good genetic lines because I planned on breeding. So we did buy show quality animals. We didn't show at first, but I was working as a guidance counselor for the Army with a man who showed Wire Fox Terriers. He saw the quality of our animals and

encouraged us to show. So we were in the first dog show we ever attended. It ended up that our winners dog went Reserve Winners Bitch. Needless to say, this did not make for a happy judge. We won one point that weekend on *Ox of Bandmaster* and took a Major the next weekend with *Rags of Smith Farm* (DOB 9/8/74). "Rags" only lost one show after she took that Major until she finished. We weren't specialing dogs at first as Elaine had the Methodist Youth Fellowship on Sunday nights. So we would show on Sunday morning traveling back home as soon as the breed was over to make it in time for the youth meeting.

Now, we look forward to the

shows not only for competition, but because we get to see our closest friends.

Tell us about your favorite dog you ever bred.

Well, I can't answer this question like you've asked it. Different dogs have been important to each of us. Most of the time, the dog that we're showing is the best at that moment. But like all things, there were exceptions where I wouldn't really get emotionally involved with a dog I was showing.

Bill was especially close to a predominately black that we bred, *Ch. Ridgerunner Elijah "Eli"* (DOB 7/4/81). Our "E" litter was very inbred to *Ch. Gossamer of Dakota*.

There were nine pups, seven got Championships, two obedience titles, and "Esther" ended up number one bitch in 1983. "Eli" was one of the ones with the obedience title. "Eli" certainly wasn't the best dog we've ever bred, in fact, he was pretty far from the ideal. But he had that kindred spirit with Bill and "Eli" loved Bill as much as Bill loved him. One time in an obedience class in the hot summer, all the dogs were just burning up under the summer sun. The park people had just sprayed the area fertilizer and an insecticide (unknown to the dog people until afterwards). The heat and the spray irritated all of the dogs bellies and all of them starting standing on the down stay. A little Toy Poodle was next to "Eli" and looked over and saw a good size shade and went over and stood under him. The obedience judge was over wrought with the thought that "Eli" would hurt him, but, of course, "Eli" was just glad to be of assistance.

Another dog Bill showed and loved to distraction was **Ch. Ridgerunner Luke** (DOB 7/4/88). Luke was out of **Ch. Quiet Creeks Excalibur**. "Luke" was the winningest dog we ever showed. "Luke" was quite the showman and never put a foot down wrong. "Luke" made it to the Number Three dog in the United States. We were surprised when we saw the ranking as we were just showing where we could get to on the weekends. We always regretted that there was only one puppy out of him. That dog was later bitten and killed by a rattlesnake.

Bill is now showing **Ch. Ridgerunner Xerxes "Zurk"** (4/17/00) and it certainly looks like this is going to be another good match. "Zurk" is out of **Ch. Woeful Whimsical Windsor** and was number seven in the nation the last time I looked.

Ch. Ridgerunner Cleta (DOB 10/3/79) was the first dog that I was really close to. To make it concise, "Clela" was simply beautiful. However, she did have one flaw; she didn't enjoy showing very much until she was older. I couldn't decide

which dog to keep out of the "C" litter, so I just kept letting people take their picks. I ended up with "Clela." I can't take the credit for her or for several other of our dogs. The Lord just let them stay. **Though "Clela" wasn't our first bitch, I consider her our foundation bitch. She was our first Hall of Famer.**

Ch. Ridgerunner Mercy (DOB 7/23/90) was a joy to show and own. "Mercy" was out of **Ch. Roclin's Image of Pine Hollow**. She was a dark mahogany and black. She moved in the ring with pizzazz and a "Look at me!" attitude. She loved everyone and every dog she met.

I'm showing "Mercy's" granddaughter now, **Ch. Ridgerunner Xquisite, "Quizzie."** "Quizzie" reminds me a lot of her grandmother with her personality, good looks and great movement.

A registered Veterinary Technician herself, **Susan LaCroix Hamil** is married to the handsome Veterinarian **Dr. John A. Hamil**. She is the manager of their Canyon animal hospital at Laguna Beach, California.

"Since my husband is a veterinarian, our lives revolve around animals twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. I don't think we even know anyone who doesn't have pets. Over the years we have bred or finished over fifty champions in the breed. Even though we usually keep only five to eight Bloodhounds at home at one time, we generally have no more than one or two litters a year. Some years we don't have a litter at all. I would credit my co-owners with great puppy raising and training for much of our success. We have also finished Greyhounds and currently own a rescue Pug."

One interesting aspect of owning dogs in Southern California is being in demand for lots of TV and movie work. One of the Hamil's current specials, **Ch. Quiet Creek Stand By Me**, starred as "Hubert" alongside **Christopher Guest** in the recent movie "Best In Show." We have also filmed numerous television commercials. John was selected by Pedigree to film an ad during their

"Recommended by Top Breeders" campaign. The ads used their dogs. Any ribbons, trophies or awards had to be won by them personally. And most importantly they had to feed the food advertised.

Susan's dog show interests were an outgrowth of her activities and involvement in showing Quarter Horses. As a teenager she was very active in the AQHA Youth Program and 4H. Her family had stable dogs, which were primarily Catahoula hounds. After seeing a picture of a Bloodhound in a magazine the young beauty was hooked.

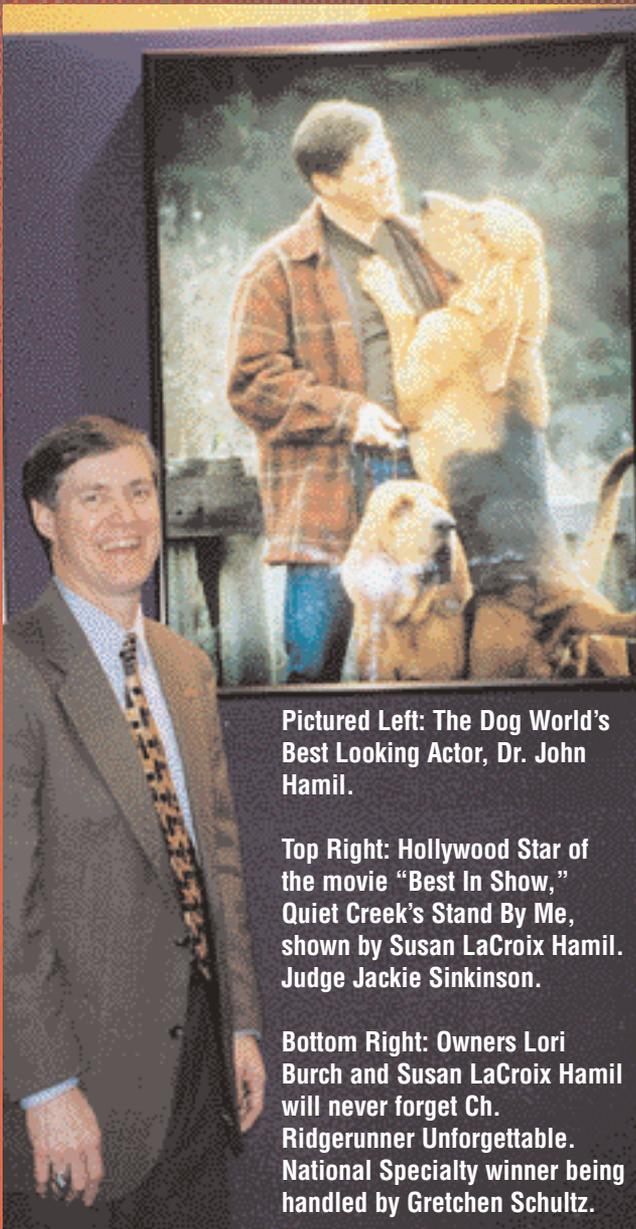
"At that time, 1967, Susan said, the AKC was only registering around five hundred to six hundred Bloodhounds a year and none of the prominent breeders were located in Louisiana. Then it was really like something out of the movie "Cool Hand Luke." No "papers" came with the dogs; in fact they really didn't look purebred. After that first dog we did find a good breeder on the West Coast and purchased our first AKC Bloodhound."

Susan graduated from Louisiana State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in education. In 1972 she earned a Master's in Library Science.

She has bred Bloodhounds under the **Quiet Creek** prefix since 1970. In that time Quiet Creek has finished or produced close to fifty champion Bloodhounds including Specialty and Best in Show winners. Quiet Creek's Bloodhounds or their offspring have been consistent winners at specialties particularly in the veterans and stud dog/brood bitch classes as well as Best of Breed.

At the 1990 National Specialty, Quiet Creek's winning Bloodhounds earned Susan the title of top breeder/owner. She campaigned nationally ranked Bloodhounds in 1994, 1995 and 1999.

In the summer of 1992, Susan and I attended the American Kennel Club Judges Institute in Pomona, California. Our class literally shook up the world, a 4.2 on the Richter scale. We were the best class ever, in our own minds! People are still talk-



Pictured Left: The Dog World's Best Looking Actor, Dr. John Hamil.

Top Right: Hollywood Star of the movie "Best In Show," Quiet Creek's Stand By Me, shown by Susan LaCroix Hamil. Judge Jackie Sinkinson.

Bottom Right: Owners Lori Burch and Susan LaCroix Hamil will never forget Ch. Ridgerunner Unforgettable. National Specialty winner being handled by Gretchen Schultz.



ing about it! Since then Susan has been licensed to judge Bloodhounds, Greyhounds and Juniors.

She has judged both in the United States and Europe. In addition to exporting Quiet Creek breeding and mantrailing stock to Europe, South Africa and South America., the Hamils have imported Bloodhounds from Switzerland, Italy, Great Britain and Belgium.

Dr. John A. Hamil is a member of the AVMA and CVMA animal welfare committees and past President of the California Veterinary Medical Association. His animal welfare concerns have led to participate in many diverse organizations including past chairman of the Orange County Animal Shelter Advisory Board, vet-

erinary advisor to a marine mammal rehabilitation center, current board member and veterinary advisor to the Blue Bell Foundation Beach Animal Shelter and originator of the California Veterinary Medical Association/University of California, Davis, Pet Overpopulation Symposium and the subsequent California Council of Companion Animal Advocates.

Committed to judges' and breeder education, Susan has presented educational seminars on Bloodhounds in the United States, Canada and Europe. She is currently President of the Blue Bell Foundation for Cats, serves as the American Bloodhound Club's Delegate for the American Kennel Club and is a member of the

delegate's committee for Canine Health and Research. She is a past President of the Orange County Animal Shelter Advisory Board and California Veterinary Medical Association Auxiliary. Susan founded the Bloodhounds West Breed Rescue program in 1978 and was also a founding member of the California Federation of Dog Clubs in 1991.

Mrs. Hamil has participated in numerous seminars, symposiums and discussion groups and worked with legislators on animal population issues. She works with shelters, rescue and her state federation.

"I feel very strongly regarding restrictive legislation and the privileges of dog ownership, Susan stated. With my back-

ground and experience I feel I bring a balanced view of the “big picture” in animal overpopulation issues facing the community of purebred dogs.”

As a Director of Shoreline DFA and a member of Santa Ana Valley Kennel Club and two parent clubs, Susan LaCroix Hamil has been involved in organizing all breed events and specialty shows.

When I asked **Lori Burch** to share her life story with me, she reminisced. “I grew up in the San Diego area. Although I always wanted to show dogs, my mother never let me have them. I did show hunters and jumpers throughout my childhood and young adulthood. They could live at the stable and not mess up my mother’s house. I became fascinated with Bloodhounds as a very young child, after watching a program about them on the “Wonderful World of Disney.” My family would never have tolerated a big, messy dog of this type, so I had to wait until I had my own home before getting one. Since I knew nothing about dogs, I looked in the newspaper literally for years before finding a Bloodhound. This was a rescue dog with a very nasty disposition, but we fell in love, and “Casey” lived with me until he died at thirteen years of age. Because of his temperament problems, my vet referred me to Susan Hamil. I gradually became more involved with the local breed club. I started working with an animal behaviorist and she encouraged me to consider getting involved with the sport of showing purebred dogs. I attended my first National Specialty in 1992 and fell in love with a beautiful red puppy from **Button Bay Bloodhounds** in New York. Even though I was very new in Bloodhounds, the breeders agreed to allow me to own “Clancy.” I immediately became involved with handling classes and we both made our “debut” when he was six months of age. The longer I lived with these winsome hounds, the more I got hooked on them and working with them. “Clancy” (**Ch. Button Bay’s Bigg Reddawgg, CGC**) went on to finish his championship out of the

puppy class and was Reserve Winner’s Dog at the Nationals in 1993. This was followed by the successful Specials career with handler, Corky Vroom. I also showed “Clancy” in Obedience, with some success. Susan then began giving me dogs to show for her and I have finished championships on many of her puppies. I continue to share my home with my cherished Bloodhounds and consider them to be my family. I know it sounds crazy, but they seem more like mystical creatures such as unicorns than like dogs; they seem to know my thoughts before I do. Presently, I have “Fanny’s” niece that I am beginning to Special.

Professionally, I went to College at the University of California at Santa Barbara. I had graduate degrees in Psychology from Southern Illinois University and Pepperdine University. I have worked in the field of development disabilities for twenty-five years and currently complete evaluations to determine eligibility for a state funded program.

I first met Fanny when she was about four to five months of age. Susan’s husband brought her out to the Mission Circuit Dog Show for socialization. This was her first outing and this show is very large, crowded and chaotic. **I took one look at that puppy and felt like I had been hit between the eyes with a lightning bolt! It was truly love at first sight!** I proceeded to take the puppy from John and he did not see much of her for the rest of the day. Fanny was the most perfect Bloodhound I had every seen, but her attitude was present even at that young age. Everything about her seemed to say “Look at me, I’m beautiful.” Fanny was not even leash trained at that point, but with some quick work and her willing attitude I showed her in a large PHA Puppy Match that evening and she got a Group Two out of an entry of over five hundred puppies.

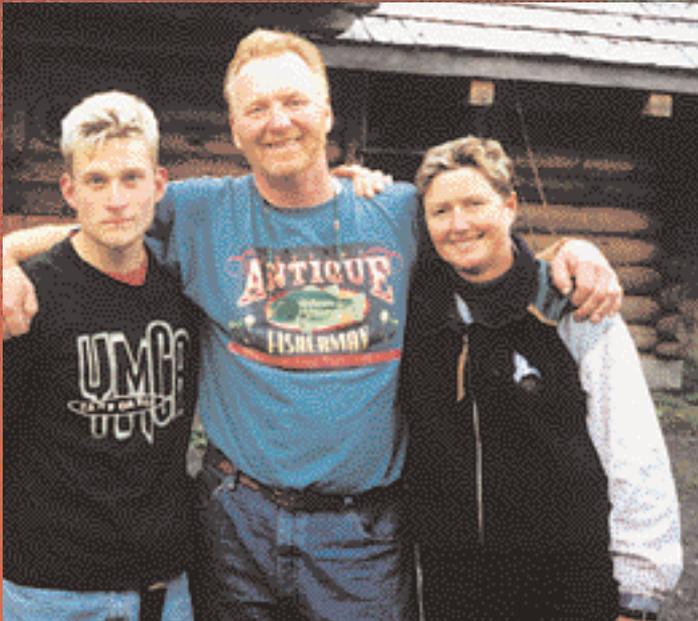
I begged Susan to let me co-own Fanny and show her. She graciously agreed and this puppy seemed to thrive on her handling classes, grooming, show scheduling, etc. She would meet me at the door each

night and seemed to watch every move I made in anticipation for her training sessions, classes, etc. Fanny showed exceptionally well in the classes and won a large Puppy Sweepstakes out of the six to nine month Puppy Class at the Hound Classic. She finished at ten months of age by taking the Breed over Specials in Las Vegas. Fanny went on to take a Group Three that afternoon and won the Group the following day under **Mrs. James Edward Clark**.

“Fanny’s” career really took off when she got her first Best In Show in 1998, at the **Lompoc Kennel Club Dog Show**. Susan then decided that it was time for her to be campaigned with **Bruce and Gretchen Schultz**. I had mixed emotions about this because Fanny lived with me and we were “joined at the hip.” She slept on my bed every night, we traveled together, and we were only apart when I went to work. **I remember taking her down to their home for the first time. Fanny just trotted off with them happily. She reminded me of a child going to camp and seemed to say “Bye, Mom, I’ll see you later. I’m going to have fun.” This attitude prevailed over her three-year career. She was always very happy to see me, but thrived on her life with Bruce and Gretchen.** Fanny had many fans and a group of children would always ask me if she was at the shows.

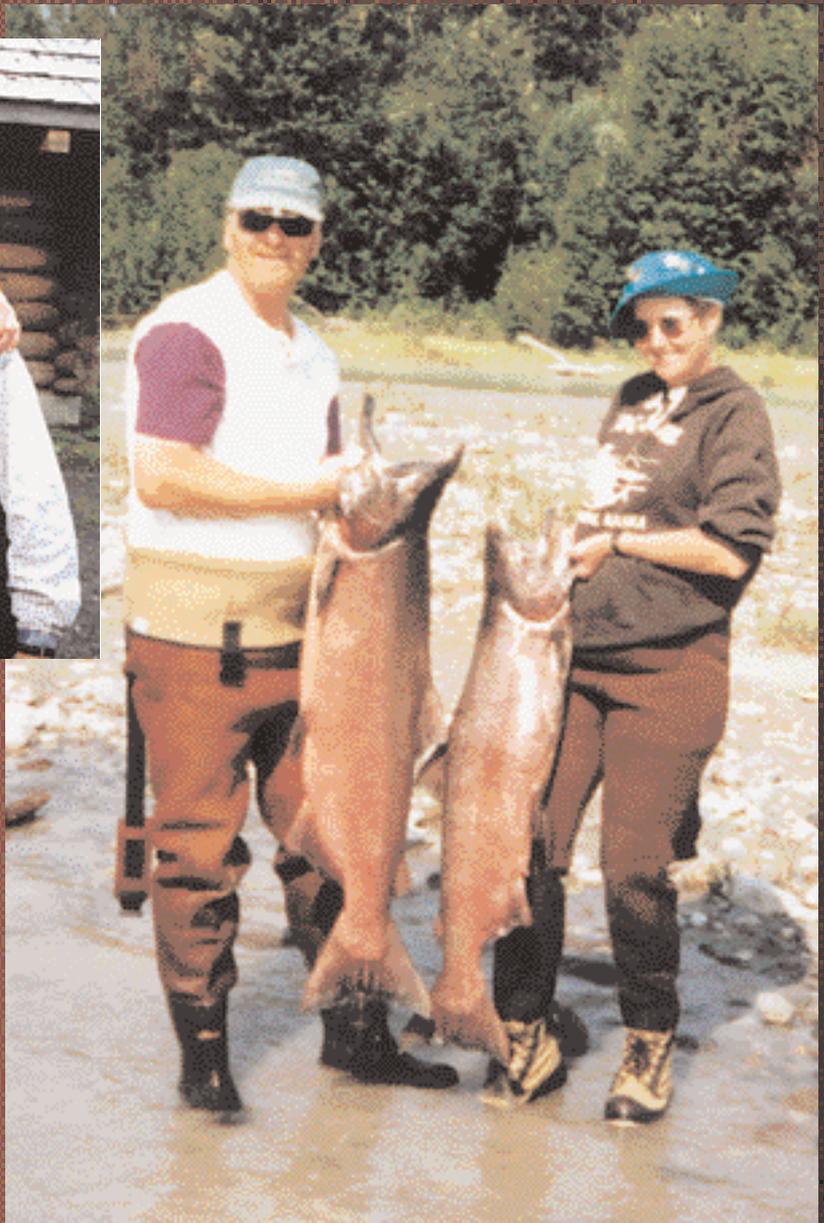
Fanny then proceeded to make Bloodhound history by winning twenty-nine Bests In Show and earning the honor of being TOP Hound for two years. She won the Bloodhound National Dog Show in 1999 under Breeder-Judge, Jackie Sinkinson. Fanny won the Breed at Westminster three years in a row and took three Group placements, winning the Hound Group under Kent Delaney this year.

It is certainly hard to know when to retire such a successful dog, especially one that enjoys showing as much as “Fanny,” but we decided that the win at the Garden was an appropriate time to end her show career. I truly think she misses all the



Above: Son, Joshua Schultz with beaming parents.

Right: Outdoorsmen Bruce and Gretchen Schultz fishing for King Salmon in Talkeetna, Alaska 1999.



action and attention of this aspect of her life.

Fanny will always be my cherished, best friend, and true love. I am grateful to have shared her glory and to be the “Fanny Mom.”

“Fanny’s” owners share their views with us as follows:

If you were preaching a sermon to a congregation of dog show judges, what would be your topic?

Hamil

Thank you, thank you, Thank you, thank you, thank you for recognizing quality in one of the “old hounds” as Number One Hound. I know that for some of the judges Bloodhounds are a difficult concept

when you come from another group or from sight hounds. Bloodhounds are not a glamour breed and they are not natural show dogs although some of them, like Fanny have star quality that catches anyone’s eye. I thank them for learning about this unusual breed and gaining the knowledge and confidence to put up a Bloodhound bitch.

Burch

Like the breed and know its function. I’ve shown my beloved Bloodhounds to multiple judges who did not appear to like or be comfortable about these big, sometimes messy, hounds. Although we do try to keep their mouths drool free, they can be messy. If that offends people

they can choose not to judge this breed. I find it very upsetting when a judge recoils at the sight of a slightly wet mouth, which is an integral part of what these noble hounds were bred to do. I would also want to express to judges to reinforce correct breed type and temperament because their choices strongly influence the future of the breed.

You must have a favorite all time dog show judge. Without mentioning his or her name, tell me what qualities make them such a great one.

Hamil

My all time favorite judge has great zest and enjoyment of the

sport of purebred dogs. Each assignment is approached with attention to the essence of the breed and complete concentration to the task at hand. Each exhibit gets careful consideration whether you are on at 8:00 AM or 2:00 PM. When the judging is completed you feel that your time was well spent and if you were observant you learned something about your exhibit and obtained a well-considered opinion of some value.

You can always bring a puppy or young dog to this judge for an opinion and your puppy will be treated with patience and kindness to help make an early ring experience a pleasant one.

Burch

My favorite show judge "discovered" **Fanny** and really encouraged me to Special her. I was showing **Fanny** in the nine to twelve month puppy class and she gave me the breed over the Specials. The next day, she awarded **Fanny** a Group One. The judge saw her wonderful type, movement, etc., even though she was owner-handled. When **Fanny** was shown at the Garden the following year, she stood ringside and watched her in the breed ring. This judge really seemed to take an interest in her and followed her career.

You are the keynote speaker at an AKC Board meeting. What will you tell them?

Hamil

The AKC is the largest and most successful registry in the world. We need to continue to establish and maintain a true leadership position in the world of dogs. We need to promote ourselves as the leaders in canine health, research and education. In the matter antidog legislation we need to be proactive not reactive.

Burch

I would discuss their involvement in "Puppy Mills" and how detrimental this has been to our breed. We get these puppies through our Rescue programs and it always is sad, but avoidable. Many pet stores provide

inaccurate information about Bloodhounds and sell these dogs to anyone with a Visa without any screening. I would encourage more public education and awareness to help minimize buying our precious Bloodhounds on impulse.

Charities advance many causes. Are you actively involved with any particular ones, dog related or not?

Hamil

I currently serve on the American Bloodhound Club Health Committee and I am also on the Board of Directors for the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation and the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals. In addition I am chairman of the Blue Bell Foundation for Cats which is a cat sanctuary located in the city of Laguna Beach. In 1978, I helped establish Bloodhounds West Breed Rescue as one of the first purebred rescue groups in Southern California and I currently serve on that board as well. I am also a founding member of the California Federation of Dog Clubs and a former director of that organization.

Burch

I am an active member of Bloodhounds West (Southern Chapter) and the American Bloodhound Club; we do various fund raising activities such as our Bloodhound "Fun Day," raffles, boutiques, etc., to help raise money for our activities and Bloodhound Rescue. I also work for a state-funded agency that provides case management services for people with development disabilities.

Winning the TOP Hound award is a great achievement. Have you won it before? How many times? What about other groups?

Hamil

No, we've never won that before, but "**Fanny's**" father **Ch. Badger Creek Druid** did finish Number Three hound in a previous year and we have had several other Bloodhounds near the top ranking in breed points.

Burch

I have had two dogs that won multiple Hound Groups and were nationally ranked Bloodhounds. They were **Ch. Button Bay's Bigg Reddawgg**, **C. G. C.** and **Ch. Bogey's Ms. Rosebud Bloodhound**.

"**Fanny's**" well-known handlers **Bruce and Gretchen Schultz'** accomplishments in the show ring are legendary. The tall attractive couple's presentation of **Fanny** was unrivaled. I pinned them down to answer a few questions for you.

What nickname have your competitors called you?

I really think there are some things I really don't want, or need to know!

What did you do to celebrate winning your Top Hound award?

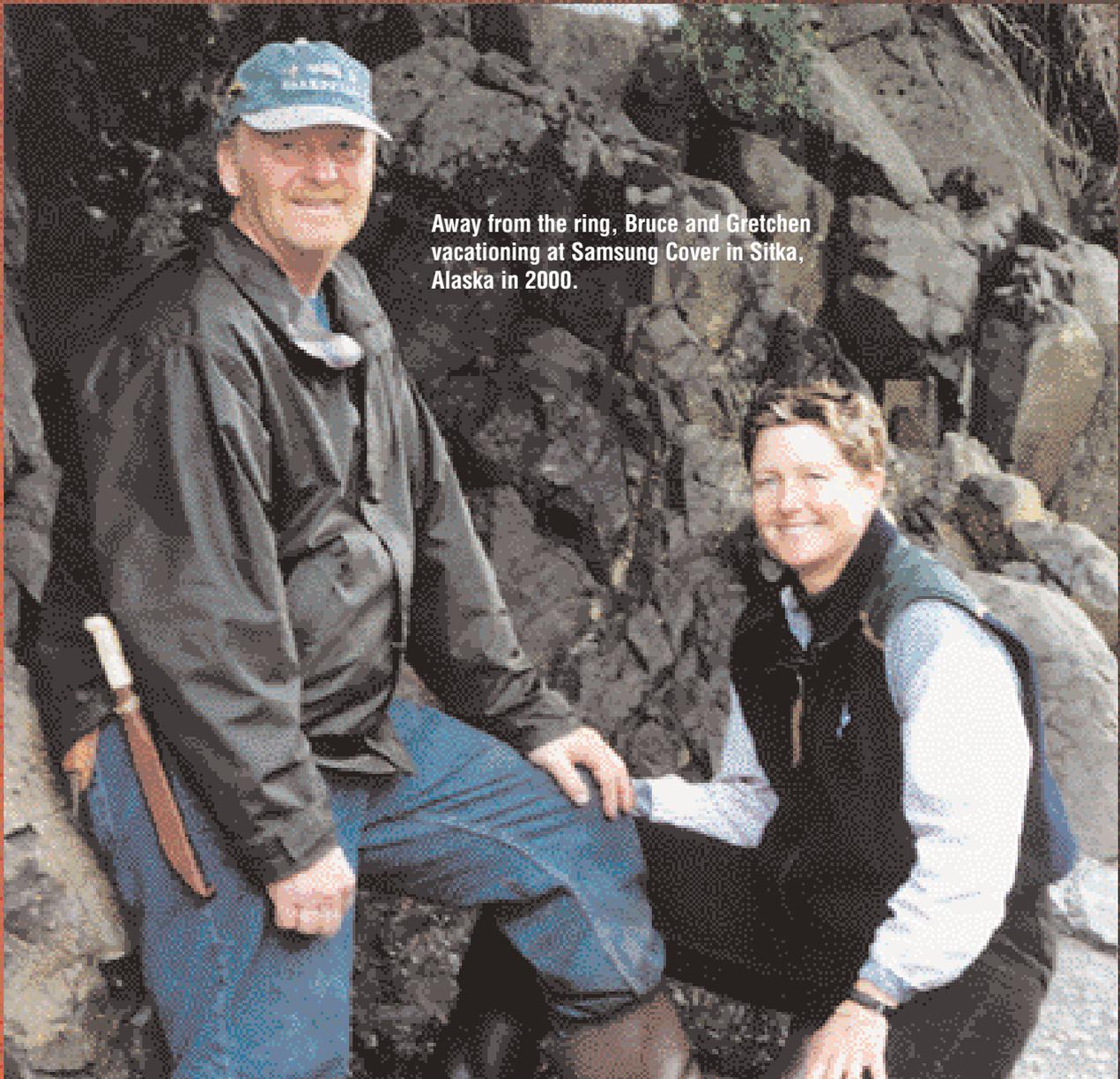
Unfortunately, this year there were no awards offered for the Top Hound, or any other group's top winner, only for the largest number of Group Firsts, which **Fanny** did not win. We would like to see one of the dog food companies jump on this obvious gap in awards, to recognize this accomplishment for the future top winning dogs, and possibly to recognize not only the number one, but maybe the top five in each group. After Best In Show, judging at the Garden, my wife **Gretchen** and I joined **Dr. and Mrs. Hamil**, the owners of **Fanny** and a number of our friends and supporters at the Southgate Bar, across from the Garden.

Did you do anything special for **Fanny?**

"Special" was the only way **Fanny** was ever treated. She really only knows and expects the best in life.

In the ring you exude confidence. Do you worry about what others think of you?

Of course I want my wife and family to be proud of me, and find me capable in the ring as well as out. Worrying about what others think of you is truly a waste of time



Away from the ring, Bruce and Gretchen vacationing at Samsung Cover in Sitka, Alaska in 2000.

and energy.

If you were teaching a class of young Juniors, what is the most important piece of advice you would give them?

Always put your responsibility to both your dog and yourself first. Be always vigilant about the care and conditioning of the dogs. Try to work for a Professional Handler to learn everything you can about the care and showing of the dogs.

Excluding yourself, name the greatest handler of all time.

Bruce Schultz, Jane Forsyth, Gretchen Schultz and "my father" Walt Shellenbarger.

My most memorable moment was...

*There have been so many truly memorable and cherished moments in my life, both within the sport and not, that this is really a tough question to answer. Standing out for me would be winning back-to-back Bests in Show with the Shorthaired bitch, Ch. **Britannia Von Siebelstein** the big Santa Barbara weekend, defeating over four thousand dogs each day, and then going on to win the Sporting Groups at the Garden two years in a row with her. Of course winning the Hound group this year was truly a great moment. I wanted to win this for both my wife, as "Fanny's" past handler, and of course the owners, Dr. and Mrs.*

Susan Hamil.

Do you set priorities and goals or let the chips fall where they may?

Interesting question. Do you refer to the campaign of a show dog, or with my life in general? With a show dog, and the campaign thereof, we start the year just "testing the waters." Many campaigns start for us in the fall of the previous year, bonding with the dog, perfecting the conditioning, and getting a "feel" for the judges reception. I'd say about mid-year, based upon the ever present statistics, we then, with the owners, attempt to prepare a show schedule most favorable for obtaining the greatest results for this par-

tical dog. With Fanny our campaign was different. My wife, Gretchen, has always shown the Bloodhounds for Dr. and Mrs. Hamil, as she did Fanny for the previous year, 1999. At the end of the year, she had to have extensive knee surgery due to an injury in the show ring and was unable to show any dogs, so I took over the showing of "Fanny." By mid-year, we realized that Fanny was doing a tremendous amount of winning, which for a Bloodhound bitch is very unusual, and all our clients supported us in Bruce showing Fanny in an attempt to obtain the ranking of number one Hound. (By client support I mean that Bruce's regular top clients, his Border Collie, his Golden and his Akita clients, supported his decision to exhibit Fanny in the various Best in Show line-ups, even when their dogs had won their respective groups, and without this support and client loyalty, Fanny may not have been able to achieve what she did!) So, of course, the rest is history!

Who is your greatest cheerleader?

My wife, Gretchen.

Are you a member of PHA?

Why?

Of course both my wife and I are members, and I am both a Board member as well as a zone governor for our region. PHA is an organization dedicated to the promotion of both the sport of dogs, and the professionalism of those wishing to make their livelihoods from this sport. I have always felt that by becoming a member of the PHA, one chooses to set themselves to higher goals and standards in the practice and trade of "Professional Handling."

The sport requires you to maintain high energy level. Special workout and diet?

Both Gretchen and I are active by nature, and of course in our profession adrenaline and excitement help maintain the energy levels needed to exhibit twenty or more dogs at each show. We always eat two to three

meals a day, sometimes skipping either breakfast or lunch depending on the show schedules. We both use vitamin supplements, and try to maintain an active lifestyle both in and out of the show ring.

What special things do you do to keep the connection between you and Fanny?

Fanny first had that special bond with Gretchen, so when I took over her campaign when "Gretch" could no longer run, it was a bit difficult at first. I spent play time every day with "Fanny," and when she and I entered the show ring, she was the entire focus of my attention. After a few months, "Gretch" could actually sit ringside again and watch without distracting "Fanny." (She had to hide much like many owners do when their dogs are being exhibited, in order to remain focused with the handler, and not distracted by loved ones watching.) Fanny was very food motivated as well, so I became the only person to give her treats thereby even further making that special connection.

How many dog shows did you travel to by airplane last year?

During 2000, we flew to the Golden National and the Border Collie National, both in St. Louis, and with three dogs, attended three different weekend clusters, one in Alaska, (where we also have family and managed to spend an additional three days visiting), and two weekends in Boston late in the year. Of course we flew to the Garden as well. Our show schedule is planned around all of our clients, where we can possibly do the best for the greatest majority of dogs, and attempting to keep all the clients happy with the results. (A difficult job when only one of us can handle, where for years our clients had the advantage of both "Gretch" and me handling.)

How do you deal with the intense pressure it requires to become Number One?

I had no pressure from Dr. and Mrs. Hamil, nor any pressure from

"Gretch," but I really wanted this for them. The greatest pressure came, and always has, from within.

How many shows did it take for Fanny to finish?

We did not show Fanny to her championship, but the day she finished she took a Group One from the classes, under Mrs. Anne Rodgers Clark, who has been one of "Fanny's" greatest supporters.

What do you do to relax?

Both "Gretch" and I are avid golfers, so every chance we get we go golfing. For our family vacation, every year we and another couple, together with our son fly into the remote wilderness in Alaska for ten days.

Describe your daily routine on non-dog show days.

Having full-time help for our show dogs allows us to basically play "catch-up" when we get home from a show weekend. We attend to office tasks, assisted by "Nanny Deb," our secretary, office manager and nanny for our special son. Errands are divided up and attended to in preparation for the upcoming weekend, supervision of the kennel, the dogs, and any changes necessary for the conditioning programs of each dog. "Gretch" maintains an extensive physical therapy schedule, three days a week, so fits errands and office business in afterwards. Seems like most days I spend the majority of my day talking on the phone, answering questions, returning calls, and trying to keep ahead of the bookwork.

How do you indulge yourself?

I refuse to answer the phone.

What's your secret to gaining an advantage over other exhibitors?

Now would it be a secret if I told you?

Do you listen to books on tape?

Yes! I can't imagine not having something to listen to while driving. Most of our shows include a great



Above: "Fanny's" first Best In Show. Lompoc Valley Kennel Club, Judge Robert L. Ligon.

Left: Unforgettable Team Schultz with "Fanny"

deal of driving, and with the selection of tapes available, has made the time in the truck much more interesting.

If so, what would you recommend?

APOCALYPSE WATCH by Robert Ludlum.

Do you have a lucky charm?

Personally, no, but "Gretch" never travels without a stuffed camel and her father's PHS pin, which he gave to her when he retired to become a judge.

Without naming him or her, please describe your favorite judge.

We would both agree that he

could be described as "Mr. Perfect." An artist, a perfectionist, and a real person. I guess his wife would be Mrs. Perfect. . . . only a bit more human.

Show sites vary so much today. Share your list of most preferred one. Why?

Lompoc Valley, in Lompoc, California. Why? The show grounds are fabulous, lots of shade trees, ample parking, great food venues, and the club members make you feel like you're special.

What's the best city to be stuck in for a long weekend after a show?

After a show, who wants to be

stuck anywhere, especially having to be concerned for the safety and well-being of your dogs.

Share a memory from that place.

Knock on wood, we've not been stuck anywhere after a show, that we did not make plans for in advance!

Has any particular Rep of the AKC ever been helpful to you? How?

As a Professional Handler, our need to interact with the AKC has been minimal. Of course, we've had friends over the years that have been employed by the AKC, who remain friends today although no

Bruce is Number One with Fanny!



longer working with the AKC.

Who is your mentor?

That is indeed another difficult question to answer, as over the years both "Gretch" and I have learned from, and respected so many different people. For "Gretch," she of course would answer that her father was her mentor. To answer that question today, based upon the present, "Gretch" and I would probably have to say, each other.

Would someone else say the same about you? Who?

Again, a difficult question to answer. Of course many would refer to both of us as their mentors,

including all of our past as well as current assistants.

Okay, you get three wishes. What are they?

Bruce:

For "Gretch" to be able to run again.

To remain healthy for the duration of my career.

To someday own a fishing lodge in either Alaska or Canada

Gretch:

To be able to run again

To win the lottery so we could . . .

Have a fishing lodge in Alaska or Canada and I could be the cook.

Will I be interviewing you again next year?

Maybe not next year, but don't rule out 2002!

Bill, Elaine, Susan, John, Lori, Bruce and Gretchen – thank you for sharing your experiences with us. You give insight and inspiration to anyone who aspires to greatness in our sport.

The lyrics to the song made famous by the late Nat King Cole perfectly describe the year 2000's Number One Hound. "Fanny," you truly are Unforgettable!