

Lines From Linda

BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR

COMPETITION DRIVES THE FAIRBANKS

The North Turn was littered with mashed and mangled vehicles. Holding their breath, Richmond & Bobbie Fairbanks nervously watched as the number 57 Porsche rounded the curve at heart-stopping speed, headed straight for the five-car wreck! Their son, Rick, skillfully weaved his way through the other cars, narrowly avoiding the pileup. As the caution flag waved, Bobbie & Richmond's heartbeats resumed their normal pace, for this was just another Fairbanks family weekend away from dog shows...

The competitive sports-minded family has done it all...tennis, swimming, international championship water skiing, golf and , yes, even Porsche Pro-Am Grand Prix endurance racing.

Their famous Azalea Hill Farm in Greenville, South Carolina is a treasure to all who live in our locale.

The Fairbanks' locally-grown plants are responsible for most of the springtime glory in this area. As a wholesale azalea grower, Richmond Fairbanks has supplied such large retailers as K-Mart and Winn-Dixie stores as well as most of the larger greenhouses in nearby states. When I make my yearly visit to the Fairbanks' to purchase new azaleas for my home, I become reminiscent of my childhood and growing up at our Conrad



Ch. Azalea Hill's Mr. Christopher wins Working Group I (prior to working/herding split) under the late Mr. Roy Ayers. Handled by Bobbie. Trophy presented by Woody Nelson.

Collie Kennels in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Their acreage is covered with azaleas laced with southern dogwoods and their many perfectly-groomed champion Collies roam free. Could this be like heaven? Bobbie Fairbanks grew up in the city where her father owned a furniture store. Summers were special as

Bobbie spent them with an aunt who owned a large horse farm in Kentucky. In addition to horses, Aunt Nell also owned a Collie. At age four, Bobbie was given a present by her aunt, a gentle old brown mare named "Brown Satin."

Wherever they went, Brown Satin and Bobbie were followed by Aunt Nell's Collie. It was there in Kentucky that Bobbie

developed her love of Collies. Summer visits with her aunt also

Six Azalea Hills Champions grew out of this litter



introduced her to the excitement of competition as Bobbie tagged along as her aunt attended horse shows. Thus began the thrill of victory for a five-year-old girl.

While they were both attending Furman University, Richmond met Bobbie. His engagement present to her was a Collie dog who grew up to be very beautiful and which many people urged them to exhibit. During the following years the young couple became busy establishing a home and a family and did not have time to pursue this endeavor.

The entire family has always been sports-minded. They owned a home with a nearby lake. One day, Dick Pope, Jr. came up from Florida's famous Cypress Gardens and gave them a demonstration on water skiing. Becoming very enthusiastic about this, the Fairbanks started practicing and attending ski tournaments in the area of Greenville and Anderson which was almost too far north and the weather was too cold for competitive skiing; however, their lake produced several top competitive water skiers! Bobbie's brother



won as National Senior Men's Champion and the lake also produced two National Junior Champions; Sam Duvall, another resident, currently holds the world jumping record. Many of their skiers were nationally-ranked in the nation's top five. Bobbie placed first in the Southern Regional Senior Women's Division and third in the National for three years. Later, Richmond and Bobbie became interested in judging ski events and advanced through the ranks from apprentice judges to regular judges to senior judges and thereby were qualified to judge the top national and international events. Some of Richmond's favorite judging assignments have been at the National Ski Invitational in Austin, Texas, the Nationals in Berkley, California and "The Masters," skiing's most prestigious invitational international event, held at Calloway Gardens, Georgia. Bobbie also judged some of the top tournaments, including being an assistant chief judge at the Nationals in Canton, Ohio. Several years ago she was also Chairman of the Rules Committee and given the task of rewriting the Rule Book, converting all jumps and other tournament layouts to metric measurements so the United States records would be in compliance with all world records. Richmond became very active in running the American Water Skiing Association and served two terms as Executive Vice President of the Southern Region. Through it all the Fairbanks' love of the Collie breed remained strong. Bobbie's first Collie eventually died of old age. It was then she decided to find another dog and this time compete in dog shows. She and Richmond looked and waited for

almost two years before purchasing a little tri-colored Collie male. That male went on to become Ch. Shadow Hill's Stormy Sea, CDX. Phil Marsh gave him his first point. Later he was to give him his first Group One in Atlanta. Shadow captured back-to-back groups at the Atlanta and Macon dog shows. That year this dog was ranked number five in the nation. Returning to the ring out of retirement at age eight, at a large Atlanta

Christopher, a mahogany sable. Virginia Hampton gave him his first points as a puppy at the Atlanta specialty show. At about six-and-a-half months of age, he won a major reserve under Mr. Bob Wills. Afterwards, a man came out of the stands and said to Bobbie, "Young lady, that is a most beautiful puppy!" Bobbie responded, "Thank you," and later asked someone, "Who is that man?"

Their reply was, "That man is Roy Ayers, the famous Collie breeder and all-breed judge." Mr. Ayers never forgot Christopher. Later he awarded him his first Working Group One. Soon after, at another show, Mr. Ayers had the opportunity to present the dog his first all-breed Best In Show. Mr. Christopher was shown sparingly for two years and was ranked fifth- and seventh in the nation.

From the same litter came a bitch, Ch. Azalea Hill's Marianne, who produced Ch. Azalea Hill's Top Man. Top Man was Best Of Breed at the Collie Club of America National Specialty show with an entry of over four-hundred Collies and seventy-six specials. He was ranked number seven that year and number one Collie the following year. The same year he held the number one show record, his sister had the honor of being the number one producing Collie, keeping it all in the family. Top Man was specialed by the late George Schlinker. *Continued*



Clockwise from top: Bobbie competing in the Nationals in Miami, capturing 1st in Jumping, 3rd Overall; young Bobbie in 1959 perfecting her routine; Rick, Bobbie & Richmond preparing for Southern Regionals; Bobbie with trophies from Southern Regionals - 1st in Jumping, 1st in Trick Skiing; 6th in Slalom, 1st Overall

Kennel Club show, Shadow placed second in the group under the late Mrs. John Marshall Jones, enjoying his opportunity to compete again at that late age. After two or three years, the Fairbanks had their first litter of Collie puppies. From this first litter came five champions. Probably the most well known was Ch. Azalea Hill's Mr.

A rare appearance in the ring for Richmond; pictured with judge J. Council Parker (Earl Graham photo)



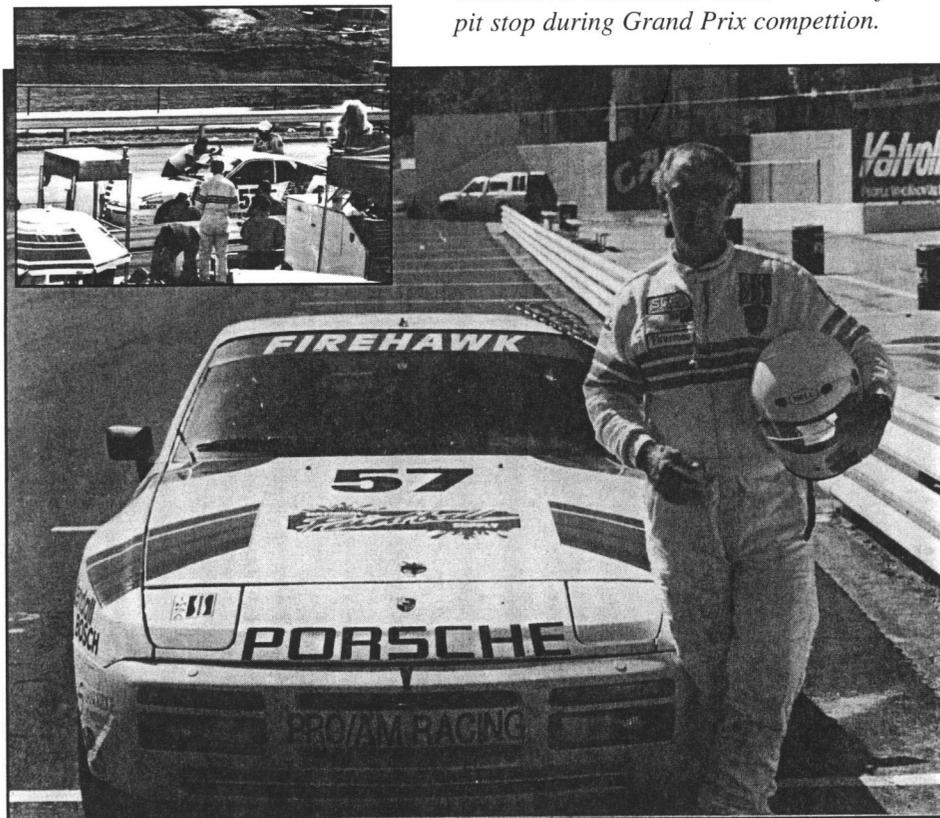


Dr. Richard Greathouse awarding Best in Show to Ch. Azalea Hill's Magnum Force shown by Wade Burns; Bobbie proudly displays her trophy

With so many other family interests, the Fairbanks have had a very limited breeding program, averaging a litter only every year or so, but have been fortunate to produce champions from every litter. They had two tri females from a Christopher son bred to a Christopher daughter. At a time when

females winning over male champions was more difficult, one went on to be ranked number four and the other number one. Both were shown by Wade Burns and each later produced champions. Ch. Azalea Hill's Magnum Force, shown by Wade Burns, is another all-breed Best In Show winner from Azalea Hill Kennels. None of the Fairbanks

Son Rick with his Porsche at Road Atlanta Grand Prix Endurance Race. Inset: In for a pit stop during Grand Prix competition.



dogs have been to shows beyond a two-year period - usually only one. Their animals are retired at their peak to roam the green acres at Azalea Hill Farm and play with their two small grandchildren, four-year-old Lauren and ten-year-old Jason.

Since Bobbie and Richmond Fairbanks have finished fifty Collie champions, they are often asked why they have not applied to judge. Bobbie's reply is that she found - in the other sports in which they participated - they had so many invitations to judge that she was able to compete less and less herself. Since time is limited, she would hate to give up her dog-showing sport.

Bobbie has served as a South Carolina delegate to the Collie Club of America for two-year intervals on two separate occasions and has been president of the Greenville Kennel Club all-breed club for three years plus serving on just about every dog club committee. The Fairbanks love working with their dogs and enjoy canine companionship. Sharing the company of the many friends they have made in this sport is their reward!

Competition has kept them busy many weekends, but Bobbie has still managed to serve as a Sunday school teacher and director of youth training at their church. She is also president of the local YWCA and has done extensive community volunteer work. As avid Clemson University football fans, they have also been involved and supportive of their only son, William "Rick" Fairbanks' many activities. Rick and wife Melissa are the producers of two grandchildren. Graduating as class officer at Furman University, Rick started his career with Merrill Lynch. Later he formed his own company building luxury homes and apartments. He was invited to attend a paint ball sporting event and became very interested and eventually formed a company called National Paint Ball Distributors and he travels all over the country participating in this unique sport.

At Road Atlanta's Grand Prix Race, the time came for the final checkered flag...while Richmond and Bobbie felt the tense thrill of the moment, their son Rick, driving his Porsche, missed placing first by five seconds to a Firestone-sponsored Pontiac Firebird. Taking a deep breath and uttering a sigh of relief, Bobbie said, "I can relate to that. I have been beaten in the Herding Group by a Firestone-owned opponent on many occasions." ■

Linda Ayers Turner Knorr