

SAN DIEGO COLLIE CLUB 70TH ANNIVERSARY 1950-2020

BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR



“It never rains in Southern California but girl, don’t they warn you it pours, man, it pours!”—Albert Hammond

In the past 70 years the San Diego Collie Club’s Specialty Show has been briefly interrupted by light sprinkling rain only three times. Otherwise, the sun has shined on this great club and its wonderful outdoor locations. Collie lovers flock there for the glorious February weather and warm hospitality of the club members.

SDCC shows have been held outdoors at McGee Park, located in the historic part of Carlsbad, for 35 years. The two-acre plus site, just one block from the beach, features a rose garden, a gazebo, historic buildings and picnic spots. It is a popular spot for weddings and events and draws a great crowd for the dog shows. McGee Park is the perfect site for this annual occasion.

Show Chair and Club Secretary Janine Walker-Keith shared with me how it all began. “The San Diego Collie Club came into existence in 1942 when Milt Walker gave his wife, LaVerne, a Collie puppy for her birthday,” she reports. “The puppy was lonesome, so they got him a female Collie friend. They were lucky enough to win AKC points at their very first dog show with a puppy from their first litter and they became hooked on The Sport of Dogs.”

The San Diego Collie Club was founded in 1948 and AKC sanctioned in the Fall of 1949. The first club meetings were held at the Walker’s home in Pt. Loma over-



Celebrating San Diego Collie Club’s “Cheers to 70 Years” theme with (left to right) Ring Steward: Connie Grosky; Sweepstakes Judge: Lynda Powers; Regular Class Judge: Bob Futh from Connecticut; and Show Chair/Sec’y/club member since 1969, Janine Walker-Keith, Incandescent Collies. Photo by show photographer, Randy Smith.



Three former Collie Club of America Presidents (left to right) Svend Jensen, Sally Futh and Bob Futh at the 2012 SDCC. Bob and Sally Futh judged at the recent 2020 SDCC shows.

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Bernice Richardson, a founding member of SDCC as well as the Bichon Frise Club of America and the Poodle Club of San Diego.



BIS and multiple specialty winner, Ch. Impromptu Burnt Norton, shown here with owner-handler, the late Jean Cullen, was BOB at the 1972 SDCC—Judge Alice Wharton. The show was held on the beautiful green lawn in front of the San Diego Mission Bay Hilton Inn, next to the tennis courts. Unfortunately, the lawn and courts soon became an asphalt parking lot.



In 1957, Rolland Mueller handled Ch. Country Lane M'liss to BO at the SDCC under Judge Lila Bates for owners Richard and Lois Hillman, and breeder Alice Wharton. M'liss went on to win the 1960 Collie Club of America National, becoming one of few CCA BOB winning bitches.



In 1970, SDCC members invited Milt and LaVerne Walker to judge the club's 20th anniversary show. Shown here with another terrific Collie man, Al Forthal, handling his future great Collie bitch, Ch. Shoreline Desdemona, to her first winning points from Judge Milt Walker in the paddock area of the Del Mar Racetrack.



Gertrude Fournier, SDCC founding member and breeder of outstanding Collies such as Ch. Lewellen Cali-Collaire, known as the Mother of the Bichon Frise in America under the kennel name, Cali-Col reg.



70 years ago, CH Glen Terrace Blue Flash, San Diego Collie Club - Best of Breed Judge Florence Cummings.



CH Lewellen Watch My Line CD, San Diego Collie Club - Best of Breed. Owner: Svend Jensen; Judge Dorothy Long - 1960.



Milt Walker was a man who wore many hats in The Sport of Dogs. He started in Collies in 1942, followed by being a primary founding member of SDCC and Del Sur KC, AKC judge, breeder of San Lori Collies reg, and President of Collie Club of America.

Left to right litter mates: Ch. San Lori Bewitched, Ch. San Lori Citation, Ch. San Lori Enchantment and their dam San Lori Rosana.



SDCC founding member, LaVerne Walker, awarding Ch. Skyline Wooden Horse—one of the top-winning Smooth Collies of all time.

looking the Pacific Ocean and the night lights of downtown San Diego.

The Walkers later moved to a more rural area of San Diego County and named their new road, San Lori Lane.

The club held its first matches on the lawn of Balboa Park near the San Diego Zoo. In February 1950, the first SDCC specialty show was held at the Del Mar Racetrack in the Del Mar Turf Club Paddock area that was a very nice atmosphere normally used for the presentation of winning racehorses with many Hollywood stars such as Desi Arnez, Lucille Ball, Frank Sinatra, Bob Hope, and Bing Crosby looking on.

The SDCC was primarily founded and well-run by Milt and LaVerne Walker (San Lori Collies), Gertrude Fournier (Cali-Col reg.), and Bernice Devine Richardson (Laurel-On) who became like family members and longtime friends. As time passed, each became extremely successful in their own endeavors connected to purebred dogs.

The Walkers went on to create a lovely family of San Lori Collies, served Collie Club of America for decades as Executive Officers and became popular AKC judges of various breeds and Groups. Gertrude Fournier obtained her first Collie in 1946 when her son became a fan of Albert Payson Terhune's books about Collies. Gertrude would go on to purchase a terrific bitch from Steve Field's Parader Kennels and became the breeder of one of the top winning and producing Collie sires of the era, the tri-color dog, Ch. Lewellen Cali-Collaire. Gertrude also became the well-known breeder of the first and finest of America's Bichon Frise under the kennel name Cali-Col. At a time when most Americans had never heard of the breed it was Gertrude who first promoted the Bichon Frise to early popularity by taking a basket of Bichon puppies with her to most all Collie specialty shows, to every Collie club meeting, and to most local all-breed club meetings, shows, and local puppy matches. She became known as the "Mother of the Bichon" in the United States, although

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Club President, Dale Keith, and your author 'all smiles' after such a successful anniversary weekend.



An AKC celebrated 50+ year judge, Sally Futh, awards her Best of Breed with a copy of John Buddie's recently published and valued Collie book, Master Class. Laurie Jeff Greer handling. Sitting ringside are SDCC Show Chair, Janine Walker-Keith, and Joan Armitage from Flagstaff, enjoying every minute.



Elaine Goto-Tamae and her mother, Tomie Goto, are not strangers to the Sport of Dogs. They have bred and shown Collies successfully since Elaine was a young teenager, and later known well for owning and handling the top-winning Collie in breed history, Ch. Shoreham Triumph Timeless.



Saturday afternoon Judge Jackie Caruso with Ring Steward Connie Grosky.



she often said Collies would always remain her first love. Bernice Richardson was also a Bichon Frise fancier, authored a book about Bichons, bred and exhibited Toy and Miniature Poodles and was licensed to judge Collies, Border Collies, Bichons and Poodles. She also owned a tri-color brother of the well-known and top-winning Collie, Ch. San Lori Mac D, bred by the Walkers.

The SDCC dedicated their 2019 specialty show to Bernice Richardson as she was the last founding member to pass away. She was 90 years old.

The four original founding members devoted a lifetime to the betterment of purebred dogs. They developed a strong foundation for the SDCC that grew in size to 25-30 members during the first 30 years when most all members were actively exhibiting and putting on a yearly specialty show with large entries such as the 1970 specialty show with 45 Futurity puppies and 163 entries in the regular classes.

The 2020 San Diego Collie Club event celebrated the founding of the club that has supported the best interest of the Collie for 70 years. If not for the founding members' wonderful guidance, more than likely, the San Diego Collie Club would not exist today, as we know it. An organization is nothing more than the collective capacity of its founding people...and that they DID!

Although today's club is small in active members it is an experienced and energetic group that has remained amicable and devoted since the late 1960s, which is so essential in the support of our breed. Club members Lynda and Jack Powers, AKC Delegate and judge Andrew Gene Mills and Maryellen Mills, Janine and Dale Keith, and the late Monica Stinson and Judy Colaianni, carried the club for nearly 40 years with recent assistance from Gloria Laube, Erin Matthews, Connie and Maureen Grosky and the late Dennis Fyda.

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GCHS Valley Park Serendipity at Baldwin Ridge surrounded by the magnificent SDCC trophies. He won the judges' hearts and BOV honors at two of the shows for his owners Cheryl and Jessica Baldwin.



OFFICERS OF THE CLUB TODAY INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING HARD-WORKING MEMBERS:

- President, Dale Keith
- Vice President, Connie Grosky
- Recording Secretary, Lynda Powers
- Corresponding Secretary/Show Chair, Janine Walker-Keith

The 2020 SDCC Specialty was held in memory of Lorraine Still, Jane Dixon and William Holbrook. Collie Club of America members Bob and Sally Futh, Svend Jensen, Jim Martin, and Anne Cross were formally congratulated as The American Kennel acknowledged these special individuals for their 50 years of service as AKC Dog Show Judges.

In 2009, club members became aware that Southern California Collie breeders and exhibitors were not exactly on the same page with Collie Rescue groups, and visa-versa, resulting from a lack of communication. So, the SDCC invited Southland Collie Rescue to hold a Rescue Raffle during the shows that included a display of beautiful, donated Collie items; art, jewelry, books and vintage items. The club's goal was to mesh Collie breeders and exhibitors with Southland Collie Rescue volunteers and adopters. All proceeds from raffle ticket sales and donations would go directly to Collie Rescue. At the 2009 show the Rescue Raffle raised \$400 for homeless Collies. It was a very nice start! Now, every year since 2009, breeders, exhibitors, club members and Southland Collie Rescue volunteers and adopters set a goal to beat the previous year's proceeds. At the 2019 SDCC shows, over \$2,000 was raised by the Rescue Raffle thanks to the continuing generosity of Collie breeders and exhibitors and their loving hearts. Southland Collie Rescue volunteers,



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Linda Kratz, Sue Baldwin, Trisha Valdivia and those attending the SDCC specialty shows continue to mesh together like one big, loving family.

Janine Walker-Keith and Anne Cross are in charge of the magnificent trophies for the weekend. Challenge and Memorial trophies have been handed down through the years by many of the Collie world's greatest contributors; Glen Twilford, James E. Pearson, Dale and Janine Walker-Keith, Les Hutchins, Al and Helene Forthal, Elaine Goto-Tamae, Tomie Goto, Cecelia Fouty, Dr. and Mrs. William Broken, Jack and Lynda Powers, and Anne Cross. John Buddie's Collie book, *Master Class* was awarded for Best of Breed wins at two of the four shows. It is thrilling to see these treasures displayed, but the memories attached to them bring the greatest joy. Photographer Randy Smith seemed to be everywhere capturing photographs of the winners.

Friday's morning and afternoon shows went on in perfect weather for Sweepstakes



Judge Lynda Powers and Connecticut's famous Collie couple, Judges Bob and Sally Futh. Exhibitors were treated to lunch on Friday and Saturday hosted by Club President Dale Keith, Jack Powers, Gloria Laube and Erin Matthews. Yummy!

On Saturday, I arrived to judge the first of the two specialties and was greeted by Sweepstakes Judge Gene Mills who was waiting for a break in the rain so he could begin.

Jackie Caruso judged the late afternoon show. Exhibitors were grabbing umbrellas as the tents covering the priceless trophies and the long-awaited Keith's famous chili—and the 70th anniversary cakes—were sagging.

Luckily, I had heeded the advice of my father, the late all-breed judge Roy Ayers: "Always take rain gear when judging a dog show, no matter where it is or what the weather forecast may be." Thank you, Daddy!



The unusual weather for only one afternoon didn't dampen the spirits of those of us blessed to be together in Carlsbad to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the San Diego Collie Club. I put my arm around the soaking wet Janine Walker-Keith and we were, as Arthur Freed wrote, "Singing In The Rain!"

CHEERS TO 70 YEARS! ■