

**LEWIS**

**NIC MAC**

**Peggy and Chuck Lewis**

Nic Mac Kennels were started in 1966. I (Peggy) saw a Westie in a pet shop and fell in love with it. I begged Chuck for one as a pet. Meanwhile we had met a Miniature Schnauzer breeder that showed dogs.

Driven by Chuck's interest in the dog sport, we decided to buy a show quality Westie. We found a kennel near our home that advertised champions in *Dog World* magazine. We visited the kennel and bought a six-month-old puppy.

We took our new puppy to our handler friend, who could barely go over her as she was so mean. She also had a bad bite. We learned that this "champion" kennel where we bought her was a wholesale kennel and so we took her back. We went to dog shows for six months after that, studying the breed and envisioning in our minds the type we wanted. We then bought a 12-week old female puppy from Ida Weaver, in Woodinville, Washington. She became Weaver's Highland Mhaira, born 6/6/66, and with the help of our Schnauzer friend I showed and finished her. We also bought a Rannoch-Dune Downbeat daughter and later another Weaver's female, Weavers Highland Moira, who later won the WHWTCA brood bitch award. We were hooked and loved it.

There were very few Westie breeders in our area at that time, so I learned grooming and stripping from our Schnauzer breeder friend and through much trial and error. Quite frankly the local Westie breeders did not offer to help. However, the famous handler George Ward was a source of considerable advice, and Bergit Zakchewski, a young woman from Germany provided several valuable tips. Bergit later married and achieved great fame as Bergit Coady and later as Bergit Kabel. We learned to evaluate our litters probably influenced greatly by that Schnauzer breeder who demanded soundness. We also spent considerable time studying the young dogs in the ring, learning what we liked, which has driven the type we breed and show.

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Probably the most important moment in Westies for us was campaigning Ch. Seamate. He won many groups, six specialties and a Best in Show, and became #1 Westie. He was not a big dog, but was very square and moved extremely well.

Our favorite dog show was the Indiana Specialty which was held in Indianapolis for many years until old age caught up with the wonderful people that put on the show. At that point Betty Williams and her friends moved the show to Louisville, and continued the wonderful legacy of that venerable event.

Of course Montgomery County will always hold a very warm spot in our hearts, as we met so many friends there, and we could see what other Westie breeders were doing, as we watched and showed in sweeps, and the regular classes at MC.

Over the years we owned many good dogs, but I believe, Ch. Nic Mac's King of the Road, (Harley) is our favorite, and has been influential to the breed. He has sired over 30 litters, and is just one champion short of his ROM-X at this writing (late 2011), I have tried to use him judiciously, and he has produced almost no major faults. He has passed on his lovely neck and great hindquarters to many of his children and grandchildren. He is also a great friend.

There have been several influential dogs over the 40 years of showing, sadly some were greatly over-used, and have added faults to the breed. We think two particularly stick out as dogs that drew attention to the breed, and brought newcomers to the fancy. One was Ch. Elfinbrook Simon, who was owned by Barbara Keenan, and won some very big, important shows. The other was Ch. Mac-Ken-Char's Irish Navigator, co-owned and shown by a young girl, Jaimi Glodek and her mother Joanne, who did considerable winning at specialties. There was one dog, that was very influential for us, and pretty much helped us set the type in the Westies we bred. This was Ch. Rannoch Dune Down Beat, owned by B.G. Frame and handled by George Ward at that time. He was a short backed, very muscular dog up on leg, with a straight, harsh, white coat. For two young Westie lovers just getting started, he was our ideal. Of course after so many years, we could mention many other influential dogs, but honestly we did not breed to the top winners particularly, we bred to sound dogs of our type that seemed not to throw faults we wanted to avoid. Some were top winners, some were dogs finished by breeders that simply produced well.

Our favorite Montgomery County moment was with Ch. Nic Mac's Come Fly With Me. The week after her first shows, winning sweeps, points and a Best Puppy in show at the

Michigan Terrier show, she came to Montgomery County where she won Best in Sweepstakes from the 6 to 9 months class under David Gignac, and the next in the regular classes she was Reserve Winners Bitch under judge Edd Bivin.

She went on to win BOS in Sweeps and Winners Bitch at the Indiana Specialty to retire the trophy there. She is now our great friend and companion, taking more than her share of space in our bed.

Coincidentally, several years earlier, we won the Montgomery County sweeps and Reserve Winners Dog with Ch. Arnholmes Arazzmatuzz and he finished at the Indiana Specialty.

There are many Roving moments and wins over the years we have enjoyed, but the Roving in Texas, where we won the sweeps and points, with Harley's mom, Ch. Paddyhill's Desert Melody stands out as this girl was very special to us.

Though there are several Westie books we enjoy, John Marvin's writing had an early influence on us and we consider his book our favorites.

Our favorite pieces in our collection are the paintings by the artist Barbara Hands, whom we have known for many years and we have several of her paintings.

Chuck went to the Centennial alone, as I was unable to travel at the time, and he had to attend a board meeting there. He did not go so much to exhibit a dog, but wanted to see the many dogs and our Westie friends. We were quite proud of the Harley kids that did so well at that important event.

We have belonged to the Valley of the Sun Westie Club and the Northern Illinois Westie Club and, of course, the national Westie Club, where Chuck served two terms on the Board. He felt it was important to help influence the future of the breed.

We feel it is most important to ensure the future of the breed by ensuring the health of the dogs.

So many breeders, especially some of the newer ones, feel that winning is so much the most important part; they neglect their breeding program priorities, which is to breed a better and healthier dog. We must be more open about the problems in Westies and also the strong points present. A breeder has considerable responsibility to the future, and must remember that.

It will become very important to the future of the breed to gain the DNA knowledge of the various diseases, as very prominent dog law groups will force this on us or we will not be able to breed dogs; in the future.

We believe the most important advice is, breed to your type; never leave it to gain something.

Be your own severest critic when you evaluate your litters. Always breed for a better dog and a healthier dog, and always be honest with yourself and others concerning genetic problems.

It is also important to talk to the older breeders that have known the dogs over the years, and learn the lines and what you are going into. They know the lines and can give you valuable information, that will not be found in books.

Finally love the breed as we have, and all of the above will happen.