

HEGSTROM

KILORAN LEA

Donna Hegstrom

My first encounter with a Westie happened when I was in college. One of my sorority sisters owned a darling Westie bitch who visited us quite often, bounding around the sorority house, greeting everyone. I knew then, that after I graduated and left for Pennsylvania, I would start a search for a West Highland White Terrier. Several years later, I found out that my sorority sister's dog was bred by Marcella Lee, a WHWTCA member-breeder.

My husband and I attended the Kennel Club of Philadelphia dog show in search of a breeder and information on the breed. Among the very first exhibitors we met were Bill Ferrara and John Price of Biljonblue Kennels and Greg and Linda Shively of Skerryvore Kennels. There was an immediate friendship established between the Shivelys and the Hegstroms as we were both living in the same area and Greg and Linda had three Westies. I was also introduced to two very well respected people in the dog world through the Shivelys. Polly Walters, a Scottish lady, who bred under the Tyndrum prefix, and Cliff Hallmark, a professional handler, were both members of the WHWTCA. Polly was also a member of the Montgomery County Kennel Club. As luck would have it, a bitch puppy, bred by the Shivelys, but owned by Polly Walters as a pick of litter, became my foundation bitch. Cliff had evaluated her and found her to be good show quality, but lacking in showmanship. He suggested that she be placed as a brood bitch with someone who wanted to learn about showing and breeding Westies. Her registered name was Tyndrum Mallaig, but I called her Kelly. Kelly became my foundation bitch and produced beautiful puppies with thick white coats and large blocky heads so typical of the Tyndrums, I was very fortunate to have the Shivelys and Polly as my mentors during those first years. Polly helped me choose Kiloran Lea as my kennel name; Kiloran being a bay in Scotland and Lea meaning a meadow. Kelly's grandfather was the famous Ch. De-Go Hubert and her parents were both from the Tyndrum line.

In the beginning years, I had guidance from Greg, Polly, and John Marvin, in evaluating litters and young puppies. John was a frequent visitor to Polly's and being invited to her home was always exciting. Stories, techniques and suggestions were plentiful and provided each of us with a basis to build upon as we became more involved with Westies. In the late 70's and early 80's, five Westie couples in the Philadelphia area and two Westie couples in the New York area became good friends, traveling to shows together and helping each other with grooming, showing and breeding. This group became the foundation of the West Highland White Terrier Club of Greater Philadelphia, an early version of the William Penn West Highland White terrier Club.

Looking back over my 40 years in Westies, many things have changed. The sires and dams who were dominant in the breed gave us shorter backs, more reach of neck and better tail sets and showmanship. In the process however, I feel we have lost a degree of coat texture, good pigment and blocky heads. In addition the breed has a size issue, which continues to warrant monitoring. In contrast to earlier years, grooming the Westie has become an art, which is not easy for the novice or many amateur exhibitors to master. Over the years, I have enjoyed exhibiting in the ring and breeding litters on a limited basis; always with the hope of maintaining the look I have developed in my line from generation to generation. My champions are a source of pride and hopefully contributed to the Westie that is seen in the ring today. Ch. Kiloran Lea's Kalla Lily, Winners Bitch at the 2003 Roving Specialty, as well as at several regional specialties, culminated her show career by winning the Veteran Bitch class at the 2009 Centennial. She exemplifies Kiloran Lea breeding and our standard. Her get, Ch. Kiloran Lea's Cedarcrest Cannon, also a Roving Specialty winner in 2008, and a multiple Sweepstakes winner, and Ch. Kiloran Lea's Kortin Trouble, a regional specialty winner continues to strongly influence the Kiloran Lea line.

Over the years, I have been a member of the WHWTC of New York, New Jersey, Greater Philadelphia and William Penn. I have held offices in these clubs and served on the WHWTCA and regional club boards in addition to the Westie Foundation of America board. Upon moving to Florida, I became a member of the Suncoast West Highland White Terrier Club. Our 2009 Centennial National and the Centennial Roving were a highlight for me and one of the best experiences for anyone who has had the pleasure of owning a Westie. There were opportunities there for exhibitors in

conformation and performance to present their latest star or hopeful and to compare and contrast what 100 years of Westies has done for the breed not just in the United States, but all over the world. Our overseas guests were an asset to this event, providing a more global perspective. Gathering together from all over the United States, Canada and around the world, was truly an event to remember.

In thinking about the future, I have a great concern not only for the future of our breed, but for the sport of purebred dogs as well. The cost of raising, training and exhibiting a dog in the ring has risen to the point that middle income exhibitors find it hard to continue in the sport. In addition, life styles have changed significantly and there is not the interest among many young people in devoting the time and effort necessary to raise and show a dog. Therefore, I feel that it is important that the WHWTCA continue to monitor the future of our breed through the use of the internet and the various social network sites, providing information to those seeking a Westie as a pet in hopes of sparking an interest in the many activities available in the Westie world. In order to maintain our standard, as well as the health of the breed, educating the public must become a top priority. The WHWTCA must work closely with the Westie Foundation of America to provide health information to the membership in order to continue to improve the quality of life for our dogs. In the future, the WHWTCA might take a more active role in educating the membership, as well as newcomers to the breed in the areas of breeding, grooming and showing through seminars with regional Westie clubs. Our current membership must take an active role in mentoring and supporting those who show an interest in any aspect of the dog world or we will lose what we have gained over the past century.
