

A Blast From The Past

Words To A Novice by Barbara R Emrich
from December 1971

When our good Editor asked me to pen some words for someone new to the dog game, I thought back over these many years since I showed my first dog. (Good Grief! it was 25 years this past September, at the Ox Ridge KC shows, Darien, Conn.). He was a lovely, to me, Smooth Fox Terrier, who had never been afraid of a thing in his life until that fateful day. He must have observed how badly his teen-age handlers's knees were shaking, because he acted as though the end of the world had come! And, for me, it had come! There was nothing I wished more than to have the earth open up and swallow me forever. Of course, it didn't, and I have survived to show time and time again, although those shaky knees come back now and then. So, dear Novice, don't think you are the only person in the world who has shown butterflies in your stomach. In time, they will become old friends!

I have just returned from testifying in a court case (as expert witness, only!) This was such an unnecessary thing, if only the breeder had put things in writing. So, here's advice which will hold you in good stead, should you ever find yourself involved in such a mess. Always.... ALWAYS.... have all sales, stud services, gifts, everything, in writing is so easy to type up an agreement of sale, listing the dog by name and number (or litter number), sex, color, age, and anything else you can come up with to provide positive identification. Put all terms in that agreement, amount of sale, terms of sale, and of course, the full names and addresses for purchaser and seller., Two copies should be made, one for you and one for the other party. Both should sign the agreement, If I place a dog without papers (as we all do eventually) include in your agreement why this is being done, and be sure to include when and if the registration papers will be provided. A few minutes spent preparing such an agreement can save untold misery later on.,

I am assuming that our hypothetical eager Novice wants to learn as much as possible about Aussies. Study, read, talk to other Aussie people... they are all great ways to learn. But, don't pass up the chance for a superb doggy education at each dog show you attend. Of course, you'll watch the Aussie judging, and maybe even a few other terrier breeds.



But, don't stop stop there, watch Pointers, Cockers, Dobses, Maltese, Boston Terriers, etc. Study the standard ahead of time for the breed, sit at the ringside, and try to outguess the judge. (And, no fair peeking in your catalog, either!) If you and he agree, great, you must be looking for some of the right things. But, if you disagree, try to figure out why you disagree. you can't bat a thousand, since there are many things the judge can see which you can't from ringside, but when you agree 75% of the time, you should find that you have a fairly good understanding of the breed. Then, move on to another breed...any breed... it really doesn't matter, and repeat the process. The point is that any and all knowledge of dogs which you gain can be applied to Aussies, in one way or another. If you are lucky, you may find a judge or two who will be happy to tell you why he placed dogs as he did. One of the dogdom's oldest all-rounders know that I am interested in learning all breeds, and whenever I sit at his ringside, he comes over to tell me of an especially nice dog, or why he had to put down a seemingly good dog. Such education is priceless!

Above all, dear Novice, stick with it. Doggy people are essentially nice people, and willing to help the sincere newcomer,. And one day, someone will come to you and ask questions about Aussies. Then you'll discover that you've graduated... you're no longer a Novice!

