

DÉJÀ VU PEKINGESE

ROM | BOE

“WHAT A LONG STRANGE TRIP IT’S BEEN....”

by SUSAN F. SHEPHARD

Register of Merit | Breeder of Excellence

No one was more surprised than me to see that Joe and Duane have named me a PCA MVP. To say that I was flattered is a monstrous understatement. There are so many people that have worked tirelessly to get PCA back up on its legs to be the club it was and more. For everyone that has worked on healing PCA, I know it has been a labor of love. The old adage of there is no “I” in team definitely applies to this board. It is a solid, working board utilizing our diversity, teamwork and passion to have formed a world class organization. Joe and Duane, I am honored by this—far more than you will ever know. Thank you.

I was raised in western and central Nebraska. My family owned a newspaper in Wauneta, Nebraska and it was a great way to grow up. I cannot possibly remember how many stray dogs and cats came through our home and none were ever turned away. My brother Hal was throwing stale bread for the birds one day and a neighbor remarked they were just sparrows, Hal replied that sparrows had to eat, too. That was the attitude I was raised on. My younger brother is a small animal vet in Lincoln, Nebraska and my niece is a small animal vet in Tucson, Arizona.

My other brother and sister are multiple dog families. The dog gene is alive in well in my entire family.

My love affair with Pekingese began as a toddler with my Grandmother’s Pekingese, Footsie. I was allowed to interact with him (worship) as long as I didn’t complain if he occasionally gave me a little pinch. And he did (pinch) and I didn’t (complain) as it was all worth it to be in the presence of such greatness.

In spite of repeated pleas for a Peke, my father held firm to his resolve of No Pekingese. I was raised in a family of bird hunters and we always had a gun dog that doubled as house dog that would have made short work of a Pekingese. I do recall several very pointed conversations with my dad that ended with me stomping my foot and telling him, “You just wait and see, I will have a house full of Pekingese and you won’t be able to do anything about it!”

After moving from Nebraska to Memphis with a toddler daughter, I had seen what I found out later was CH St Aubrey Bees Wing of Elsdon with Luc Boileau at a local dog show and I was back on the Pekingese mission. We found a breeder in Memphis and she had Peke puppies and some rare peke-a-poops. Well, daughter

Kellie fell in love with a peke-a-poo and once more, the Pekingese got put on hold as we brought Bubba, the peke-a-poo, home. Some years later, my first pekes joined us; Baby and Bug-Marie, both purchased from a local pet store. All three were wonderful pets and much loved.

In 1995, I decided I wanted another Pekingese as Bubba and Baby were gone leaving Bug-Marie as an only child, which she liked very much. I remembered that little show dog with the funny name in Memphis that had so captured my imagination so started to search for a real breeder rather than a pet store. My search ended with Wendy and Richard Moore of West Bay Pekingese. They sold me a chunky little girl named Boo. And Wendy said in passing, “Oh, you know you could show her...”—and so the adventure began.

Shortly after Boo came to me, I purchased a bitch puppy from Joyce Wilhoit of Mai-Joi Pekingese. She became both CH Mai-Joi’s Gold Calendar Girl and my heart dog. Busy Shephard was all show girl and she ruled both the house and my heart for exactly 16 years. Until she was 15, she came to all the shows with me, not always by my choice but by her insistence. Her last show was a Veterans class when she

was 15 years old. After a year of growing her coat out, it was finally time to show her. And in walks a 7 year old BIS dog, he had just aged into Veterans. And of course, I was disappointed as he was glorious. No worries though, we were there so she could have a day out, so we went and had fun... Busy Shephard showed like she was the Top Dog All Breeds, including walking into a beautiful free stack, giving it about 3 seconds, stomping her front foot and barking at the judge as if to tell him to pay attention. The judge was Frank Sabella and he did not hesitate when he pointed to her for the breed. That is my favorite win of all time.

In the mid 1990s, I met both Winifred Mee (Pekehuis, UK) and Michael Hill (Akarana, Canada and UK). Both have become lifelong friends and mentors. Winifred sent me what was to become my foundation bitch, CH Pekehuis Dream of Gold ROM BOE (GENA). I bred her to CH Déjà vu Travelin' Man (TRAVIS) who was a double Rover grandson (CH Akarana Excalibur x Déjà vu Niagara Falls Honeymoon) and produced two stunning litters that included CH Déjà vu Sir Gold for Pekehuis ROM BOE, CH Déjà vu Pekehuis Gold Fusion and CH Déjà vu Pekehuis Still Gold, all that have gone on to produce champions and their children and grandchildren are also producing champions. Travis and Gena are behind every dog I have. Their son BRADLEY (CH Déjà vu Pekehuis Gold Fusion) spent two years in England and is behind some of the contemporary winning dogs at Pekehuis. CH Déjà vu Sir Gold for Pekehuis (NILES) last live litter was for Betty Tilley-Poole producing 5 puppies, 4 that finished their championships.

In 2011, Omar Gonzales offered Betty Tilley and me a dog that was bred from both our stock. He was sired by a CH Yakee Forward Step to Pleiku son and out of a NILES daughter. This was GCH Briar-Mar American Gigolo at Vannjty. We were very happy to have JON as he not only is a beautiful dog; he is easy to live with. Jon went on to win 17 Pekingese Specialties and won an owner handled Reserve BIS. He has sired some beautiful puppies for not only Betty and me, but for several other breeders that have used him. Thank you again, Omar, for sending JON to Florida.

2012-13 was a time of great sadness for us. We lost 2 dogs within 3 days in December 2012 and had a house full of sick dogs. After much time and



Eva Matheny handling, Joe Joly judging—Busy wins BOB over several specials from the classes.



Busy wins Best Veteran over a BISA Pekingese under Frank Sabella, note Joe and Eva are in the picture!



Just the most beautiful face in the world—CH Mai-Joi's Gold Calendar Girl bred by Joyce Wilhoit.



Travis at about 10 weeks old.



CH Akarana Excalibur x Déjà vu Niagara Falls Honeymoon (both Rover children).



Winning BOS at Citrus Capital Pekingese Club under May Robershaw, winning Best in Sweeps under Thomas Curley.



Gina at about 8 months old.



Gina, a retiree enjoying the day.

“LOLA DID MORE TO HEAL MY HEART
 THAN ANYTHING AS SHE IS MUCH LIKE HER SIRE NOT ONLY
 PHYSICALLY BUT IN PERSONALITY TOO!”



CH Déjà vu Travelin' Man x CH Pekehuis Dream of Gold—Left: Bradley was BOB under Judge William Cunningham at Eukanuba 2006. Right: Bradley as a puppy Winners Dog at CCPC.



Portrait was taken by Lisa Croft-Elliot when Bradley spent almost 2 years in England.



Taken at 7 months old.



Niles, casual adult head shot.



frustration at the vet with no positive diagnosis and desperately ill dogs, I went home and put the entire kennel on Flagyl and clavamox plus put everyone on chicken, rice and yogurt. Within a few days, all were on the mend. Several months later, I saw that the dog food I fed was on recall. In fact, this premium dog food was recalled more than 10 times in 2012. The culprit was salmonella which was something no vet would test for. However, my vet did contact the dog food company and they ended up paying for months of vet bills. When it was all over, I lost 4 dogs from December 2012-April 2013 that we attributed to bad food. The only saving grace was that I had frozen semen from Bradley and Niles.

Betty Tilley graciously let me use one of her champion bitches as to be able to utilize some frozen Niles and we produced CH Déjà vu Pleiku Whole Lotta Love (LOLA) who finished in 2014 with a 5 point Specialty win over Champion bitches from the puppy class. Lola did more to heal my heart than anything as she is much like her sire, not only physically, but in personality too!

2014 had many high points, which after '13, I certainly needed. With co-breeders David Kelland and Gary Tucker, we bred Michaelmas Ngaio to GCH Briar-Mar American Gigolo for Vannjty and produced one male puppy. I had promised friend Sheila Armstrong a puppy for the past several years, so I agreed to let her have this little red man. He stayed in Florida with a very young handler, Christina Roberts-Onalee. Christina made



NILES daughters—co-bred with Jackie Breazeale and Beth Overstreet. CH Déjà vu Sir Gold for Pekehuis x CH Karousel DragonFly. DORA is CH Déjà vu Reckless Abandon—both a baby picture and her finishing picture. COOKIE is CH Karousel Pick Your Poison is shown in the baby picture, picture with my granddaughter Alicia Marie Farrer and when she was being specialed by Kathleen Knowles for then owner Omar Gonzalez. Cookie is the dam of CH Briar-Mar American Gigolo for Vannjty.

this puppy her mission in life. He was beautifully trained and conditioned and a totally fearless showman. “Geordie” finished undefeated with only Best of Breed wins at 7 months old. Not content with that, Christina and Geordie completed his Grand Championship 3 weeks later, becoming the youngest Pekingese in AKC history (by 2 months) to complete his Grand Championship. GCH Déjà vu Michaelmas Game On is now living the life of luxury with his besotted owner, Sheila.

The other high point for 2014 was the return of John Wayne! No, not the western movie star! CH Déjà vu True Grit for Shambala (CH Déjà vu Travelin’ Man x CH Déjà vu True Gold for Pekehuis) was a puppy that finished fast and went on to be in the Top 5 Pekingese for that year. He then went home with owner Nikki Kinzler. Nikki contacted me last year and asked if I would like to have John Wayne back. I, of course, was thrilled to have him and am looking forward to incorporating him into my breeding program.

In 2013, I had sent a cute red bitch, Déjà vu Imagine (CH Shen-Yi Bullet Proof x Briar-Mar Pure Poison) to a friend, Rona Shoolroy in Idaho. Rona finished her in short order and bred her to a double TRAVIS grandson. She free-whelped 5 puppies. One male puppy, (CH Sun Valley’s Quincey from Déjà vu) was sent to Roma and Colleen Skinner in Dallas. This was their first show dog and Colleen finished him in a flash! Rona retained one bitch that has both her majors and I have one bitch here that has one major.

Currently I am growing up 2 litters of puppies, both sired by JON. One is the repeat breeding of “Geordie” and the other is out of a BRADLEY daughter, Akarana Allure. Ken and I are both totally besotted with them, especially the little man, Stanley.

One of the things I am most proud of is my affiliation with the Pekingese Association. In 2006, a small group of us had a private Yahoo chat group. Someone had called us the “Bad Seeds” so we embraced it and called our group the Bad Seed Reunion. The members were the current board of The Pekingese Association, Eva Matheny, Anthea Everitt and Eleanor Lamb. From many conversations and frustrations, we understood there was a huge contingent of Pekingese fanciers that were unhappy with PCA and felt they had nowhere to turn. Then someone said, “Let’s have a club!” So we put a club together, not really knowing if anyone would really



CH Briar-Mar American Gigolo at Vannjty x Can Ch Michaelmas Ngaio—Finished undefeated with only BOB wins, youngest Pekingese Grand Champion in AKC history. Owned by Sheila Armstrong and Ramona Griffin.



CH Déjà vu Tre Grit for Shambala



JON CH Pleiku Stepping Forward x CH Karousel Pick Your Poison. Co-owned with Elizabeth Tilley Poole.

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GCH Briar-Mar American Gigolo x Akarana Allure (Bradley daughter)
 Left: Stanley, Déjà vu Stand By Me. Right: Faith, Déjà vu Keepin' the Faith.



My best helper, grandson Mason Farrer at Meet the Breeds... already knows how to bathe and dry puppies, feed the kennel, run the dog yards... so blessed that he likes the doggy life!



CH Déjà vu Sir Gold for Pekehuis x CH Pleiku
 Kerimere A Dream is a Wish



be interested... more than 150 people were interested! We had our first match in Dallas and it was a resounding success. Our goal was never to replace PCA or to become an AKC sanctioned club. Our goal was only to give the Pekingese fanciers a place to go that they felt comfortable. We have had several matches in Dallas, Camp Hill and the last one was hosted by David Fitzpatrick at his home. We have published multiple yearbooks, each one with nearly a hundred pages in member advertising. Last year, the PA hosted breakfast and lunch for the Triple Crown shows and the Pekingese Club of America show. Additionally, the PA partnered with Doll-McGinnis publications to bring back the Black Mask party! I know that during the 8 years of turmoil within the parent club, that the PA was good for the breed, breeders and exhibitors. And the PA will again partner with Doll-McGinnis in March 2015 in Louisville for another Black Mask party to kick off the National weekend!

Additionally, I am on the Board of Directors of the Pekingese Club of America. With the help of The American Kennel Club, PCA is well back on track to being the well-respected club it always was. Because of the member's generosity, PCA is financially healthy again. Members have donated more than \$20,000 YTD in our Phoenix Fund. THANK YOU!! We have a strong, diverse board that is continually working to make PCA the very best it can be. We were able to partner with the Triple Crown clubs (Allegheny, Colony and New Jersey) in October 2014 and have our National. With an entry of more than 50 dogs, it was a resounding success! And it feels good to have The Pekingese Club of America back at the front of the line.

And in my spare time, I am one of the directors of the West Volusia Kennel Club and currently serve as a co-chair of the Judges Selection committee. Our club hosts a 2-day all-breed show the third week of September every year. Last year we had more than 1300 entries each day! We also play host to several "Group" clubs that have their Specialties at our venue on the Friday before the show. Of our 90+ members, nearly 70% of them come out and work the show. It is really a great club, full of great people that I really enjoy.

I could not have made the positive strides I feel I have made without the love and support from so many. I have met so many incredible people, all passionate about this breed. I have been blessed with

3 mentors/best friends from 3 countries. Eva Matheny, Michael Hill and Winifred Mee have been generous with their knowledge and their friendship. I am the luckiest person in the world to have these three in my corner. And if I haven't told them how much I appreciate them this week, let me say it again: THANK YOU!

My husband Ken, while not caring for the show aspect of the breed, (something about he would rather donate a kidney than go to a dog show), is passionate about the dogs. He keeps the home fires burning for me when I am gone to the shows. And there is no better puppy socializer than him.

I have worked for the *TRIBUNE* since 1984. I am a Senior Automotive Account Manager representing *The Orlando Sentinel* newspaper, *Tribune Interactive*, *Tribune Direct* and *cars.com*. My daughter Kellie is a Registered nurse who has just moved back to Florida with her children Mason and Ali. Both of the kids like the dogs, but Mason has joined my all breed club and helps me with my dogs. He knows how to bathe and dry a dog and knows how to feed my kennel. Their household includes 3 cats, 2 Pekingese and soon, a Chihuahua. (Thanks Thomas and Diane!!) Hopefully I have a 2nd generation in training!

I can not imagine my life without the dogs and am grateful everyday that I am blessed with so many little flat faces and every night I go to sleep serenaded by Pekingese snorts and snores. What could be any better than that? ■



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