

Thank you for asking me to share my thoughts about 50 years in the breed. —D.H.

Thank you, Debbie! —Lynda McKee, Hiram, Ga.; TifflynLDM@aol.com ♦

Pulik



## The Price of Celebrity

By now I'm sure that everyone on the planet has heard that millionaire and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg is the proud owner of a Puli puppy named Beast. The puppy was introduced to the public on Facebook on March 6, and 36 hours later, Beast's Facebook page had over 27,000 "Likes"; on May 1, it topped 100,000.

In spite of this overwhelming response from the public, the reaction from the Puli world was mixed. Some saw this event as a pending disaster for the breed, while others took the attitude that a little publicity is a good thing.

By the time this issue goes to

print, we should have some idea of the effect of shining a spotlight on our unique breed. It is inevitable that there will be people who will fall in love with the adorable puppy pictures featured on Beast's page. We can only hope that both his virtues and his shortcomings will be revealed with fairness, and there won't be a rush to acquire the latest "celebrity" dog for all the wrong reasons.

All Puli owners are acutely aware of the fact that our adult Puli has an eye-catching appearance and is sure to generate a lot of discussion wherever one is seen. All of us have assured people that our Puli can, indeed, see though all that hair and have answered the common questions such as, "How do you bathe him?"

The problem arises when the public only sees the adorable puppy who at 8 weeks is still a ball of fluff. The observer does not have any idea of

what lies ahead in terms of grooming and maintenance.

What can you as a Puli owner or breeder do to make sure that prospective Puli buyers understand that today's cute, fluffy puppy can turn into tomorrow's matted nightmare?

First of all, be honest with puppy buyers. A Puli is not for everyone, and that is the first thing I tell anyone who inquires about the breed.

While I love Pulik and am quick to extol their virtues, the breed does have its drawbacks, and unsuspecting buyers should be informed of the negative as well as the positive traits.

Pulis are loving, affectionate, loyal, energetic, intelligent, and unique. However, each of those traits can become a problem if carried to the extreme.

Their love can turn into possessiveness. Being loyal can make them protect you in situations where it is not needed.

Being energetic is great, but some Pulis seem to lack an "off" button.

They are intelligent enough to outsmart their owners on occasion.

Their unique coat comes at a cost in time and effort and is not for the person who wants a "wash-and-wear" dog or who does not have adequate time to devote to grooming.

Their herding instinct has been known to get them into trouble. Stories abound of Pulik who have to be rehomed because they insist on nipping people on the back of the legs to encourage them to move along.

All of us who love this breed have been entrusted with its future. Let us be worthy of that trust by encouraging responsible ownership and being strong enough to say no to anyone who wants a Puli just because of its unusual appearance or in order to emulate some celebrity. —Sherry Gibson, Manchester, Tenn.; gibsons@blomand.net ♦

## Pyrenean Shepherds

Our guest columnist for this issue is Susan Buttivant. She brought her first Pyrenean Shepherd home to her farm in Ontario, Canada, in 1995

and began herding with the little shepherds in 1996.

## Herding With Pyrenean Shepherds PART TWO

To fully appreciate the Pyrenean Shepherd, or Berger des Pyrénées, as a working dog, one must know his history. The breed was developed in the southwest of France in and around the Pyrenees Mountains, where there are still some of the highest concentrations of livestock in the country.

The breed developed in remote valley cantons, and as a result of isolation and individual need, small variations were expressed in many of the regions.

This resulted individuals that differ in size from the smallest, at 15 inches at the shoulder, to the tallest, at 21 inches.

Other variations in appearance include rough-faced and smooth-faced varieties, each retaining discrete physical souvenirs representing the local breed characteristics of that particular region—yet his head and expression would typify the breed throughout the whole of the country.

He is an insatiable worker, with the agility and nimbleness necessary to work for his shepherd in the harsh, mountainous terrain of the Pyrenees. Working close to his charges, he is at ease on flat pastures or on rocky precipices. Neither his size nor his style of work conveys the overpowering presence of a larger herding breed, and this is necessary so as to not endanger his charges.

This lithe and quick worker discreetly aids the shepherd in working the flock through twisting and steep mountain trails, along roadways, and in the center of town streets. He is as suited to working the many indigenous breeds of cattle, goats, pigs, and fowl as he is to working a large flock of sheep. He comes in the perfect size to suit the many jobs of a farm dog and is an extremely easy keeper.

Imposing his authority on the live-



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