The following evening I took her and her sister to the parking lot of a nearby cinema for some obedience practice. You can’t take an OES out in public and not draw a crowd. She reveled in the admiration of her newfound fans and put on an Oscar-winning performance. As I heeded her back to the van she was strutting along, and I could almost hear her say, plain as day, *They love me. They really, really love me.*

Just then she fell off the curb. It’s a good thing she’s cute.—K.L.

Thank you, Kristine.—Marilyn O’Cuilinn, Mineral Wells, Texas; marilyn@skybeammail.com

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**Pembroke Welsh Corgis**

**Guest columnist and breeder-judge Rut Parker has shown his Happiharbor Pembroke Welsh Corgis since 1965.**

**Bits of History**

Most of us try to imbue our dogs with uncanny virtues. The Saint Bernard breed had Barry who, replete with his keg of brandy, saved travelers in mountain passes. The Lhasa Apso guarded monasteries. The Mastiff defended royal lands from poachers. In other words, there was an exalted reason given for the existence of most breeds.

In the case of the Pembroke Welsh Corgi, however, we had a poor little dog bereft of imposing physical qualities, yet compensating with heart, adaptability, and a sense of humor. He originally belonged to very poor farmers who lived on small plots of land in Wales with perhaps one cow and some chickens and ducks. The land usually backed up on to the “green land” of the king. The farmers’ cows were allowed to graze there, and it became the corgis’ job to bring them back for milking. The land was hilly, rocky, and briar covered, ideally suited for, at that time, a rather leggy, small dog.

The Welsh people are a fun-loving lot with a keen sense of humor and a great love of life. They are deeply independent and somewhat irreverent, and their little dogs reflect this. When not fetching the farmer from the pub or the cow from the hill, the corgi would guard the chickens from the fox and end up sleeping in bed with a child. It was also common for the corgi to be under the bench at the pub. There was a clearance of perhaps 15 inches under the pub benches. It has been suggested that the corgi is set low not “to avoid the heels of a kicking cow,” but so that he could comfortably fit under the bench at the pub—and later, bring the farmer home.

Early on, little thought went into breeding of the Pembroke. It has been suspected that some lines got their start when farmers returning from the pub of a Saturday night inadvertently left a gate ajar. And it is a known fact that the Pembrokes were intermingled with the Cardigans from across the Bay.

However, Thelma Gray, of Rozavel Kennels, who was important in the development and standardization of the breed, took a much more organized approach to breeding. Unfortunately, World War II intervened, and early in the war Britain was in desperate condition. The Nazis bombarded London nightly, usually unopposed in the air.

One evening Thelma Gray was sitting with two of her friends as one of her best bitches went into labor—a very unusual event of this time, as breeding was discouraged due to lack of food for dogs or people. Suddenly the air alarm went off, and a warden beat on the door, shouting, “Take shelter!”

Dogs were not allowed in the shelters, but blankets were. Thelma picked up the bitch, holding her in front with the blanket falling around her shoulders, making Thelma look pregnant herself. The three friends and the corgi went into the street and down into the shelter, where they found a remote corner and settled in.

As the explosions began and bits of sand fell about them, the bitch went into labor, and a single dark red male was born and began to cry. One of Thelma’s friends, who had a strong voice, began to sing loudly “God Save the Queen,” drowning out the whimpering of the puppy. The warden passed and gave a salute, and people about smiled and joined in. The puppy settled as his mother licked him under the blanket.

The three ladies passed around a pack of cigarettes as Thelma asked, “What shall we name him?” One of the ladies looked at the pack of cigarettes and said, “How about Lucky Strike?” Ch. Rozavel Lucky Strike became one of the pillars of the Pembroke Welsh Corgi breed. The queen got her first corgi from Rozavel Kennels. Renowned judge William Kendrick maintained that Thelma Gray knew more about dogs than any one alive at the time. When Thelma moved to Australia, the queen had a gold pin made in the image of Lucky Strike by Garrard and Co. in London and presented it to her.

Today, corgis still go to the pub, and they still live in the home of the queen. Their adaptability allows them to deal comfortably with the idiosyncrasies of their human beings. My wife, Nash, still has her Mrs. Gray’s Lucky Strike pin and enjoys wearing it to shows.—R.P.

Thank you, Rut!—Lynda McKee, Hinam, Ga.; TifflynLDM@aol.com

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**Selecting the Right Stud**

Your bitch is finished and has all her health clearances. Do you plan to breed her? If so, how do you select the right mate for her? The answer: by asking the right questions.

First, what are your bitch’s virtues, and where does she fall short? There is no such thing as a “perfect” dog. Recognizing your bitch’s weaknesses can guide you to a male who will complement her. The old-time breeders wisely tell us, “Never breed fault to fault.” You might be willing to take a chance on an otherwise spectacular stud in spite of his having a short upper arm, for example, but you shouldn’t do so if your female also has that same fault.

Maybe you are considering a top-
ranked dog. If so, ask yourself, What does this particular dog have to offer my female? You should never be so dazzled by a dog’s show record that you cannot honestly evaluate the dog behind the title. If you haven’t had your hands on the dog and examined him thoroughly, how can you be sure he will give you what you need in this mating?

By attempting to correct a fault, be careful that you do not introduce another, opposing fault. Some seem to think, for example, that breeding an undersized bitch to a large male will somehow result in offspring of correct size. Genetics does not work that way; rather, the offspring are likely to be a mixture of some large and some small puppies. Better to breed to a dog of correct size and select the puppies in the litter that are also correct.

Is this to be your female’s only litter, or is she one part of a planned breeding program destined to produce several litters? If you plan to have only one litter from her, then you have to get it right the first time. You would probably do best using a proven stud who has several litters on the ground that you can evaluate. Is he producing similar type with various females? What traits does he seem to be passing on consistently? Do the puppies show the features that you would like to improve in your bitch? On the other hand, if you know you will breed her again, you might want to try that young unproven, unfinished male who impressed you at the national.

Going to your national specialty with an open mind can afford you the opportunity to see lots of different dogs. Ask to examine dogs of interest, and find the perfect match for your girl. Don’t ignore young dogs and dogs not yet finished. Even if he never obtains the coveted Ch. in front of his name, if he can give you what you need, he is the right choice for your female.

Once you’ve selected the right dog, there will be more questions. Is he standing to approved bitches? Would your female be acceptable? What is his stud fee, and what guarantees are offered? What are his health clearances? Will it be a natural breeding or artificial insemination? Is this a linebreeding or a total outcross for your bitch? If there are common dogs in the pedigrees, how far back are they? How many times do they appear in each pedigree? The more you ask, the better your chance of getting the desired results.

—Sherry Gibson, Manchester, Tenn.; gibsons@blomand.net

Pyrenean Shepherds

A Coat of Many Colors

Not too long ago, a friend commented that if she didn’t already know that two of my dogs were both Pyrenean Shepherds, she never would have guessed it.

My friend is not the only one to be flummoxed by the breed’s greatly varied appearance. When I took my blue merle smooth-faced pup to an agility trial 10 months ago, many of the competitors assumed he was either an Australian Shepherd with a tail, or a Border Collie. When I mentioned to an acquaintance at the trial that it didn’t seem to occur to people that the youngster was a Pyrenean Shepherd, she replied with great certainty, “Well, that’s probably because he isn’t one.”

Since he came from the same breeder as my gray rough-faced girl, who looks much more like most people’s idea of a Pyrenean Shepherd, I had no doubt at all that he was, in fact, a registered Pyr Shep. However, her comment points up the confusion a newly recognized breed (ours joined the AKC Herding Group in 2009) with a lot of variability can cause.

The two different coat types, rough and smooth, are only the beginning of the Pyrenean Shepherd’s variety. Between the two types, they include many more different looks and textures than a casual observer of the breed might expect. While the smooth-faced variety has a short-haired face and the rough-faced has a scuffier one, either coat type can be of many colors. Coats range from solid black to black with touches of white; gray in many shades, from pale to dark; fawn in shades ranging from tan to copper, with or without black hairs mixed in and/or marking the face; merles of different colors, ranging from a brownish, rusty, or fawn shade to true gray; and brindles.

On top of the acceptable variations in coat color, rough-faced dogs may have “demi-long” to long coats, with hair that is straight or slightly wavy. The longer-coated individuals may have cords on the elbows, croup, and thighs. Even the shorter-coated rough faces may have a tendency to curl on the back half of their bodies. The smooth-faced dogs can have coat up to three inches long on their ruffs and culottes.

Added to the variation in coat type, color, and length is the fact that some Pyr Sheps have docked tails andcropped ears, while others have long or naturally bobbed tail, uncropped ears, or a combination of ear and tail lengths. While all are correct for the breed, it’s understandable that people unfamiliar with the possibilities can be more than a little confused!

Height difference can make breed recognition even more challenging, since the rough-faced variety is generally smaller than the smooth-faces are. The breed standard calls for the rough-faced dogs to stand 15.5 to 18.5 inches tall, with bitches half an inch smaller. Smooth-faced dogs are to be from 15.5 to 21 inches tall, with bitches again a half-inch shorter.

More detailed information, along with many photographs showing some of the variety in the breed, is available on the Pyrenean Shepherd Club of America website, pyrshep.com.

—Kathleen Monje, Pleasant Hill, Ore.; cognitive@epud.net

Shetland Sheepdogs

O ur guest columnist for this issue is Marie Eguro, who trains and shows in conformation, obedience, and herding. Marie has the distinction of having finished two OTCH dogs with multiple 200 scores, the first from Novice A. Her second OTCH dog, a Sheltie, finished all three titles without a single NQ and had almost 400 OTCH points by her third birthday. Marie is training a Sheltie puppy she hopes will be her first breed-by Ch./OTCH. You
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