
LINES FROM LINDA

FAMILY, FRIENDS, COLLIES AND MORE MAKING MEMORIES IN CONNECTICUT

BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR



When my brother Roy Ayers, Jr., learned I would be judging the Hartford-Springfield Collie Specialty in late April, he jumped on a plane escaping the drama of Washington, DC, to spend a “Brother-Sister” weekend with me. We are extremely close and he would enjoy the opportunity to see old friends and a quality entry of Collies! My parents always said Roy teathed on Collie ears. We were excited! Put us together with a bunch of the breed we grew up with and we’re like kids again! It is hard for us to understand today’s world of youngsters who don’t know about Lassie!

The fun and successful Connecticut Specialty Weekend shows were hosted by three Collie Specialty Clubs, Tri County Collie Breeders Association of New York, Collie Club of Connecticut, and Hartford-Springfield Collie Club.

Jackie Caruso, one of our Collie world’s great contributors both as a breeder (Devonwood Collies) and AKC Judge serves as Secretary for two of the clubs, Tri County Collie Breeders Association of New York and the Collie Club of Connecticut. Jackie shared with me the background of how these clubs came together to put on such a fantastic weekend of shows:



TRI COUNTY COLLIE BREEDERS ASSOCIATION
OF SOUTHEASTERN NEW YORK



Left to right: Ann Marie Ely, Sally Futh, Jackie DeCinque, Dianne Burke, Helen Campbell, Mary Lange, and Ginny Cuneo

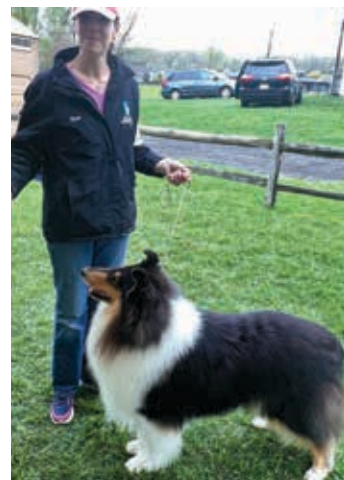
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The future



Mary Lange and Jackie Caruso working hard to set up for the four Collie Specialty weekend.



“In good weather or bad, this is an event held every year at Stony Hill Preserve, Bethel, Connecticut. It was a day filled with beautiful dogs competing for championship points and breed wins, visiting with old friends who come from near and far and watching our experienced judges judge the dogs. We were fortunate this year to have distinguished judges Jeffrey Silverman Presley, Harry ‘Butch’ Schulman, Linda Ayers Turner Knorr and Joy Brewster. The clubs offer ringside mentoring for anyone interested in learning more about Collies and mentoring for judges who aspire to judge Collies.

The decision to come to Stony Hill is the idea of Mary Lange (Gemstone Collies and Great Danes), President of the Hartford-Springfield Collie Club, me representing both Tri County Collie Breeders Association of New York and the Collie Club of Connecticut.

Previous to the shows held at Stony Hill Preserve, two of the clubs, Collie Club of Connecticut and Hartford-Springfield Collie Club, held their shows at hotels in several different locations in Connecticut in February. Tri County held two shows in one day at the beautiful Sunnyfield Farm in Bedford, New York.

Times change, hotel prices were becoming cost prohibitive, weather in February can be unpredictable with several years of major snowstorms, entries were declining, club workers were decreasing... all of these led to a decision to change the venue of the show for the two Connecticut clubs. For Tri County, which was held at a horse farm, there was a very rainy April and the fields were sodden and no animals or cars could go onto the property. The three clubs had to adapt to all

of the changes. I had attended some Farmers Markets at Stony Hill and thought “this would be a great place for a dog show.” I saw a sign that said it was available for event rentals and found out that there were many agricultural and animal related events held there.

In 2015, it was decided to hold the one show in February and experiment with a second show at Stony Hill outside in October. The three clubs banded together for the October event at Stony Hill. The October show was a huge success. Collies look their best and show their best outside. Their effortless movement is really highlighted as they gait through the grassy fields. Their colors are accentuated in the sun against the green grass.

The Mission of Stony Hill Preserve is the preservation of open space and buildings for community use and education. They welcome our dog shows and other animal-related events. It is a beautiful, spacious property with level fields perfect for dog shows. There is also a pavilion that people can use in case of inclement weather and a building that can also be utilized for cooking for an event or to hold seminars or gatherings.

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Jackie and Ron Caruso



Left to right: Jackie Caruso, Sally and Bob Futh, Linda Ayers Turner Knorr, and Roy Ayers Jr.



In these days of declining memberships at specialty clubs, it was essential that the three clubs work together to put on the event and they all work beautifully together. Everyone has their jobs to do. We get outside help for stewarding and our show secretary. This year we had help from a local 4-H group leadership program, Dogs Rule of Fairfield County led by Allison Rogers. They helped unload cars and set up tables and helped display the ribbons and trophies and they also brought homemade dog treats and toys for sale to the spectators and exhibitors.

Hartford-Springfield Collie Club had tables set up with all kinds of books and Collie memorabilia for sale with all proceeds going to dog related charities. Mary Lange prepares delicious lunches for the judges and exhibitors.

The show has a festival atmosphere with everyone enjoying the dogs, the food, and all the extras along with watching judging and learning. The Connecticut Specialty weekend has become a 'must attend' event. It is a great example of how clubs adapted to changing times to make the independent specialty shows work."



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It is impossible to name individually all of those people responsible for this “always remember” weekend, but I do want to shout many thanks to the officers of each club: Tri County Collie Breeders Association of New York, President Terrie Jositas, Vice President Mary Valentine, Treasurer Ron Caruso, Secretary Jackie Caruso, Show Chairman Carol Schaper... Collie Club of Connecticut, President Robert Futh, 1st Vice President Judy Hayward, Treasurer Ron Caruso, Secretary Jackie Caruso, Show Chairman Mary Santarcangelo... Hartford-Springfield Collie Club, President and Show Chairman Mary Lange, Vice President Allison Harvey, Treasurer Ann-Marie Ely, Secretary Helen Campbell.

Two and a half days of perfect weather was a true blessing for an outdoor spring show. It was a good thing I came prepared as my half day of judging was the one time it rained. One of the highlights of the weekend was working with my Ring Steward Darci Brown. Setting aside all proper ring procedure, we worked together to keep the dogs dry under the tent while I stepped out into the rain. None of that dampened the spirits of the exhibitors as Darcy and I created rainbows in colors of purple and gold!!! ■