

BRIARD BRIEFS

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*Sketches
Female*

THE FAR HILLS SHOW: Even the most optimistic booster could not bring himself to say that the Far Hills show was a success. In spite of a great deal of work and the excellent help we had from the Somerset Hills K.C., we managed to get the wonderful total of four dogs and three owners. The results were as follows:

Judge: Mr. I. J. Smith

Best of Breed: Chef D'Oeuvre of Begun House, Westlawn
Best Opposite Sex: Calypso Pepsi, Kent
Best of Winners: Dom Perigon of Stilt, Davis
Winners Dog: Dom Perigon
Winners Bitch: Pepsi
Open Dog: Dom Perigon
Open Bitch: Pepsi

That the results were disappointing is obvious. That what follows can be connected to the results is also obvious. For some time it has been evident that The Fellowship has accomplished much of the objectives that caused it to be organized many years ago. Briards have been promoted. Ethical rules of conduct have been established. Let us take one example -- in pre-Fellowship days the use of professional handlers was common. We have seen no professionals handling Briards for many years.

When we were organized about 14 years ago it was common for shows to insist that exhibitors remain for many hours after they were judged. The Fellowship carried on a bitter fight against this practice and it appears that the battle resulted in at least a partial victory. Show after show now allows exhibitors to arrive at any time before the scheduled judging time and to leave immediately after judging. In other words, we are no longer considered in the same light as the two-headed calf or the sword swallower; forced to remain on exhibit for the benefit of the crowds.

We bitterly opposed such shows as Westminster where exhibitors and their dogs were forced to remain for two days and two evenings, although the actual time we were in the ring amounted to less than half an hour. Admittedly there are still a few such shows but Briard owners do not support them with entry fees.

The brutal practice of clipping Briard ears was not uncommon when The Fellowship was founded. We put in a rule that such mutilated

Clipped ears

Briards could not be shown unless the senseless operation had been done before the rule went into effect or before the owner had purchased the dog. Today, a clipped-eared Briard is as rare as the dodobird.

The various pros and cons have been discussed for months by your officers. On the one side our accomplishments and on the other the unquestioned fact that, in spite of our best efforts, Briards are not being shown nor bred in satisfactory numbers. An organization can legislate against abuses such as professional handlers and ear clipping and make the rules stick, but it cannot force members to show or to breed.

Balancing the accomplishments that have been attained against the rather dubious chance that much more can be gained in the face of the constantly decreasing entry lists, the Board of Governors decided to disband as of October 1st, 1959. This, then, is the final issue of Briard Briefs.

After all outstanding bills have been paid, the remainder on hand will be donated to the Cornell Dog Clinic, a most worthy outfit that is engaged in dog research.

Such trophies as are on hand will be divided among some of our members in the West and Far West for use at shows they attend. These good friends of Briards have been trying to carry on breed activity at such a distance that they have never been able to participate in our specialty shows here in the East. It seems only fair that we should furnish them with some trophies so that, for some time they can compete and, at least, get a memento of their activity.

There will be some details to attend to before the official disbanding of our organization. As soon as these can be settled, the trophies remaining in stock will be distributed and the cash remaining -- something over \$100.00 -- will be forwarded to Cornell. Our records will then be destroyed.

This, then, is the swan song of the organization. For years we have carried the breed. The end would have been reached years ago had it not been for The Fellowship.

Regretfully,

Gerald T. White,
Secretary-Treasurer