

An Interview with Faye Strauss

by James Perry Taylor



A Typical Sherlock puppy with Faye, 1977

1~When, and how did you become involved in Doberman Pinschers?

My husband, Gary, had a Doberman named Dean. I met him the summer we lived in NY. Dean was amazing and I knew this was the breed for me. He was so smart, affectionate, and funny. When we moved to Eugene, Oregon, we did some research and purchased our first Dobe, Parks.

2~ How did you come up with the Kennel Name Sherlock? And how many Champions have you bred?

Gary had won a nice payout on a long shot horse named Sherlock at the Belmont race track. As my maiden name was Sher, the name sounded like a winner to me.

Sherlock has produced over 100 champions since 1977. We have been lucky to find great owners for our dogs. They are the major reason for our success and many have become good friends.

3~ Faye, you have always been “THE FACE” of Sherlock, however those of us who know you are quite aware that your husband Gary is a “BLOODY GENIUS”, what has been his role all these years in your success ?

Gary has always been my partner. He is a graduate engineer and worked in the Pulp and Paper industry 33 years. He is brilliant, loves the dogs and studies them. He has a good eye for a dog and helps grade our litters. Usually we agree on the picks, but occasionally we have to keep two because we have different favorites. He loves to go to the shows and is very analytical about what the judge is looking for. Of course, sometimes it is hard to tell what they are looking for. Since he retired he takes the dogs on their daily free run in our woods. He is a big part of our success. I am trying to get him to become a judge. He is a natural.



Ch Sherlock's Good as Gold winning Under Jane Forsyth (Gary, kneeling in front)

4~ Thru your many travels, I know you have had the great fortune of meeting many great dog people. Which individual was your greatest influence?



Ch. Sherlock's Ann Klein with Moe Miyagawa

Marj Brooks was my mentor. When I began showing dogs I worked for her and she taught me a lot about handling, the breed and the importance of the standard. Jim Bennett taught handling classes in the Seattle area and his teachings were invaluable. I bred to the Bivin's dog early on and their support and knowledge was amazing. Mary Rogers and Moe Miyagawa were very giving of their wisdom. I have been blessed to have many great mentors.

5~ What do you look for when evaluating a young Doberman? In your opinion what will change with time and what will not?

I start watching my puppies at six weeks of age. I see who moves well and how they carry themselves. Then I stack them to see what they feel like. Gary and I have a puppy show weekly until they are 12 weeks old and then the puppies go to their homes. My philosophy is what you see is what you get. So if something doesn't look right in a puppy, it could turn out to be a problem later. If a puppy has the same problem every week it is usually going to be a problem later. A puppy can have a bad day so weekly shows give a better picture of what we have.

Some things can get better with age. If one of my puppies is high in the rear there is a good chance



Ch. Sherluck's Good Golly Miss Molly with handler
Adrian Woodfork and judge
Bill Shelton 1988

they will grow out of it. If they toe out a wee bit, it probably will straighten out. Sometimes a puppy will roach on the table, but if they look good on the ground it probably won't be a problem later.

6~ What was your most memorable win? I know there have been many, but which one still makes your heart pump faster when you remember it?

It is like your first love, you never forget. The first points I ever won were on my female, Ch Moraga Hill's High Fashion She was just over a year and her handler, Marj Brooks, wanted to give her time to grow up. So I decided to enter her at the Sacramento Doberman Specialty as I was helping Marj at the show anyway. Fashion was entered in American Bred as they didn't have a 12-18 class then. Nancy Hogans-Heitzman was judging and we won the class. It was a huge show of over 200 Dobs. In winners she made us free bait in the middle of the ring and in the end Fashion won the five

point major. I was flying when we went into the breed. There were 15 specials, many top dogs. When she awarded us the Best Of Breed I was stunned and elated. Fashion went on to win lots of specialties and groups but that win was the first, for both of us.

I will never forget when I was starting my dog, Ch. Sherluck's L. B. Jake. I was about to hire Moe Miyagawa, but we were entered in large Colorado shows first. There was a specialty and a few all breeds, all with large entries. The first day Jake won the specialty. The following day we won the breed. Mr. Donald Booxbaum was judging the group. He pulled out a lot of dogs. Then he rearranged the dogs and rearranged them again. This was before the working and herding groups were split and there were a large number of competitive dogs. In the end Jake was the winner. From there we drove to LA and won the LA Doberman specialty and followed that with a Group One the following day at Pasadena Kennel Club under Mr. Richard Renihan. What great memories.

7~ Ch . Moraga Hill's High Fashion WAC who herself was a BIS winner produced almost 20 Champions and is one of the breed's most influential Dams- what was so special about her?

Fashion was special. She was the ideal size, 25.5", square, balanced, muscular and powerful. She looked bigger than her inches because of her heavy bone. She had a strong topline, was smooth as glass and hard as a rock. Fashion looked poured into her skin and her movement was efficient, free, balanced and vigorous. She didn't put a foot wrong and was a joy to show. She did lots of winning.

In the whelping box she was just as stellar. She produced 19 champions, at one time the record for the breed and one UD. Her kids included the top Doberman, Ch Sherluck's Drum Fire (producer of over 70 champions) and his BIS winning sister Ch Sherluck's Casalaria (producer of 11 champions) and top 5 Dobs Ch. Sherluck's Castle Rock (producer of over 30 champions) and Ch Sherluck's Barney Miller. From her kids came other top winners like, Ch. Sherluck's Prairie Breaker, Ch. Sherluck's Good as Gold, Ch Sherluck's True Grit, Ch Chehalem's Traveling Man and Ch. Sherluck's Primrose Lane.

She was a wonderful companion. She loved to ride in the car, go for free runs



Ch Moraga Hill's High Fashion with Faye Strauss
Sacramento DPC 1977



Ch. Sherluck's Drum Fire with Bob Hastings

in the woods, swim in the lake, and retrieve rocks, balls and sticks. She loved to sleep in our bed and train the next generation of Dobermans. She was a great guard dog, but she was always trustworthy. We are blessed to have her progeny in our home today.

8~ Other than a Sherluck dog of course, who were the three best Dobermans you have ever seen?

That is a tough one. There have been so many great Dobermans over the years it is hard to pick just three. Indy, Ch Royal Tudor's Wild as the Wind, would have to be on my list. She was very charismatic and epitomized the breed. Ch Marienburg's Sun Hawk was a great one. In an age when most dogs didn't have fore chest he did. Ch Electra's the Windwalker was another great one and a great producer.

9~ In recent years the U.S. has experienced a HUGE influence from dogs from South America, why is that?

In viewing the pedigrees many of the South American dogs come from American stock. South American Dobermans have the bone and substance we are losing in the US. They excel in full fronts with forechests well defined and strong temperaments. Unfortunately, there are many that are over-angulated that are impacting the breed's square appearance Also, South America has some great handlers.

10~ In the past you have campaigned dogs for other people but you primarily showed your own dogs. How did a Breeder-Owner-Handler not only survive, but thrive in one of the most Handler dominated of Breeds? And what advice would you give an owner that wants to show their own dog?

To be a successful owner handler you need a good dog. Read your standard to see where your dog excels and make an honest assessment of your charge. Get your dog in optimum condition through exercise and diet and become a team with your dog. Your dog needs to be well trained and you need to dress for success. Watch the pros. Copy their good moves. Attend handling classes to hone in your skills.

As an owner handler, I gained an advantage by being able to achieve a great act with my dogs. From working for Marj Brooks and attending Jim Bennett's handling classes, I learned the tools to compete at a higher level. Timing is everything in handling and that is what many professional handlers have over owner handlers. But if you work at it, you can have both timing and a great act with your dog. Of course you also need the raw material, a superior specimen. There is no greater thrill than walking into the ring and getting the perfect act out of your dog and having a judge recognize it with a win. That is what you trained for and it is always exciting when a judge recognizes that effort with the big win. All my early wins were under total strangers who liked my dogs as much as I did. What could be better!

11~ I would never put you on the spot and ask you about any current Judges, but what three Judges that are no longer with us did you respect the most and why ?

Robert Waters, Richard Renihan and Nelson Radcliffe because they loved my dog Ch. Sherluck's L.B. Jake and so did I. They awarded us big wins when I was an unknown. They weren't afraid to recognize a novice with good dog and Jake went on to be one of the best dogs of his day. Irene Bivin and Betty Moore were great ladies



Ch Sherluck's Casalaria 1986



Ch. Sherluck's L B Jake 1981



Ch. Sherluck's Prairie Breaker with Lana Sniderman 1987



Am Can Ch. Simca's Dream Academy

who knew Dobermans and always looked and acted professionally and encouraged the novice. Then there was Peggy Adamson, Doberman breeder judge icon, who often awarded our dogs with wins that were always thrilling. She brought an excitement to the Doberman Pinscher Club of America and worked tirelessly to promote the breed.

12~ You are one of the few modern day Judges to have judged both the Breed at The National Specialty and Westminster. What would you like to see Judges pay more attention to when Judging Dobermans?

The breed is all about temperament. I hope no Doberman judge ever rewards a dog with poor temperament, no matter how lovely they look. The Dobe should be steady and ready, "of proud carriage, reflecting great nobility and temperament"

We need to remember that this is a medium size dog that is square. A Dobe should have a broad chest and heavy bone. Elegance in a Doberman is not a long neck. Elegance is the smooth dog with a well arched neck widening into correctly placed shoulders The strong



BOB 2004 DPCA national Faye Judging Ch Deco's Half N Half v Legend

straight topline flows to the well muscled croup and the tail that is just slightly off the horizontal (not perpendicular to the ground). He is so smooth he looks poured into his skin. He is muscular and powerful and appears bigger than his inches because of his "heavy bone" (to quote the standard). He owns the ground on which he stands.

13~As a founding member and current president of the Mt. Rainier Working Dog Club. How did this new club come about?

Elaine Young thought our area had such great working group people that we should start a club. So she called people and asked them to meet on November 8, 2003 at the Judge's Education Association of Washington institute to entertain the idea of beginning of a working group club. Who can refuse Elaine, and over 35 people attended the meeting and signed up. Ann Quigley was elected our first president. At our matches Chris Lyden would bring the salmon and Mike Emerson the brats and hamburgers and the merriment would begin. We are now over 75 strong. Last year was our inaugural point show and every member contributed. We are having fun, enjoying each others company, promoting the local working group clubs, and working breeds. Now we are getting ready for a Friday, Saturday show on August 21 and 22 in conjunction with Sammamish Kennel Club. (Please attend and you, James, will be our Best In Show trophy presenter). Also attending may be a representative of the Chinese Working Dog club.



Faye pictured awarding the 2008 #1 Dog Of All Breeds "SPIRIT" a BIS.

14~ 75 years from now, what would you like for people to remember about Faye Strauss?

Dahhhh. That I loved the sport and was a positive influence

in helping it thrive. That I had good dogs and was a good judge and mentor.

15~ The final question is the one I end all my interviews with, if you had it do all over again, what do you think you would do different?

Lots. But how can I complain.



The First Best in Show Mount Rainier Working Dog Club 2008