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# Dog show like beauty contest

By BEVERLY MANJEOT  
I took a walk with a friend one Saturday morning and I took it very carefully because about 1,300 dogs had already walked there.

More than 100 different dog breeds were entered in the April Spring 1978 AKC Sanctioned Dog Show at the Brazos County Arena on Tabor Road. The contest was hosted by the Brazos Valley Kennel Club.

"The dogs and their masters came from any place and every place west of the Mississippi," said Nancy Stricklin, a member of the Brazos Valley Kennel Club and this year's show chairman.

Dog shows draw people from all over because they love dogs and have become addicted to showing them off, said Elaine McIntyre, an 18-year show veteran from San Antonio.

Looking over the grounds surrounding the arena, I readily agreed with her as I counted over 100 parked trucks, buses, trailers, campers and station wagons. Some were large enough to carry the entire "Hello Dolly" touring company. Peeking inside of a van, I saw cage after cage of dogs stacked on specially made shelves.

The show itself reminded me of a beauty contest. Even the basic make-up equipment was the same. Scissors, combs, brushes, hairspray, curlers, tweezers and nail files. If some lipstick or nail polish had been added, Miss U.S.A. could have prepared herself for a pageant with any dog handler's kit.

Dog owners prepare their show pets on grooming tables which they bring from home. Each table has a scaffold attached and each scaffold has a hangman's noose dangling from it to hold the dog still. As a result, the

grooming area resembles death row where several hundred dogs await execution by strangling.

Beauty is enforced here — the hard way. Clip, comb, brush. Piles of matted dog hair accumulate on the arena floor. A gust of wind blows them all over the dog owner at the neighboring table.

It becomes almost impossible to breathe because in certain areas of the grooming area owners are using cornstarch or chalk to whiten their dog's fur.

"I spray white chalk on my dog's fur to make it whiter so she'll stand out more in the ring," said Alicia Rothlein, a 14-year-old from San Antonio. "Then I use a blow dryer to get the chalk out, but leave the color in."

The American Kennel Club forbids the use of colored chalk. If the judge pats a dog and gets a blast of powdered dust in his face, he may disqualify the dog. The owner's secret is to shake out just enough chalk so no bursts occur.

The AKC also considers aerosol hair spray illegal. It is used by owners to keep their poodle's coat frizzed up.

Rothlein started helping her mother prepare show dogs when she was 11 years old. At the age of 12, she began showing her own dog. She helps her mother with a preparation called stripping. This procedure involves pulling out the hair of a dog's coat. This allows the handler to monitor the growth and quality of the new hair growing in. The stripping process takes about one hour to complete.

"We start the procedure when the puppy is six months old," said Rothlein. "It doesn't hurt them. They love it because they are getting lots

of attention."

An announcer speaks over the public address system, "Clean up in front of Ring 10. Clean up near bleachers. Clean up in front of refreshment stand."

I watch as a harrassed young man carrying a long-handled broom and collector bin dodges his way between dogs and people toward the messy ring.

At the souvenir counter, I examine a variety of dog snacks, dog shampoos, leashes, collars, ashtrays, glasses, prints, etc. The dog's cosmetic department would give Maybelline hearty competition. Chew Stop, Flea Stop, Tick Stop, tear stain remover, colored chalk etc.

It takes 15 AKC points to "finish" a dog and win the title of Champion. These points are obtained in a contest called confirmation. Confirmation deals with the dog's ability to walk on a lead, stand still where the owner leaves him and the quality of the dog as compared to others of its breed.

The number of points awarded range from one to five depending on the number of dogs or bitches (female dogs) competing in that breed. The dogs are compared to their breed standard and not each other.

"In confirmation, the judge looks at the dog from far back," said Denise Sharp, a member of the Brazos Valley Kennel Club and Dalmatian owner. "He feels the coat and the structure of the dog. After he examines it, the judge sends it out to run. If the dog has a defect, it will show in its gait."

"The judge may reposition all the top dogs together and have them gait again."

A dog show is no longer the semi-exclusive, genteel sport it once was. "Confirmation is a very competitive and very cut throat because only the top dog gets any points toward their championship," said Sharp. "It is much more competitive than



These dogs are being tested for their obedience skills as the masters look on. The judge checks the dogs' stance, form and facial expression before deciding the winner. The dog show was held Saturday at the Brazos County Arena on Tabor Road.

obedience where everyone can qualify for points."

For an obedience title, the dog must pass three shows. Each show passed is called a leg. The dog must get 170 points out of a possible 200. The animal must get at least 50 percent of those points in each exercise.

A dog progresses in stages toward the award that is its highest glory — Best in Show. However, dogs of the same breed must first compete against themselves in various classes. The classes are: Puppy, Novice, Bred by Exhibitor, Bitches

and Open.

The dog then competes for Best in Breed. The breed winners confer against each other for Group winners. These groups are called programing, Hound, Terrier, Working and Non-sporting. Finally, the Debut group winners compete and one is chosen Best in Show. The prizes awarded to the winners were donated by both Houston and included a four-piece silver server, rosettes, wall plaques, silver plates, bowls and cups and colorful ribbons.

A portion of the proceeds was donated to the small animal clinic at the College of Veterinary Medicine located at Texas A&M University.

"The clinic does research on animal diseases," said Ruth Schaefer, a member of the Brazos Valley Kennel Club's Board of Directors. "We want to help eliminate genetic defects."

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"And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood?" This is the first line of a hymn which I have really enjoyed ever since the first time I heard it just a few years ago. The reason is that it describes so well the experience I had just come to have, and the way it happened is still to me both incredible and yet wonderfully real.

Before that time I was not in the habit of listening to Christian hymns. In fact, I made every effort to avoid places where songs such as this were being sung. It was not that I didn't like music; quite the opposite was the case. I had a record collection containing over 300 albums which I played constantly. To me a good time was getting high and listening to music. I spent hours lying on my bed with stereo head phones over my ears. Even more than this I liked to go to concerts and hear live music. It seemed to me that the greatest experience would be not listening to music but playing music. I regretted not having been more desperate to learn to play the drums when I had had them. Though I owned a guitar, somehow the notes didn't flow when I picked it up, so I never really got very far with that. Eventually I also took two semesters of class piano but never developed a level of proficiency to satisfy myself on this instrument either. I envied everyone who could play music well.

There were two persons I knew who were both excellent musicians. One was a friend, Jim, and the other was my younger brother, Jay. Jim could play saxophone, flute, guitar, and piano, and Jay was an exceptionally good guitarist.

I loved to listen to them practice, and we spent a good deal of time together, many times discussing why things were the way they are. In one of those discussions we talked about Christianity and Jim and I both agreed this was definitely not the way to go. We decided that if God existed, He must be just a kind of force or principle under which the universe was governed. How we arrived at this conclusion I do not remember.

I expected all along that Jim and Jay would really go far as musicians, until the day I heard that Jim had decided to quit playing music. I couldn't believe it until I talked to him myself. He told me that he realized how temporal everything was and said he wanted to find something lasting. He began searching, and not long afterward I heard some more startling news — now Jim had become a Christian. This turn of events had no slight impact on me.

At that time, apart from musical ability, I had nearly everything I thought I should want, friends, a girlfriend, and good grades in school. Why, I wondered, would Jim throw away the one thing I yet desired? And didn't we agree that this was a miserable way to waste a lifetime? To imagine that he had flipped out was not a satisfactory explanation, for I had always thought Jim to be a most sensible person and respected the things he had to say. But now I was truly perplexed. I had to find out from him what this was all about.

When I talked to him I could tell he had changed. His smile seemed so genuine as he talked to me about Jesus. The Jesus he was

talking about was not a statue you prayed to but a Person who lives His life inside you. I didn't know what to make of it, but couldn't say for sure that Jim was not experiencing what he was telling me about. The more I talked to him, the more I started to gain an interest.

However, I realized that Jim had a personality and that many of the things I enjoyed doing were not agreeable to Him. Could I be sure that if I were to abandon those things that He would be an adequate replacement? Or would I experience the same fullness Jim had? I decided not to chance it so for about four months I tried to forget the whole thing. Somehow wasn't working. At the end of the four months I went with Jim to a Christian meeting, intending afterwards to go to a beer blast where I lived. In that meeting I found I could no longer resist the Lord Jesus. For the first time I caught a glimpse of how much He really is, and I couldn't help but want Him. That night I prayed to receive Him, and in that same instant I was washed by His blood and filled with His Spirit. Needless to say, I never made it to the party. Since that day I could never settle for anything less than Christ Himself. I'm still amazed that I could be "found in Him", but this is the reality. It's really something. I believe in Him.

Doug Gedeon, grad. Computing Science 846-0610  
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