

ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE FAIR CITY OF MIAMI.....

It was in September, 1960, that a group of Sheltie lovers first got together in Miami to talk about forming a club. As most of you know, it was all Archie Appel's idea..... none of the rest of us would have had the nerve to try to start an association. Archie was a breeder and exhibitor, in both conformation and obedience, and she had been a licensed judge of Collies and Shelties. At that time she and Doc had two shelties, a bitch who died not long thereafter, and Archie's present veteran, Dandee.

A letter went out to all known Sheltie owners in the area....It must have been 50 or 60....and, of that number, 20 or more, along with their Shelties, showed up at that September, 1960, meeting, to talk about the possibility of forming a club. Archie had recruited three other families to sign that letter with her and Doc. The Murphies were one; although they had graduated to their second Sheltie and first show prospect back in 1956, they were just then awaiting the arrival of their second litter from this bitch; they also had a male who had just finished a completely undistinguished summer circuit with a handler, and a young bitch with a good head for whom they had hopes....recognizable to present day club members as "Freckles." The Sandersons were signers; they had one bitch they had gotten from Archie, and if they had not yet bred her (please forgive my faulty memory, Lorraine), they were about to. The other signers were the Gibsons, who raised occasional litters from their one bitch; however, they favored a strictly social club, and after the vote at the second meeting to organize along the lines of a specialty club, dropped out.

We were fortunate that Dorothy Reber (now our loss and Texas' gain) saw the notice of the meeting in the paper and joined us with her three bitches. Dorothy knew her way around the show ring in both conformation and obedience (with C.D.'s on all three), and had raised several line-bred litters.

Now, as you can see, we had Archie and Dorothy, who had some experience. The Murphies had visited some midwestern kennels with Marge's dad, whose hobby was Shelties, of course. (He had gotten them started....with one for part of the wedding present, no less....No, it's not true that Johnny married Marge to get one of Mr. Brown's Shelties....I don't think....hmmmmmm.) But, except for one or two people who thought they might like to start breeding Shelties, everyone else who started this club was a pet owner....a true Sheltie lover. And this is what they said when asked why they wanted to be involved in starting a specialty club, "I, personally, have no interest in showing Shelties, or much less in breeding them. But I love my Sheltie, and that's the only breed of dog I'll ever have. Let's improve the Shelties in South Florida. By upholding the Shetland Sheepdog Standard, we can guarantee those wonderful qualities we admire in our dogs will be there in the dogs we bring to the attention of the public in the future." So, that's why through the years this club has concentrated so heavily on those educational meetings every two months; that's the reason that your old time club members are so concerned that there be a fair number of general interest programs interspersed with our programs on show grooming and handling, obedience training, and matches.

Now it's the sixth anniversary of the Shetland Sheepdog Club of Greater Miami. Some of those original pet owners have fallen by the wayside; a few of them have developed into

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what all those books and articles call a true "Sheltie fancier," and some of them feel today the same way they did in September, 1960. Today our club has a higher percentage of breeders and exhibitors...which it HAS to have if it is to function as a specialty club. But on this anniversary, for those of you who have recently joined us along this long, long way, I hope you realize that we have come most of this way through the efforts of the pet owners to help the breeders, and that the pet owner "percentage" we list for this club are a very special breed, themselves!

The above appeared in the July/August of the SHELTYE TALES, 1966. Written by Marge Murphy.