

THE LOST COLOR

by

Marilyn Stockwell

(Fayr Isle and Snow Isle)

There he stands, the most beautiful Sheltie I've ever seen! My eyes follow the lovely outline that so easily displays the elegant length of neck, the level topline and gentle slope to the croup. He turns his head and for the briefest moment I see the true expression that makes a Sheltie a Sheltie. He looks away again, attention riveted on the human before him.

I allow my eyes to drop to the exceptional bend of stifle and the front legs that are set well under him, giving notice to the lovely shoulder layback and the longer upper arm. Surely this is a dog who could work all day! I see, too, that the dog's length-to-height proportion is correct, and I seriously wonder if this dog has a fault.

Across the ring an older gentleman in a tweed suit is going from dog to dog. It is a large class, and he moves slowly over each dog. A true rainbow of colors: there are sables, tris, blues and bi-colors. My eyes drift from one exhibit to another. They are all fairly nice dogs. It is the Bred-By-Exhibitor Class, and all the handlers are a bit anxious to see their dog win that blue! I notice that the three sable dogs are pretty, but all three have an outline that displays a much too short neck—a common problem in this day and age! One sable (the shaded one) is very straight in the rear and shoulder as well—he won't have much reach or drive. He wouldn't be able to work long, and his straight pasterns would add to the wear and tear on the rest of his body. Still...he is a pretty picture.

The two tris are quite nice even if a tad long in the body, and the blue merle boy is that gorgeous shade of light silvery blue with so much flash! The huge white ruff, the nearly half length of white on the tail tip and the white belly hair sets him off as hard to miss. Even that white body splash on his rump blends well into the soft silver background. His head is very attractive as well. If anything, I would want to see more neck and a bit more leg under him. This makes him appear a bit too long.

I drift back to the dog before me. He is truly the best dog in this class! Having made his preliminary once-over, the judge signals the class to move out. Oh my! Here is where we separate function and form from pretty-as-a-picture. Only two dogs in the class move out with excellent movement—the rest are average or less than average, as in the case of the dark sable

boy. I watch as the dogs make a second round. The longer tri male has more reach than the others, but his topline dips a tad as he moves. Then I focus on my choice. There he goes

exhibiting beautiful extension and drive. He moves easily around the ring, slightly ahead of his handler, and it's easy to see that level topline. As I said, and as I whisper to myself, "He is truly the best dog in the class!"

On the table the dogs are gone over one after the other and then they're each moved down and back. The beautiful boy is sixth in line. He stands his ground proudly as the judge approaches. He seems to be a kindly man and he gives the little Sheltie a soft rub on the ear as he goes over the exquisite head. Moving down and back, the little guy never

misses a beat. He stops and gives his ears to the judge. I can see that he is well thought of by this man in the tweeds.

Once more around and the dogs all stop, each one focused on his handler. The judge points to the dark sable and calls out, "One!" To the blue boy, the judge says, "Two," to the longer tri, "Three" and fourth place is given to another sable. The ring empties and I watch as the beautiful boy follows his handler out of the ring. No one seems to even notice the beautiful color-headed white boy as they stand at ringside—all the fussing is over the dark sable boy who just won the class. I hear someone say he already has a major and six singles.

Later that day the sable boy goes Winners Dog for his second major. Soon he will be a champion and will be added to the ranks of stud dogs. As I turn to leave the ringside I notice the color-headed white boy and his owner. My heart is heavy. The best dog did not win that day! In fact...he will never win. Even though at one time this color was an accepted color, the Breed Club has decided that his color can no longer be acceptable! Never mind the great color-headed whites who have made the Breed what it is today, never mind Astolat Lady Harlequin.



UCI-Int'l Snow Isle Below Zero ("Zero") is pictured as a puppy.



Snow Isle Let It Snow ("Snow") is owned by Angel Maria and was bred by Marilyn Stockwell.

Without her we would never have had her grandson, Ch Timberidge Temptation, ROM, and his brother, Ch Prince George O' Page's Hill, ROM. Without "Temptation," who produced 32 champions, and Prince George O' Page's Hill, ROM, who was the sire of the notable Am/Can Ch Nashcrest Golden Note, ROM, there would have been no Ch Lingard Sealect Bruce, ROM, ROMC, no Ch Stylish Miss O' Hatfield, ROM and no Ch Sea Isle Serenade, ROM, ROMC. And without "Serenade," we would not have had Ch Halstor's Peter Pumpkin, ROM, ROMC, "Serenade's" grandson!



"Tux" at 14 months.

If we look even further we will also find that "Lady Harlequin" plays heavily in the beginning of the AOACs as well as the sables. The great Ch Philidove Heir Presumptive, ROM himself goes back on both his sire's and dam's side several times to "Lady Harlequin," and we can rightly say that without "Heir Presumptive," there wouldn't have been an Am/Can Ch Banchory High Born or "High Born's" great son, "Reflection"—both of whom were ROMs and ROMCs!



Winterset This Side Of Winter is owned by Marilyn Stockwell.

What a loss it is to our breed to not have a venue in which to judge the qualities of the color-headed whites now being used in so many breeding programs. When one researches his pedigrees and finds one or more color-headed whites who were used, how will he know the merit of these dogs unless by word of mouth (which is always questionable, at best)? If these dogs are not given the opportunity to go down in record as champions of the Breed when the merit is earned, how will we honestly be able to judge the true quality of a pedigree?

We have now eliminated the little color-headed white Sheltie of the Islands—once referred to in 1908 by Rev. Oddy



Snow Isle's Haunting Beauty ("Beau") was bred by Marilyn Stockwell

while

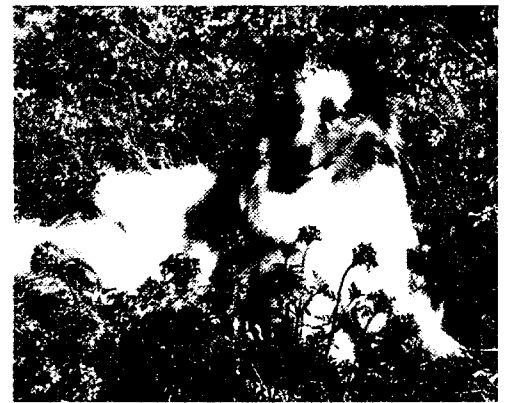
describing the Breed and its colors, as: "White and sable markings, sable and sable and white, tri color, black and tan and the sable marl" and described by Margaret Coleman Moore who spoke of her favorite Shelties as the "white ones with the gold markings"—from recognition within our *Standard*.

I have yet to ever receive a direct sensible answer to this terrible oversight. One claims, "The sheep won't respect a white dog," and another person states, "Judges wouldn't be able to tell color-headed whites from double dilutes." Still another person says, "The color wasn't original to the Breed," and the newest excuse I've been given by a board member: "There has never been a color-headed white champion even when they were allowed!" I've also heard the added comment that dogs with heavier markings are not "true color-headed whites!" Yet, nowhere can I find any color standard on the color-headed whites that would support this claim!



Snow Isle Song O' The North.

One can find, however, the AKC *Standard* which lists more than 50 percent white to be eliminated from competition, but nowhere do we see mention of the color-headed white by name or by description!



Fair Isle Color Me White ("Jacob") who is the sire of "Zero" and "Snow."

All we can do as a people who are governed by fair play is to work for the *Standard* to change—which would permit the very equal founders of the Breed to once again compete in all fairness for their rightful place of honor—not only in our Sheltie breeding programs, but in ring competition as well.

Let us not forget the color-headed white Shelties who made our breed what it is today. Remember beautiful Ch PrinHill Jazzbo's own dam was a color-headed white! Those of you who love this color, let it be known! □

Back in the early sixties Marilyn Stockwell fell in love with a brilliant red Sheltie known as Ch Elf Dale Viking. That was her introduction into the world of the Sheltand Sheepdog. Currently living in the Ozark Mountains, Marilyn breeds her Shelties under two prefixes: Fayr Isle and, for her Color-Headed Whites, Snow Isle. She has always felt that the Sheltie fanciers have lost recognition of an important part of our Breed history by not recognizing the beautiful Color-Headed White Shetland Sheepdog

in 1908 by Rev. Oddy ~~white~~ stockwell-pictured as a pup.