

Lost in Translation

by Tim Creavin

I went to my first German Shepherd Specialty last month. What an experience. I am still walking around Boston telling perfect strangers with their dogs, "Hey, that's a nice looking bitch!" Their scowls tell me they have never been to a dog show.

My experience began when I arrived at the show, near Quakertown, PA (for the record, I didn't see one Quaker). I wasn't there long before I was asked to assist as a steward. At first I thought I was chosen because of my obvious leadership qualities. I soon found out that the only requirements are 1 - you didn't have a dog in the show; 2 - you weren't too bright; and 3 - you had a pulse. Me! Me! Me! I was perfect for the job. Okay, maybe not perfect. In hindsight, I shouldn't have announced the next class by screaming, "Okay, all you Quakers, get your bitches in the ring!"

Needless to say, my steward job was short-lived. I was told there was another job for me. I thought to myself, "What could they have in line for me?" Dog show judge? Or maybe my natural Shepherd savvy was so obvious I would be made president of the sponsoring German Shepherd dog club. While practicing my acceptance speech, I was told I would be perfect for walking the dogs in an adjoining field and convincing them to crap. I was to report back as to who did said crap, as well as the texture. Talk about a fall from grace. I guess I can scrap that speech.

Lunchtime was the best. What better meal to get at a dog show than a big, old chili dog? Afterward, I noticed a bunch of dogs following me around as if I was the pied piper of Dogville. I felt as if there was a deep bond between me and all things canine. Of course Becky had to come by while I was holding court with the dogs and proclaim, "Hey meathead, why don't you use a napkin next time!" It was then that I looked down and realized half of my chili dog had landed on my jeans. All the dogs were interested in was a little lunch of their own.

I did pick up a few pointers at the show. For example, I noticed that one of the handlers, George, would run his dog around, and at the end of his turn, he would stare at the judge. He appeared to be using some sort of telekinetic mind-melding trick, saying "pick my dog." It also appeared to work. I've got to ask George how he does that. I think I could use that technique the next time I go to a singles' bar. "Look into my eyes, I am Brad Pitt and we should mate."

I also got to meet one of the locals. Willie said he lived in Quakertown, and offered me a piece of smoked venison. He told me he killed and smoked it himself. I asked him how the deer hunting was around the area, as if I always ran into deer in downtown Boston myself. He said he was sitting in a tree-stand the day before for 10 hours, waiting for a big buck that he had been tracking. "Didn't you know it, that son of a bitch ran by as I was climbing down the stand!" Willie said. That kind of made me rethink my own hissy-fit the day before, when the train pulled away at the station and I would have to wait 10 minutes for the next one.

After three glorious days, it was time to head home. We packed up for our 6.5 hour ride with a few new coffee cups. Oh and we got some ribbons and a big bow, but really, you can't put coffee in those. I thought I was going to recall the highlights of the dog show on the ride home, but all I got was the melodious tree-cutting sounds of Becky sleeping. But wait . . . she awakens five hours later. What pray-tell will sleeping beauty say? "What the #*&%@ are we doing in Rhode Island!" Well I never claimed to be Columbus, but I thought that Rhode Island *was* in New England – maybe, huh?

Looks like I've got to run. I need to get to my safe room in the cellar. Some big guy is at my door screaming something about me calling his girlfriend a "nice looking bitch." I guess some people just aren't accomplished dog aficionados like me.

*Tim Creavin is a Bostonian through and through. The fact that he actually got into a car to knowingly travel to a **dog show** is a tiny miracle. He is also responsible for the first German Shepherd Becky Dickson ever owned; he bought a black and red East German bitch for her 13 years ago for Valentine's Day (If he only knew . . .). Tim is an occasional contributing writer for the German Shepherd by Design. He can be reached at ttcrave@hotmail.com.*