

Judge Nancy Harper

How long have you been judging the breed? How many times a year do you judge German Shepherds?

15 years

Are you an active breeder of German Shepherd Dogs? Do you have a kennel name ?

Active Breeder, kennel name Heinerburg

How long have you been in the breed? When and how did you get started?

In the breed since 1959. I was first in Collie and Dobies. I was in Germany in 1957, was struck by the Great Shepherds I saw there. I did some research and brought back first Shepherd from Germany. This dog was linebred on the famous R- Osnabruckerland line. I bought a foundation bitch from Bel Vista Kennels. This bitch made her ROM on her first litter. I bred her to GV Yoncall's Mike, all of our dogs go back to that original line including our Sel CH Danny Boy of Heinerburg ROM.

Do you judge both all-breeds and specialties? If so, which do you prefer?

I judge both all breeds and specialties as I also judge other breeds, I like them both.

Do you have a color preference?

5) My kennel is know for rich pigment which I prefer. Our Winners Dog at the '84 National and Select Ch Lothario of Heinerburg was an great example of that. Color however should not be the determining factor if another dog has better structure.

Do you find it harder to judge solid blacks ? If so, why?

6) I do not find it difficult to judge Blacks at all. I have put several blacks up, one belonging to Barbara Amidon years ago and most recently the current GVX who I put up the Spring before this year's National.

When judging the dog, do you also judge the handler? Please elaborate if possible.

I could care less who handles. I put up a 16 year old girl in CA with all the handlers in the ring, a big 5 point show, the day after the Futurity out there.

What importance do you place on missing teeth?

The same as the Standard dictates that we, as judges, should.

Please discuss temperament in the ring today. Has it improved? Declined? Please explain.

Through the years, I have seen good, bad and in-between temperament. I think the loose lead exam has helped a great deal, just like the OFA has greatly improved the hips and elbows on our Shepherds. We need to set the bar very high, we are fighting PETA you know.

Right now, I find most dogs to be sound for the brief time they are in the show ring. I found the mid 70's to be the time that temperament was not so good. Please don't go berserk on that statement, I don't mean ALL DOGS. There are some lines that do not tolerate kennel life - they cannot be put out there and just given food and water. I have only experienced temperament such as I had with my German Dog from the late 50's with the minority of my own breeding. I am talking about the strong character and extra smarts that those imports in the 50's and 60's had, just incredible. It was not that they were just "sound" they were of such character that they were totally dependable in ALL BRAND NEW CIRCUMSTANCES. Guns, thunder, lightning, unexpected big bangs on the street – ANYTHING. NOTHING FRAZZLED THEM. Not just ring trained and socialized.

We lost a lot of that. Those dogs were herding dogs, as well as SchH III dogs but they were not so "driven" as the ones today and were very self-assured, and totally dependable in ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. I won't breed an unsound bitch. I don't want the responsibility of what

happens with the puppies. I don't want to be responsible for the kid bitten in the face by the Shepherd who bites when cornered.

Do you prefer a dog to be shown on a loose lead?

A must, they cannot be properly evaluated straining and pulling so hard. I know I am older than most, but, I don't believe that even "young eyes" can see everything that is going on when these dogs race around the ring.

How would you rate the following in sequence of importance? (On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best).

Coming/Going:

Sidegait:

Temperament: 10

The future of our breed DEPENDS ON IT. The community and the public are not going to tolerate shyness, fear bitters etc. Our breed needs to be upfront in serving our country on our borders, in the Military, in search and rescue etc. The companion dogs (pets) that come from the ranks of our best breeders NEED TO BE A CREDIT TO THEIR FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH THEY RESIDE.

Teeth:

Coat: A great coat in good condition, if everything else is there, who would not be influenced? Same as pigment: it can't be chosen over the better structure.

Pasterns, hocks, feet:

Pigment: As stated before, I love great pigment however, it should NEVER supersede the better structured dog. Period. No enhancements please. We have worked hard and considered pigment when we bred our bitches and will continue to do so. It bothers me to think that all that consideration and studying is no better than a bottle of pigment.

Structure: 10

I mean no disrespect here BUT THINK ABOUT IT. Structure is 10 which is also SIDEGAIT & COMING AND GOING; they are all related. You can't have good structure and not have sidegait and correct coming and going. If the rear assembly is correct that dog will be sound on the go that includes upper thigh, lower thigh, stifle, hock, right down to the toes. Same for coming. A dog that is incorrect in the fore-assembly is going to demonstrate that coming at you in some way. The exception could be a short upper arm, which will keep the dog from extending but the dog could be very sound coming at you. Toeing in, elbow out, flipping of the pastern, it's all connected to STRUCTURE.

Shoulder/Reach:

Attitude: Fortunate the breeder that produces a line of dogs that just LOVE to perform. It is a natural gift - training helps - but the dog that is blessed with attitude which to me means willingness, determination AND presence, is a notch up before they walk in the ring. Our dogs were bred to be tireless workers - that is carried over in the ring with a "go" attitude and is always a plus.

A dog with great structure has a difficult time indeed showing it off if he doesn't like doing it!! Attitude can also be closely related to character, spirit and good temperament. We are not speaking here about the one flying around the ring for fear someone will "catch" him/her.

In your opinion should double handling be allowed? Please explain.

Done correctly, an art. Incorrectly, distorts the dog, makes them look bad so many times, so unnecessarily. Many a good dog has been ruined by over doubling. Dogs can and should be trained to respond to you at ring side - it takes some work. Joan Ford was one of the best. Never stood out with her doubling, you hardly knew she was there, but their dogs did!! Watch some of the ole time continually successful breeders they are out there doing it but never obnoxious.

Do you feel more emphasis should be put on the total package, and less on movement?

What about type, the CORRECT type for a German Shepherd Dog? You start with type, that's what makes this dog a GSD and not a Golden. Beginning with the head, ears, under jaw, eye

color and expression, back skull, etc. German Shepherds should not be great movers that are "ugly." How can a dog have the "look of eagles" if it is "ugly"? Look, great sidegait being wonderful and all that, but you have a weasel head, scrawny bone, slab sided, no depth of chest, etc., that is not what a good Shepherd is about. It is about the ENTIRE DOG.

Do you have a pet peeve about anything owners or handlers do concerning the showing of dogs? (Do you have any suggestions for owners or handlers regarding anything they should NEVER do when showing under you ?)

1) Dirty Dogs, includes teeth especially!

2) INTERFERING WITH THE LOOSE LEAD EXAM - that just makes it worse because I am going to keep having the handler turn the dog away from you and it becomes obvious there just could be a reason for the owner to persist.

Do you have any suggestions for owners or handlers regarding anything they should ALWAYS do when showing under you?

1) GIVE ME A LOOSE LEAD - ALWAYS

2) NEVER IGNORE MY CALL TO SLOW DOWN

Do you have any advice for people who are relatively new to showing and/or breeding?

I need it myself. Patience, you need lots of it. Always get a signed contract, always. Understand the contract. Deal with reputable breeders only. Ask lots of questions, lots of them. Don't be in too big of a hurry. Learn the true definition of a BREEDER. Don't restrict your learning and questions to just GS people. The dog world is CHALK FULL of experts on STRUCTURE. They give seminars all over the place, go to them. They understand the meaning 'FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION.' Horse people know too. If I can help, I will.

Any final comments?

Be very concerned about the Health issues facing this breed. If you just want a winner, buy one, don't breed. If you do breed, DO YOUR HOMEWORK. Be honest about your own dogs, do not expect everyone else to be because, unfortunately they aren't. Be aware of bottle necks we create in the gene pool.