

## A week at the National in Houston, Texas

by Julie Timbers

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First let me remind you, "Don't trust the weather!" The week before I left for Nationals I kept an eye on the weather forecast, it was averaging 87 degrees. Needless to say, I dug out all my summer clothes, which I had already packed away, everyone knows there is no need for shorts and tank tops in Minnesota in October. Well, there was no need for them in Houston, TX the week of Nationals either!! My 1 sweatshirt and blue jeans which I wore on the airplane were seen a lot around the hotel that week considering the temperature was averaging 70 degrees or less. I will say that the temperature was great for the dogs, even though you found many of us in our PJs with our teeth chattering as we stood by expens at 6:00 in the morning waiting for our dogs to do their business.

The hotel was great! The service and the friendly staff was unbelievable. The rooms were large and they kept almost all of the exhibitors on the first floor with easy access to the outside, which had a lot of grassy areas. Everyone knows how important that is, we won't mention the fire ants.



Grooming in the ring area, well all I will say about that is, it was extremely cozy! The ring itself was good size and as long as you didn't look down at the pattern in the rug while you were moving, things were OK.

The Houston Regional Specialty was held on Monday, with breeder/judge Darby McSorley. It was a very long day, starting with Sweepstakes at 10 am and final judging ending about 6 pm. Ms. McSorley had the complaint that she was to thorough, I think that was more of a compliment myself. She moved us several times and put several dogs back up on the table to compare, in the end she pointed to Fernando, you could of knocked me over with a feather! Stunned, excited, thrilled are just a few adjectives to describe my feelings at that moment.

The ALAC Regional was held on Tuesday, with breeder/judge KeKe Kahn. Ms. Kahn seemed to enjoy judging her own breed, and for those of you who are wondering she looks great and says

she is feeling better than she has in a long time, after her fall here at our January shows. KeKe ended up picking Ch. Hylan Shotru Full of Dreams for BOB.

Fernando made the cut and Indian Hill Melou's Josie went third out of a large open class.

Wednesday, was agility, obedience, rally day. Everything was able to be held on hotel grounds and a large number of spectators came out to watch the agility trials at 9 am in the morning. Let's just say that the hotel sold a lot of coffee that morning as we tried to stay warm watching the dogs run, have fun and embarrassing their owners (right Melissa?)



Thursday, was a special day as JoAnne was able to come for a few hours and watch the dogs being judged. She had just gotten out of the hospital on Tuesday so making it to the show was a tremendous feat. So many people were able to see, talk and hug her. I was amazed at how many people she knew by name. Unlike myself, who had just been smiling and saying hi all week to these other exhibitors who I kind of recognize but had no idea what their names were.

Ronnie Crowder judged the Futurity earlier that morning and did a great job, chosing an 18 month bitch, CH. My Thai Ta Sen Halleluiah Chorus. In particular Ronnie fashion he was able to pull several laughs from the crowd.

Friday was the judging of bitches and specials under breeder/judge Barbara Schwartz. You could tell by the look on her face, that judging her first National and the quality of dogs was an overwhelming experience. She stayed with type and in the end had a beautiful line up. Fernando went Best of Opposite to Hylan ShoTru Full of Dreams.



Josie took 1<sup>st</sup> place, again from a very large open class (entry of 9).



Karen Schlais's lovely black dog from the 9-12 month class was very impressive all week long, winning his class every single time! (entry of 9) Debby's and my little Edie, FFT Carpe Diem picked up a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2-3<sup>rd</sup> places and a 4<sup>th</sup> out of a very large 12-18 mo bitch class, (entry of 10) in which she was clearly the youngest and Fernando's littermate, FFT Kisses of Fire was in the final line-up under Ms. McSorley.

To say we celebrated, maybe a little of an understatement, but we certainly had fun. There were also a few scary moments, like Monday evening when the call came in that Cathy Sarantis, Bev Simms and her husband (from California) had been hit by a semi truck, their rental car totaled and were being taken to the hospital. After a long night sleeping on emergency room couches, I am happy to say they were all released with minor injuries.

Mary Beth Lang (from Indiana) never made it out of her hotel room and by Wednesday she was taken to the hospital and diagnosis with meningitis. She was still there when we all left on Saturday.

Maybe it is because I know more people or I am just used to them, but I thought that the people attending this national were all very friendly and congratulatory. I didn't hear of any complaints from the exhibitors or the hotel, and on any given night you could walk into the bar or the restaurant and find tables of exhibitors laughing and sharing stories. Really isn't that what the National is all about, spending time with people who share the same passion about the Lhasa as you do.

