

1946 Column

Mrs. Alexander Phemister

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IT IS ALMOST INCREDIBLE how the little Basenjis have become so well known all over the country. It was only a few years ago at the dog shows that people would come up and ask, “What kind of a dog is this?” This last year or two people would say, “This is a Basenji, isn’t it?” But now, not only are they recognized but their habits and characteristics are generally known. Everywhere they are received most favorably and yet this is only to be expected, for who could help but admire this little dog who, only a generation or two from his native habitat of the Belgian Congo, fits into our life so beautifully that it seems as if he must have been destined for just such a life. His beauty, grace, charm and fascinating habits endear him to all who admire these qualities in a dog.

Much credit should be given to the pioneers of the breed; those people have introduced it to the public. Every opportunity to sponsor the breed is being used and one such example was described to me by Thomas Crawford of Baltimore, Md. A pageant of dogs with their handlers dressed to represent the country the dog originally came from was put on in Baltimore. Mr. Crawford’s female Basenji was shown and attracted a great deal of attention. It would be

interesting to hear just how the handler was dressed but Mr. Crawford did not mention this. R. P. Valtier, Detroit, Mich., anxious that all should recognize the Basenjis at the dog shows, had some very fine Basenji signs made up and sent them to the various exhibitors with his compliments—another example of how we are all working together for the advancement of the breed. “All for one and one for all” is really our motto.

I believe New Jersey has just had its first Basenji litter, the arrival of five puppies whelped in October. This is the first litter to my knowledge in this new breeding season.

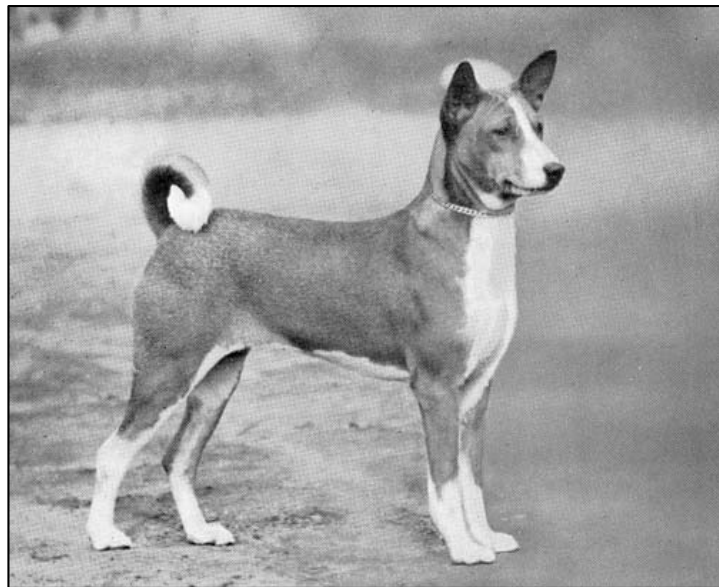
Last year several cases were reported where the females came in season in August, were bred but did not conceive. Then in October or November they came in season again, so were bred and this time had puppies. So, if any summer breedings were unsuccessful this year, watch your females carefully; it is likely they will come in season again, at the more normal period.

I am happy to report that Mr. Phemister and I now have two Basenji champions—brother and sister—Ch. Phemister’s Melengo and Ch. Phemister’s

Simba. They are out of Zinnia of the Congo and sired by Phemister's Boise, the first Basenji to have come to North America. These young homebreds are worthy of their titles in every way—quality, style, charm, and personality. Time after time they placed in the hound group, never lower than third, and one must appreciate that here in the East the hound groups always comprise some eight or nine dogs that have won in the hottest of competition. I am very proud of my little Basenjis when I see them up among the winners of such groups and I know all you other Basenji breeders must be proud also when yours make creditable showings. Incidentally, I am quite certain that at least one, and probably both, of my

champions will also carry another honor, the obedience degree of "C.D.", both being already fully trained.

I think we should all set a goal for 1946 and strive to attain it. May we have Basenjis bred closer to the Standard—and nearer to perfection in temperaments. Breed for quality, not quantity, always bearing in mind that the Basenji is an aristocrat among dogs. We want to breed only enough of our dogs to go into homes of the proper type and environment. The future of the breed depends greatly on the wisdom and foresight we pioneers are using at the present time.



*Photo above: Phemister's Melengo
Melengo was the first AKC Basenji champion.*

