

October 2022 NWRRC Member Profile: Betsy Metcalf
Submitted by Lorraine Pedersen

For the training column this issue, I thought it might be a good idea to talk to someone who has been training and titling RR's for decades, so I had the pleasure of doing a phone interview with Betsy Metcalf. Betsy is the only current member of our club who is also a founding member of the club - she and her sister Suzanne have had ridgebacks for a very long time and are very active with them. Betsy and Suzanne live in Wenatchee – they raise Arabian horses and Rhodesian ridgebacks and their kennel name is ARR for Arabian and RR.

Betsy's family had Dalmatians for a long time, but they wanted to go with a breed that had fewer health issues. Betsy had been in Alaska for her job and had come home in 1978, and she and her sister and mother were discussing dog breeds and breeders, and Suzanne mentioned Dobermans. But they did not personally know any Doberman breeders. The name Great Dane came up and Suzanne suggested a "miniature" Great Dane.



Zenyatta's dam, Ch Arr Zanadew Dreams RA, TD, AX, AXJ, NF, SWA, SCE, SEE, SHDA, CGCA, TKA, RATO, VC.

When looking in the paper, they saw an ad for a Rhodesian Ridgeback litter. Betsy had seen a couple of them in Arizona and she liked them. So they went to see this litter. The sire and dam were bred by Diane Jacobsen. It ended up that they were going to get the pick of the litter. They had brought along a friend who was a Sheltie breeder, and she actually ended up picking the puppy for them. And so the puppy, Dehner, went home with the Metcalfs.

Dehner's name is also the brand name for dressage boots, and they chose that name because the cost of the puppy was the same price as a pair of these boots at that time: \$500. Suzanne put a CDX, TD and CH on him – really all that there was to compete in at the time. Dehner went to California to be shown in conformation and did well against the RR's there, and he eventually became the #9 RR in the country. He also was the first coursing dog the Metcalfs had. The Metcalfs got a daughter from him, and that was their foundation bitch, Debutante – all of their dogs trace back to Dehner. Dehner was one of the first RR's that competed in Lure Coursing – and it wasn't true competition at first! The RR folks would course their dogs after the trial was over, and it proved that RR's could indeed course. The Metcalfs and other early RR coursers helped get RR's accepted for competition in that sport. The Metcalfs ARR Mesquite was one of the first dogs to earn an ASFA Championship title.



Three ARR dogs on the left are: Ch CalicoRidge Arr Sun Catcher, VCD1, RE, JC, AX, AXJ, AXP, OJP, VC (out of Ariat's litter sister Ch Arr Reflection of Sunchase)

Ch Arr Ariat RN, TD, JC, NAP, NJP (granddaughter of Ch Arr Cheyenne, out of Arr Shaniko)

DC Arr Sundew Rising, VCD1, RE, SC, MX, MXB, MXJ, MXJP2, OF, XFP, MBIF IN ASFA and Ch, VC (out of Catcher)

Over the years, the Metcalfs have had 19 RR's. They only bred a litter when they were ready for another pup to keep, about every 3 or 4 years. Zenyatta, their current RR, is their 11th generation. They have competed in virtually every sport available: Conformation, Obedience, Tracking, Agility, Scentwork, Barnhunt, Lure Coursing – all in all, they have titled numerous dogs in numerous sports, including 11 TD's.

The dog of theirs that has the most titles is Zenyatta – and, as Betsy pointed out, she has more titles because there are so many more opportunities now to get titles. Zenyatta has racked up an impressive 43 titles!!! Her full name is FC Int'l CH Arr Zenyatta Dew, RA, TDX, SC, AX, AXJ, NAP, NJP, BCAT, SWE, SCM, SIM, SEM, SHDE, RATS, CGC, TKA, VC. (The total takes into account that many of these titles must be preceded by other titles – for example, you must get a TD before you can earn a TDX, so a TDX is actually two titles.)

Betsy's favorite sport to watch is Agility; right now, she is having a good time working on Scentwork titles, which get really complicated. The title Betsy is proudest of is Zenyatta's TDX. This is a tough title to get and the Metcalfs tried with four dogs and hit the jackpot with Zen!

Betsy has attended about 17 specialties, a couple of times without dogs. A cherished specialty memory is Betsy showing Arial to a Top 10 in California. Another favorite memory is dressing her dogs up for Halloween and taking them to schools for kids to meet them; Calvin and Hobbes was a favorite costume. One of these best memories is of a non-speaking girl who saw Betsy and her dog for the second year in a row, and she said the dog's name! Betsy said she would see high school kids who would tell her they remembered her and her dogs when they were in grade school.

Over the years, Betsy has had some mentors – believe it or not, the breed was not very numerous in the Northwest in the 60's and 70's, and the Old Guard former members all mentored each other – Shirley Wait and her daughter Karen McClelland, Nancy Williams,

Rosalie Sterner, and others were pioneers of the breed in Washington. Louise Lertora of Rawhide kennels in California was also a good mentor for Betsy. Some changes Betsy has seen in the breed is that the dogs have gotten bigger – on the flip side of that, some are also much more refined, or “greyhoundy” in body shape, lacking the bone and substance the breed should have. If you are fortunate enough to visit the Metcalfs in their home, you can see the Dog Room – that room shows a lot of the things they have earned and won, and you can see photos of their dogs from start to finish – and it is plain to see how much they improved the dogs they bred over the years. It is something to see!

The future for Betsy involves Detective Dog, which is a high form of ScentWork. As I mentioned earlier, ScentWork is pretty complicated, with titles to be earned at many levels, which have to be worked through from bottom to top. It is very involved and time consuming, and the entry fees can be pretty spendy too. But I am pretty sure if anyone can do it, it’s Betsy and Zen!

Thank you, Betsy, for the interview. As always, it was a pleasure talking to you! You and Suzanne are truly inspirations to the rest of us!



Betsy and Zenyatta doing ScentWork. Zenyatta is FC Int'l CH Arr Zenyatta Dew RA, TDX, SC, AX, AXJ, NAP, NJP, BCAT, SWE, SCM, SIM, SEM, SHDE, RATS, CGC, TKA.