

Meeting up with the Dillinghams

by Horst Kranz - Feb. 2004

One of my highlights in my life was when I had the privilege in meeting up with Dorothy Dillingham and her daughter Shelly Dillingham. Shelly and Bernadette have been long time friends and it was quite amusing to hear what they used to get up to while D.C. was still alive. Shelly is still breeding the Chow Chows that D.C. was involved with before he met Dorothy. Talking to Shelly I found she was a very passionate person in what ever she did. I was pleased to see that she was still using the Tigara formula, which her dad probably drummed her into. < Grin>. She owns a Pet shop with a Grooming parlour and has a very successful business to keep her out of trouble <VBG>.

When Bernadette and Shelly get together there is always something funny happening? We had a wonderful dinner at Restaurant and when the dessert menu came up they looked at each other and said “ lets have some, he’s paying”. Between the two of them they would scoff this large ice-cream cake with great delight. I could not eat something like that as I find the cakes in the USA very rich in content, which my body would probably reject. How they manage to eat it remains a mystery to me. I was told afterwards they used to pull the same stunt on D.C. when he took them to a Restaurant. Yes folks the same famous words were used way back then “he’s paying”.

On my meeting with Dorothy Dillingham from Tigara, I found some very interesting info that confirmed my thoughts into reality. The dogs of Tigara had outstanding structure which I am afraid has been lost in general in our breed. Although a smaller number of our dogs carry these wonderful front ends I personally feel that there is a very strong place for the few Kotzebue dogs of today that are still around. Yes folks, what I saw in black and white pictures of these wonderful examples from the past, I think many of the breeders worldwide have forgotten and we should educate our future owners and breeders with some of these dogs. The front ends are the one of the best I have ever seen on the breed so far and it’s so sad I could not have sat down and spoken to Mr Dillingham who was a very sensible and humble breeder, a good father to his family and friends. Dorothy and Shelly have agreed to scan some of these pictures for our use in this webpage. These would IMO help with future education of the breed. Judges should see these dogs although mostly in black and white it has a very important historic background for all to share. I also feel it is a good education tool not only for new fancier in the breed but should be used as an education tool for judges and many breeders to see where it might help them to become better judges and breeders. The world has to see this to believe this, as I for one was not around to see these dogs in live action. But with a good eye and knowing structure it was magical to see these pictures and has left and everlasting image in my mind. The trip down to Dorothy and Shelly was worthy experience to me and I am very grateful to have met these wonderful people who have contributed valuable input towards our breed. The sad part to all of this is, the wonderful bloodline has been dissolved and the true Tigara has been lost forever. I truly wish that some of these dogs were still around today.... personally in my opinion I feel they are needed.



The Dillingham’s formula was the very same or similar formula that I bred my Saint Bernard’s with for 20 odd years and even today I encourage the fanciers that are breeding with my lines to do the same type of breeding. Way back then I had different mentors of the breed, people like the late John Treger, Mr Eduard Rodel, and the father of the Saint Bernard Breed in my opinion Dr Antonio Morsaini. It was a hard school but worth it at the end.

I presented Dorothy a deserving Valentine heart mixed with her favourite nutty chocolates, thanks to Shelly for helping me there. I brought Dorothy a wonderful hand painted tablecloth from South Africa, which fitted so perfectly on her dining room table. The dinner was great afterwards with Bernadette, Shelly, Dorothy and myself at an outstanding Restaurant. As a South African I felt proud and honoured sitting next to one of the great breeders from the past. I owe my thanks to Bernadette for this wonderful highlight in my life...THIS FOLKS MONEY COULD NEVER BUY. I wonder how many took notice and made the time at the nationals to speak to these people and learn something?? I will definitely meet up with Dorothy again and I will make a point of this. As for Shelly she is a

wonderful friend to Bernadette and I have incorporated her as part of my family.

I hope you enjoy these pictures from the past and I would like to say thank you to the Dillingham's for allowing me this privilege to show the world some wonderful History of our breed. I would like to suggest to all of you to look at them with an open mind and judge the dogs on their wonderful assets. Even the Dillingham's did not have perfect dogs like everyone else those years back, but one thing for sure the breeders back then used to discuss the dogs genetic assets as a unit and held an objective mind for the future of the breed. In today's world this has been lost and I have heard too many times by some fanatics the same stupid words used " They had their turn then and now its ours". What a shame that some people have taken this attitude, it should never be about the winning in the ring, but rather winning in the breeding to retaining Type that the charter members like the Dillingham's have left us. Judges have to take responsibility as well for their action, as they influence the breed in the direction of which way it will go. In today's world the winning factor has become a very large influence for many breeders and its sad that some Judges, breeders, and exhibitors have different agenda's in what once was and now could be lost forever.