

# Selkirk Rex Breed Club

# WOOLGATHERING

Issue 4

Selkirk Rex Breed Club

September 1994

Thanks to everyone who has been sending in hints, helps, comments, etc. Just before the last issue was sent out, I received a letter from a FIFe judge from Spain who wanted information about the Selkirk Rex! It does pay to advertise, even if his letter was in response to the listing of breed newsletters in the Almanac. I hope everyone is keeping in mind that we have to really work on type during the next couple of years to get more consistency in our breed. We also need to make sure we are grooming our cats correctly. Joy sent in her grooming tips after the last issue was copied, so its good to see we are all concerned about the same issues.

## FROM THE ALMANAC:

"Michael Peterson asked to have results of judges miscellaneous breed reports included in the minutes. He felt it important to note that the Selkirk Rex and the Ragdolls are not doing too well at this point. **The biggest complaint on the Selkirks has been the condition of some of the cats** (*emphasis added!!*) and the inconsistency in the show ring. Sixteen out of 33 reports said the cats were not consistent.

Judges Breed Report  
Miscellaneous Breeds

### Selkirk Rex (N=45)

2. Is this the first time you have handled this breed in the judging ring?  
Yes: 17                      No: 28
3. Were the cats in good physical condition?  
Yes: 38                      No: 6
4. Were the cats well-behaved in the judging ring?  
Yes: 41                      No: 2
5. **Were the cats consistent in type?**  
**Yes: 16                      No: 16**
6. Did you find any genetic problems in these cats; kinked tails, bone deformities, crossed eyes, etc.?  
Yes: 1                      No: 41
7. Do you feel that this breed is distinctive enough to set it apart from breeds already accepted for

Championship status by CFA?

Yes: 29 (64%)      No: 13 (29%)

8. Do you feel these cats merit consideration by the CFA Board for Provisional status?

Yes: 19 (42%)      No: 24 (53%)"

Several things to note from this report:

1. 50% of the judges who have seen Selkirks believe that they were shown cats that were not consistent - either with other Selkirks or with the standard. Send in your pictures so we can all share what our cats look like. If we don't agree among ourselves about **what the Selkirks should look like**, we can't expect the judges to understand what will meet the standard. When I showed DJ and Goldie, I told the judges that their types were bad, but their coats (a longhair and a shorthair homozygous) were the only reason they were being shown.
2. 64% of the judges believe that the cats are distinctive enough to merit designation as a separate breed. We need to work on the rest!
3. Even though we are not up for advancement to Provisional status until 1997, it is nice to realize that even with the current problems (inconsistency and condition), 42% felt the breed merited consideration for Provisional status.

We have 2 more years to work on consistency. Once again, we all need to be working toward the same type of look. Send in your pictures to me so we can all see what everyone else thinks the breed should look like. To begin the process, I will include some pictures in the next issue. Write with your comments about the look of the various cats. No one but me will ever learn who said what. I will, however, report on all comments received.

**~~We shouldn't have to worry about condition if everyone takes the time to correctly groom their cats before showing them.~~** That is not a breed problem, that is an **exhibitor** problem. However, it is one that could keep this breed out of Championship status.

## President's Message

By *Jeri Newman*

### Building a Breeding Program:

The outcross list for Selkirk Rex is: Persian (Himalayan), Exotic Shorthair, British Shorthair and American Shorthair. The original proposal presented to the Board in 1992 had the following dates listed for discontinuing the outcrosses: Persian - Exotic: 1998; British-American: 2010. This can be changed before we are accepted into championship status, and I would like to see Exotics extended slightly.

I thought it might be helpful for me to discuss with you the assets and liabilities of each breed on the outcross list. Keep in mind that selections are made primarily on the basis of improving the individual, as no lines of Selkirks have enough generations behind them to make a very predictable assumption on the basis of pedigrees. If you know your outcross breed well, pedigrees can be helpful. That's why it is important to use our time now mainly for outcrossing -- when you add a cat with a long pedigree to your breeding program, you are working with a known and refined quality, and can thus progress much more quickly to producing a Selkirk line that throws somewhat predictably.

We all started with Miss DePesto; an 11 pound, blue-cream and white shorthair who is known to carry colorpoint and longhair. She has a narrow muzzle with a very strong "pinch" or whisker break, prominent cheekbones, very slanty eyes (green) and a wide, wide, wide, very flat spot between her ears. I have often said that she looks like the world's worst Devon with a Chartreux body. The first breedings with cats with rounder heads produced cats that looked like better Devons except they were much too big bodied (size and boning) and the heads were too massive and there seemed to be a large amount of hair! Some judges asked if we had been messing around with Devons. Of course, we hadn't, as the genetics are quite different, but this intermediate step certainly looked a bit Devonish. When the head structure becomes rounder, the eyes get rounder and we work away from such prominent cheek bones, the cat becomes a god Selkirk. So, back to the original question: How do you select cats from the outcross list to accomplish the desired result?

**PERSIANS:** Look for: Smooth, round skull (not all Persians have this). Persians seem to produce wonderful curly coats. Cats with quite a "break" (indentation above the nose) can be used, especially if your Selkirk has no stop, but remember that you are adding this to the genetic mix. Persians with a nose that slants downward from the break will not only improve "stop", but will throw the proper wide muzzle and correct nose slant. Look for heavy to moderately heavy boning (remember those Chartreux legs we started with -- good on a Chartruex, but lots of room for

work toward the ideal Selkirk!). Look for round eyes -- outside corner straight across from inside corner -- you'll be amazed at the variation you see when you start looking carefully!

**AVOID:** Extremely short, cobby bodies, tiny ears, short, short tails, break above eyes. In other words, Regional and National winners are OUT, but even those people probably have some cats at home that would be appropriate. Also avoid - flat head, flat spot above the eyes, slanty eyes, poor tear ducts, extremely hairy faces (too much hair close to the eyes can be bad when that hair is curly!), narrow hips, cow hocks, cats that don't want to stand with back legs fully extended, pedigrees known to have extensive heart problems or cryptorchidism.

**EXOTICS:** Look for: Basically the same things as Persians. Most Exotics carry long hair, so take that into account. If you want one that is homozygous for short hair -- so does everyone else. You might want to look at the parents to make sure there is the right coat length on the shorthair (medium, not extremely long or short), and plenty of undercoat.

**AVOID:** Again, this is basically like the Persians, except that some Exotics have a somewhat "stiff" texture to their coat, which seems to decrease the curliness of the Selkirk coat. I wish I could tell you that this is a rule, but there are too many exceptions.

**BRITISH SHORTHAIRES:** Look for: The roundest head and broadest muzzle you can find. Even this works better with a Selkirk with at least some Persian in the background. The best British bodies are right on target. There are at least two major muzzle styles in Brits; chose the one with "corners" -- very prominent whisker pads, as opposed to gently rounded. Most Brits have the right nose angle.

**AVOID:** Flat spots between ears, lack of at least a slight nose stop, slanty eyes, light boning, unfriendly personalities, receding chins, blood type B, extreme whisker pinch.

**AMERICAN SHORTHAIRES:** Look for: The roundest head you can find, broad chests, the proper (for a Selkirk) muzzle, good boning, a soft, fluffy coat (which is wrong for an American but right for us). In other words, excellent quality except with an incorrect coat. Keep in mind that what I consider excellent in an American is considered quite extreme by a lot of very knowledgeable people! My plan is to use Americans for specific colors when I don't want to go back to a Persian again. Remember, you can't get a round head from a Selkirk with a flat head to an American.

**AVOID:** Flat heads, slanty eyes, narrow muzzles, correct (for an American) hard coats, light boning, small size, and the other usual things -- bad tear ducts, hearts, cow hocks.

Remember, there is a lot more variation in type in the homes of breeders than what you see at the show hall. The right cat for your Selkirk could be found in any of the outcross breeds. Brits have Persian not too far back. Americans (don't shoot - it's only the truth!)

have Persian, Burmese, even a little Korat at one point. Exotics (please don't shoot) have Persian, Burmese, domestic shorthair and what else, besides the Persian that is still allowable? At one point in the development of the Exotics and Americans, people could choose which way to register their cats. I honestly don't know about any murky background in Persians, but I do know that there is still such a natural variation in registered Persians that I could find a cat and hand it to a Judge who would say, "Nice Maine Coon, but the coat doesn't feel or look quite right!" I'm sure I will hear from people I've offended; rest assured that was not my intent. I am trying to emphasize the importance of being able to judge the good and not-so-good qualities of your Selkirk and make the right choice for an outcross. If I have said anything blatantly and supportably incorrect concerning any breed, please correct me! I can say from personal experience that I have seen Americans that are easily mistaken for Burmese and Exotic. They are not the result of anything illegal, simply the outcropping of things previously added to those breeding programs. Are we having fun yet?

NEXT: Showing your Selkirk: How to Cope with Miscellaneous Status; Genetics - Dominant, Incomplete Dominance, Homozygous, Color Selection; HELP! What else did I promise to talk about?

## TIPS: HEALTH AND GROOMING

By Joy McCabe

Many CFA judges are saying that the Selkirks they see are either not groomed or not properly groomed. I thought I would share some grooming ideas that we have and invite any other ideas that you Selkirk breeders might have. CFA judges do not care how beautiful or curly a cat is if they don't think it's properly presented.

The weeks leading up to a show are very important. We use Hartz Mountain litter because it's white, for Selkirk, Mouton. He's a red tabby and other litters stain his feet. Another daily need is cleaning the eyes and if necessary applying Vaseline or eye drops. The vaseline prevents hair loss around the eyes from crust formation and puts the eyes in show shape.

Now for the bath. Most of the time, it should be done two or three days before the show. Some cats do better a little earlier, but it's best to err on the side of a cleaner, fresher cat. Cut the nails first, both front and back. Cats that will not allow their nails to be cut should not be shown. No judges wants to be scratched and bitten.

If your cat is terrified of a bath and you can't get her wet, place a bucket filled with warm water in the sink prior to fetching the cat. Immerse her in the bucket and she will be more subdued for the bath. We use House of An-Ju One Step Grease Removing Shampoo first. This is very similar to Goop, but made for cats. Working this throughout the coat, massage gently then rinse. Next we generally use Mella Miracle. We tried many human shampoos, but this tends to

leave the coat soft. The judges like this. Again, massage gently and thoroughly. I use a baby wash cloth to wash the face, ears and back side, in that order.

Here comes my rinse lecture. Rinse, rinse and rinse some more. The curly coats are harder to rinse and proper rinsing leaves a cleaner-looking coat. You know that bucket you got ready first; well, it wouldn't hurt to have a second. After you rinse under the faucet until you and the cat tire, you immerse in the second bucket of water and, if possible, let your tap run steadily and over the top of the bucket. If you look at the water running off, you will see hair and other matter. You now have a squeaky clean cat. I treat our bathed cats to rocking and singing when nobody's around. After this, I clean the ears (Selkirks have waxy ears). Then I comb the cat all over.

Grooming before the show consists of cleaning face and backside. Comb again. If your cat has tough hair to comb, then buy a wide toothed dog comb, but cats should be combed. Before each ring, we check our cats all over. Remember that we're competing against the finest cats in the world. I carry a small spritz bottle filled with water. It's good for the coat and I use it to spray the rectal area, followed by wiping with tissue. This must be done before each ring. Judges make notes about cats with feces on them. Check your cat's feet for litter or crusting from feces. Clean any wax from the ears with swabs. The last check is the eyes. If your cat tends to have crusty eyes, you can use Bosch & Lomb Allergy Eye Drops. Make sure the eyes are clean and sparkling.

Now proudly present your Selkirk to the judge. Let's all work for provisional status in CFA with these wonderful cats.

## SHOW NEWS

by Donna Bass

Nancy McMullen, Stephani Zabel and I met at the Tonkinese Breed Association show in Chicago, May 21 & 22. Nancy had three cats entered -- Socrates, Alex and Socrates' son, Sockit Tu Em. Socrates and Sockit are both reds, and Alex is a black and all three are longhairs. Socrates looks like Bert Lahr playing the Cowardly Lion and has the curliest hair I have yet seen on a Selkirk.

All of the judges were impressed, including two who had never handled Selkirks before. Sharon Roy went through the new breed trials 10 years ago with the Tonks and mentioned that she thought it might be an easier trip for us than for the Tonks.

Olin Wilford was impressed also. This was the first time he had handled the breed.

Annette Wilson brought Socrates up while waiting for a kitten for a final and the audience of kitten exhibitors loved Socrates - this big, curly, patient boy who looked like the Cowardly Lion.

Bob Bradshaw, however, cautioned us to make sure our standard was tighter. He suggested asking for assistance from several judges who were familiar with standards writing, such as Diane Doernberg.

He was also disappointed that Socrates, the three year old, was better (in coat, not than the two younger cats overall). Since the Selkirks are using slow maturing breeds for outcrosses, this may be something we need to address in the standard.

After the show Saturday, the three of us went out for dinner and spent the time talking about standards, our cats, the judges and just about everything else.

Nancy and Stephanie spent a lot of time talking to visitors. Unfortunately, the gate wasn't as good as it should have been. It was fun meeting two SRBC members!

Remember, be sure to write up the suggestions you had for change to the standard. They are still needed!!

### STANDARDS DISCUSSION

By Donna Bass

I spoke with Diana Doernberg recently about the Selkirk Rex standard. My specific question was whether we had to use the standard we started with until we applied for provisional status or whether we should be refining the standard and using the revised version until then.

Her response was that we should probably be refining the standard as we go and using the refined standard with the judges.

So, with that in mind, I propose the followings:

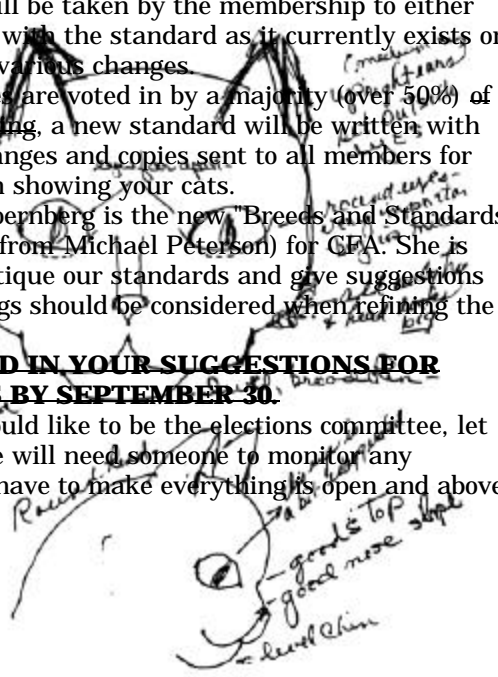
1. Send your suggestions for corrections, deletion, additions, etc. to the current standard to me by September 30.
2. A vote will be taken by the membership to either continue with the standard as it currently exists or to make various changes.
3. If changes are voted in by a majority (over 50%) of those voting, a new standard will be written with those changes and copies sent to all members for use when showing your cats.

Diana Doernberg is the new "Breeds and Standards" chairperson (from Michael Peterson) for CFA. She is willing to critique our standards and give suggestions on what things should be considered when refining the standards.

#### **SO SEND IN YOUR SUGGESTIONS FOR REVISIONS BY SEPTEMBER 30.**

If you would like to be the elections committee, let me know. We will need someone to monitor any elections we have to make everything is open and above board.

*Add a stocky, rectangular, heavy boned and muscled body, & you're got it!*




## a new project!!!

By Donna Bass

At the July 16 Crow Canyon show, John Collila asked to see my Selkirks. Since he was not a shorthair judge, he was not on the schedule to judge them, but wanted a chance to see them anyway. He was curious, but he kept saying, "I need pictures". Then he showed me what he meant by "pictures".

In case you didn't know, various breed councils present "judges workshops" which inform the judges of the breeders' (through the breed council) concept of what a "perfect" cat should look like. They present examples of the breed and also extensive notes to explain each point in the standard.

John showed me what the Persian breed council had presented and I was awed. They had not only precise descriptions of each aspect of the whole cat, but diagrams, charts and a

template for use (see diagram ). All I could think was, "What a wonderful idea! How can we do that for Selkirks?"

So, my idea is that we produce a "judges workshop"-type booklet to present our consensus on what we feel the Selkirks should look like. In addition to helping the judges, it could also be provided to all Selkirk breeders so that we can see where the breed is going. This is a project that will need input from everyone, especially if you have any drawing or graphics skills whatsoever.

I propose that we divide the booklet into several different sections:

- a. Head
  - Muzzle (front and profile)
  - Head shape (front)
  - Head shape (profile)
- b. Body
  - Shape of body
  - Proportions
  - Boning
- c. Coat
  - Curl
  - Density
  - Length
- d. Colors
  - Clarity (i.e., brindle or not)
  - Eye color
  - Variety

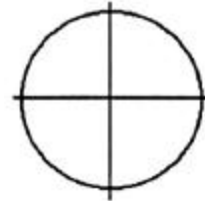
Of course, if you have a better way of

dividing the thing, let me know.

Anyway, this is much too big a process for one person to do alone. Jeri has done some work on this, but I think several people (or everybody) need to work on different sections. We can put them all together, discuss what needs to be changed, expanded, clarified, etc. before we start presenting it to judges and new breeders.

So, let me know which section you would like to work on and get started. We should plan on having this all done by the end of the year so that we could start using the booklet at the beginning of next year.

The template for the face looked like this:



Various faces were drawn with this template overlaid, so that the judge could tell where the eyes were supposed to be in reference to the nose, the ears on the head, the nose in reference to the center point, etc. Individual drawings of various "bad" noses (crooked, too low, too high, etc.) were drawn, for instance, to clarify the position, shape, angles, etc. of the "perfect" nose.

I'm excited about the possibilities of this, but I would like to know if I am the only one. Please let me know how you feel and what section you feel comfortable working on. If you don't have a preference, I'll give you a section to work on.

I am trying to get a copy of the Persian workbook for more complete details. By the time you get this issue, I should have it.

By doing this kind of stuff early, we can show the CFA Board how serious we are about "consistency" and about having our breed taken seriously. Please help!!! As you can see by the drawings included on page 4, Jeri has started the process. You can provide your input, also. Please help!

## MUSINGS ON THE INCATS SHOW

by Donna Bass

The INCATS show actually started on Thursday before the show with a "press party" that lasted from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel in downtown Hollywood. It was hot and sticky in L.A. all weekend, and this older hotel did not have the best air conditioning in the "Oscar Room." We all endured, though.

There were about 20 different breeders who were part of the party. Directly across the aisle from me was the lady who is attempting to originate the "La Perm", a wavy coated cat. This cat's fur, at first glance, looks like Selkirk fur, except **there are no curls**. It is a long wavy coat. The LaPerm looks different and expresses differently - no curly whiskers, they don't know the cat is wavy until it is grown, etc. It is also being developed as a more foreign-body-type cat.

The only problem with it so far is that (1) the originator knows nothing, *nada*, zip, about genetics, breeding cats, showing cats, etc. and (2) her cats have been running around the barn for the last 12 years breeding with anything and everything. She has been keeping records and keeping the cats indoors only for the last two years. She needs breeders who know what they are doing even more desperately than the Selkirk breed does. We at least have Jeri as the originator, who knew what she was doing from the start.

Also at the party was a groomer from Florida who had her "Coeur de Lion"-cut Persian - her cat was shaved to look like a lion. If I didn't know that some Persians have a pissed-off look on their faces normally, I'd say that cat was really pissed-off and embarrassed by the whole thing. When she told me she didn't know what to do next, I suggested a full show-poodle cut. This type of grooming is a fad that I hope doesn't get going very far!

During the party, from 10:30 am to 3:00 pm, there were approximately 12 media types who showed up. According to someone who was there previously, last year no one showed up because there was news happening elsewhere! This party occurred the Thursday before O.J.'s wife was killed (the very next Sunday night!), so there wasn't much happening then. In the group were CNN, the three local network news teams, and several of the local independent stations. There were also a couple of print media types. They wandered around taking pictures, talking to exhibitors, etc., and generally asking the same inane questions one gets at shows. We all smiled and did whatever they asked.

We had originally been told we might be on the Jay Leno show, however that was cancelled. The media party did produce, however, several spots that ran on just about every station in the L.A. area. CNN played their footage Thursday, Friday and Saturday. I was shown on one local station with Su-Su and Goldie. It was a tiring day, but interesting nonetheless. We also were given a free lunch.

Friday morning was a last minute rush to the Marriott - the L.A. Times was coming to interview people who were staying in the hotel about how they groomed their cats, the problems, etc. I loaded my four into carriers and went over there, even though I wasn't staying at the hotel. When I got there, they put my cats outside on the balcony because the carriers smelled like boy cat. They didn't want to give the impression

that cats and cat shows smell. Sorry, but boys will be boys and they do occasionally smell.

Friday afternoon was spent setting up the breed booth. Because I am not used to showing more than one cat at a time, I don't have matching cage curtains, or even curtains that would fit the Southern California cages very well. I did the best I could with what I had, but it didn't look as good as it should have. In addition, because INCATS screwed up, I had to put my Tonkinese cat in the Selkirk breed booth. It was either that or have him out on the exhibition floor, alone, or under the table!

Lorraine Shelton was on hand to help with the booth on both Saturday and Sunday. After the first 200 visitors or so, the responses became automatic. The catch phrase "The Cat in Sheep's Clothing" came without a second thought. The description of the coat as "like lamb's wool" impressed the visitors. Saturday, I let a lot of people feel Goldie, who was pretty good about the whole thing. They were all just amazed at the feel of his coat, which, this weekend, was very good - soft and "woolie".

Sunday, Goldie had decided he had had enough. He was a wiggle-worm in the rings and didn't even want to come out to be petted and cuddled by me. Very few people were allowed to touch him on Sunday. Those who did were impressed and loved his coat and look. Most people preferred the longhair cat, but some preferred the shorthair (Su-Su and Tina). Many more people wondered if this was a longhair Devon or Cornish Rex. It was difficult to explain to people about the difference in inheritance (dominant vs recessive) among other things, so the answer was "No, it is a new breed, totally different from either Cornish or Devon and none of them are hypo-allergenic!"

Goldie and Su-Su were also the two showcats this weekend - Goldie once again only being shown because he was a longhair. In fact, when I said that to Stan Barnaby, he said, "Well, I was going to say!" Both Stan and Wayne Park hung ribbons on the cages, "so that you would know which one I preferred." Since it was very obvious which was closer to the standard (Su-Su), I would have been disappointed if it had gone the other way. I included Goldie because a judge at a different show tried to tell me that Su-Su was a longhair.

Comments by the judges mostly indicated disappointment in the coats - both of these cats are young (8-10 months) and do not have mature coats. In addition, Su-Su, the shorthair, was coming into heat, so she had almost no curl at all, but she had more than her sister, Tina. With a few spritzes of water between rings and little fur ruffling, I was able to get a little bit of curl to show, but it was not as curly as it should be. Because they are slow maturing, and a mature coat feels and looks different from a younger coat, we may find that only our older cats will ever catch the judges' eyes. (*Note: have you noticed a difference in coats between those produced by "cotton candy" Persians vs heavier coats? Which works best? See Jeri's notes above.*)

Among the many things Lorraine and I chatted about during the two days in the show and over dinner Saturday night were:

1. What colors are the most spectacular and able to catch the eye of the visitors and other breeders? If no one wants to look at our cats, or thinks they look just like Pookie after a

bath, how can we get them to be breeders and exhibitors of Selkirks?

2. How do we encourage experienced breeders/exhibitors to get involved with Selkirks? Do we use the Jeri Newman method of buttonholing other breeders? Do we forget about getting money for the cats (from other breeders) until we get more breeders working with the breed?
3. How do we get our numbers up? With so few registered, how can we expect to get more kittens born? Is anyone doing any breeding? Are there any kittens anywhere?
4. What kind of set up should we have for use by everyone for "breed booths"? Everyone seemed to enjoy the copies of magazine articles I had laid out on the table. Pictures of the various cats out there (all professionally taken, preferably) would impress the crowd even more. Send in your ideas about a breed booth setup that we could share as necessary. It would be nice if we could all be consistent, and a shared setup might be the way to go.
5. **How do we get some enthusiasm into the current Selkirk Rex breeders?** There has been almost no response to the last issue of "Woolgathering". There won't be as many issues unless I get some feedback or other communication from more people out there. Does no one care or have an opinion? Both Lorraine and I mentioned that we were losing enthusiasm for the whole thing because it seemed no one was doing anything. If you are doing something, why aren't you sharing it with the rest of us? We need to know that efforts are being made by others to find new breeders, to breed cats, to show our Selkirks, etc. **What are you doing and why aren't you letting everyone else know?** If we cannot generate enthusiasm amongst ourselves for the cat, how can we expect the judges and other breeders to be enthusiastic?

If you have any comments about the above, please write to me. If no one is communicating, it is a waste of time and money that I could be spending on my cats (since the money is all coming out of my pocket)! **The communication process needs your input!!!**

Other on-going projects:

1. Be sure to send me (and Jeri Newman) a copy of your Selkirk Rex pedigrees. We can keep all of them in separate data bases and make sure we don't lose the history on the breed.
2. Write a synopsis of what the judges said about your Selkirk when you showed it. Be sure to indicate the judge! This is important!
3. Write a brief history about yourself. Why did you get into Selkirks? What do you hope to accomplish? What colors are you

working with? When did you get your first cat? What breedings have you done? These are just some of the questions that you could answer. Be complete, give as much chronology as possible and send pictures, pedigrees, etc.

4. Send mug shots of your cats so we can share what we think Selkirks look like.
5. Suggestions on how to encourage more breeders to work with Selkirks. We need at least 25 by 1996!!
6. Someone to act as liaison with other cat fancy associations so that we can all be working toward the same thing.
7. Someone to organize an advertising program to which we can all contribute that won't involve last minute decisions.

*From Reader's Digest*

A three-year-old boy went with his dad to see a new litter of kittens. On returning home, he breathlessly informed his mother, "There were two boy kittens and two girl kittens."

"How did you know that?" his mother asked.

"Daddy picked them up and looked underneath," he replied. "I think it's printed on the bottom."

- Pearl Scully in *The Saturday Evening Post*  
(If only it were true!)

#### SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE INCATS SHOW

*By Lorraine Shelton*

Sure wish I had been feeling better! I usually thoroughly enjoy working with the public, but that throng of humanity is quite overwhelming when you aren't feeling your best! The set-up of the booth worked out quite well, forming a "lane" of traffic in front of the cages that kept the crowd moving so everyone could see Donna's curly kids. Donna brought some Nolvasan along so that interested parties could get their hands on the cats. This really helps, as this time of year the cats weren't in full spectacular coat and touching is definitely believing with this breed! Most were quite willing to "scrub

up" beforehand.

A distraction to the booth was the fact that the show producers had not given Donna a place to bench her Tonkinese! So we were constantly telling folks, "No, no that isn't a Selkirk." Even worse, the Tonkinese breed booth was shut down the second (and busiest) day due to illness on the part of the exhibitor, so we ended up with more "gate" asking questions about Donna's lovely Tonk champion than about the Selkirks!! His loveable antics drew many admirers.

This phenomenon made me aware that we really need to keep an eye on personality development on these guys. Yes, I know right now type is our main issue, as it should be, but we really need a "Selkirk Ambassador" with an incredibly outgoing personality. The cats at the breed booths lounging sedately in open baskets, on top of scratching posts, etc., were real showstoppers. A "scaredy cat" only brings comments of "Ohhhh, the poor cat is scared", not "Look at the coat on that cat."

Remember all my lectures on building the barn before we paint it? Well, I completely forgot about the "crowd pleasing" aspect of the promotion of this breed. In order for this breed to "catch fire", we have to grab folks' attention. The beautiful torties and brown tabby we had on display just didn't have the "crowd appeal", in my opinion, that some other colors may have had. The picture of the patched tabby in the *Cats* magazine article sure turned heads, just as my attention was grabbed years ago by my first encounter with a spectacular white longhair. In my region, there was a silver patched tabby and white longhaired Scottish Fold shown that made the gate audibly gasp over its color. Should we disrupt our breeding programs to focus on the more "crowd pleasing" colors like points, whites, vans, silvers, etc? No, but if a choice has to be made between two outcross cats. . . maybe it should be a consideration. Right now we need our numbers up. And the only way to attract a new enthusiast is to catch their attention with a spectacular cat. Color can contribute to that. Of course, beauty is certainly in the eye of the beholder. . .just something to keep in mind.

The highlight of the weekend for me came while we were packing up after the crowds had dissipated. At this point, I had a wonderful opportunity to discuss the "new breed" process with two folks that had "been there, done that": the founder of the American Curl and a Norwegian Forest Cat breeder. They had some very good points to make. They emphasized how presentation must be FLAWLESS, something our breed has received a LOT of criticism for from many different areas of the country. With small numbers of breeders working in Selkirks, one person's actions will very easily be seen as reflecting the ethics, breeding practices and husbandry standards of us all. BE CAREFUL OUT THERE!

Another thing that was emphasized was the need for mutual respect between breeders. We can, AND WILL, disagree. Our debates may even become heated at times, but we must work together in an environment of mutual respect. The "behind the scenes" attacks on one another that has occurred in other breeds must not be allowed to build within our own little community here. The only cure for this is COMMUNICATION. If you have a beef. . . WRITE IT DOWN. . .send it to Donna to print in the newsletter and let's discuss it:

out in the open where such discussions belong. Remember the "We Are The World" video where many of show business' biggest egos were brought together under one roof? The phrase coined there was, "Check your egos at the door." We are too small to be torn apart by egos, but to set our egos aside for the betterment of the Selkirk breed is going to require effort from all of us.

At the INCATS show there were TWO American Curl booths, neither one "talking to" the other. Let that be a warning to us all. Let's look for the warning signs and defuse the bombs. We are already "broken in two" by the fact that some of us show exclusively in one organization or another. That separation needs to be addressed before we turn into two different breeds! The Selkirk Rex Society was created to take care of this but has had some problems building momentum. In the meantime, we need to focus on keeping the lines of communication with our TICA (ACFA, ACA, CCF, whatever) brothers and sisters WIDE open. Either we need to do whatever it takes to get the *Selkirk Serenade* off the ground, or we should have regular columnists in the *Woolgathering* to give us the news from the other associations.

Well, the purpose of the INCATS show was breed promotion. We got a lot of flyers distributed and got some cats seen. But the only way for our breed to succeed is for it to GROW. We need to get our numbers up, registrations are DOWN. We need to hit the major shows with a big splash. Donna and I started putting together some ideas for a "permanent" breed booth, with flashy matching cage curtains (give your input now or they'll end up looking too "California Foofy!"), a large sturdy banner with our logo, etc., etc. This may seem silly to some, but catching the attention of the fancy will make our goals much easier to obtain. The more "professional" we look at future shows, the more respect we will command.

I sure had a lot of fun talking with Donna for a whole weekend! I sure didn't envy her that long drive Sunday night. Donna was able to attend the press party on Thursday and a "last minute" press function on Friday to make sure our breed got represented in the "pre-show" hoopla that INCATS is so skilled at generating! Let's see if we can all work together to build up publicity for the Selkirks.

#### **Other matters:**

I was disappointed in the lack of response to my plea for financial help and pictures with what should be a very eye catching ad in the widely circulated *Cats USA* magazine. Only one person responded, Ruth Pasley, who was able to send me a nice professional photo of Mel Lino to use. I have no other pictures of Selkirks, so will be including the one I got from Jeri. I don't like this, as it gives the impression we only come in white!

I was hoping we could run a permanent ad in *Cat Fancy* and *Cats* for the Selkirk Rex Breed Association, with a picture and a contact address to "Send a SASE for more information and a list of breeders." I can't foot the bill for this all alone. If anyone else thinks this is a good idea, PLEASE contact me and I'll get a price quote together and see how much it will run us a

year. The reason I am volunteering to spearhead this is that no one can accuse me right now of using this as a way to sell kittens of my own, as it will probably be at least a year or two before I have an Selkirks for sale to anyone!

### **Kittens/Cats Available:**

**Pixelpoint Belle Starr** - A tortie & white shorthair curly from a Selkirk to an Exotic breeding. Pretty good type - muzzle is a bit narrow at 8 months old but may get better. Also, two straight hairs (boy & girl - sibs to Pixelpoint Golden Lambkin) and Goldie's babies (homozygous lhc boy (from his mother) & lhst girl (from his sister)).

**Non-registerable, non-showable** kittens: Red shc male, Red and white shc male, black (sable?) shc female, tortie shst female (Selkirk to Tonkinese). Cute, but strictly pets. They have Tonk personalities - very outgoing and affectionate. This occurred because my boy figured out how to get out of his cage and Tina (Belle Starr) was willing!

**If you have kittens available, send in a list of what you have and whether they are pets, breeders, straight or curly. We all need to know what is available in case people call!!**

### **FROM THE EDITOR:**

I don't know if you've noticed the title, but we were accepted by CFA as a club. They asked, however, that we change our name. Dick Kallmeyer called me on June 16 to let me know and told me they would be sending me the information. If you can think of a better name than **Selkirk Rex Breed Club**, let me know.

### **SELKIRK REX BREED CLUB**

President: Jeri Newman

Vice President: Lorraine Shelton

Secretary/Editor: Donna Bass

Treasurer: Carolyn Koval

Directors: Joy McCabe (East)  
Nancy McMullen (Midwest)  
Ruth Paslay (West)

#### Hair Designation Abbreviations:

shst	Shorthair straight
shc	Shorthair curly
lhst	Longhair straight
lhc	Longhair curly

**777777**

Kittens Available from Donna Bass  
(510) 798-9150