

CANINE CORNER

by Kathleen Crisley, CSMT, CTMT, SCMT

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Remembering Jenny



Jenny and John.

There are some people who become special to you, not because they have been a regular feature in your day-to-day life, but rather because they were influential at key moments. In this column I say goodbye to my friend Jenny Hamilton who passed away on 11 September 2021.

Jenny is known to many of you because of her long-time involvement in dog breeding, showing and judging. I will leave it to those who knew her best in this regard to pay tribute to her, which is only fitting.

I met Jenny in December 2003, when I was put in touch with her by a mutual acquaintance, Sue Horton. The email said: "A lovely, gentle, abandoned 3-year old spayed black and white Pointer (English) bitch is desperately needing a permanent home."

I phoned Jenny the next day and, after going to see Daisy, and then bringing a friend for a second opinion, Jenny was savvy enough to offer Daisy to me on appro. My family and I would later laugh because I think Daisy was on appro for about 12 hours.

And so began our friendship. I would see Jenny every time I dropped Daisy with her for what I called Daycare Wednesday. Jenny would happily board Daisy when I would travel overseas each year or when I needed to work out of town. I recall even dropping Daisy to stay on a cold and, ultimately snowy, June day. I then discovered that it was Jenny's wedding day! This was typical Jenny. Always helpful, always kind, and always giving of her time and effort.

She was also a lady on a mission. I never truly saw her sit down for longer than a cup of tea. She'd be off to dog shows with her

stall, boarding dogs, breeding dogs, or sewing dog beds on her sewing machine in the garage. And almost always there would be someone coming or going when I arrived — she and John enjoyed a large circle of friends. When I told Jenny of my plans to start my business, she was totally supportive. In 2008, she dressed Daisy's father, Shaka, in his bow tie and tux and attended Daisy's eighth birthday party at the Christchurch Dog Training Club grounds where we officially launched. John came too, suffering from two broken elbows at the time which I thought was pretty heroic. Thanks, John.

Jenny graciously allowed me to sell dog treats from her stall at a Mandeville show; she purchased treats and invited me to work

with several of her dogs, including Weasel and Wilba. I regularly bought pigs ears and bedding from her. When I considered adding a greyhound to our home, she planted the seed of doubt about whether it was the right thing to do, because the greyhound would have different exercise needs and would I really have the time? I decided against it.

When Daisy passed away in July 2014, Jenny cried with me and said, "maybe it's time you got that greyhound that you've been interested in." And so it was: Izzy arrived in October.

I last boarded Izzy with Jenny in May 2019, when I made a mad dash to the USA because my mother was dying. Jenny gave me a big hug when I got back and told me she knew exactly how I felt because she still talked to her Mum every day. Shortly after that, I found out about Jenny's cancer and forthcoming stem cell transplant and paid a visit to give her a 'get well soon' gift.

Like many friends, we kept in touch through Facebook. After the big 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, she told me she was in remission and excited because her daycare dogs were returning in Alert Level 2. But in August there was a heartfelt post from Jenny saying she was in hospital and that the stem cell transplant hadn't taken but she would keep fighting.

On a brilliantly, sunny spring afternoon, I checked my Facebook feed to discover that Jenny had crossed over earlier that day. I'm sure Daisy was there alongside many other dogs to greet her.

Goodbye, Jenny. You have had a profound influence on the direction of my life just by being you. I will remember your smile always. 🐾