

Mary Lott

Overnight, on May 30, 2023, Mary Lott, a true all breed herding enthusiast, and mentor to many younger people starting out in the sport, passed away in her sleep. Mary lived in Salem, Oregon and trained and trialed her Bearded Collies for several decades in various dog sports, but herding was her passion. The news of Mary's passing shook many in the Pacific Northwest, where she was often seen at AHBA trials...always delighting in her breed's joyful style working stock, whether a leg was earned that day or not. Watching Mary handling her dogs, reminded one why we train and exhibit our dogs in the first place...

...for Love.

Mary just plain embodied the essence of a good sportsman. I think that is part of the reason so many are saddened by her loss. She had a truly generous spirit with her dogs, and her friends. She was kind and wickedly funny. Always ready with her smile.

She supported her herding community in many ways. In exchange for a few hours on stock, Mary could be relied upon to help out at Fido's, or Brigand's or Frog's Breath at trials or lessons. She was a passionate supporter of AHBA and all breed herding and brought many people along with her.



AHBA judges Lynn Leach (Canada), Jackie Goulder (UK), and Reegan Ray (USA) share their memories of their friendships with Mary.

Reegan Ray:

I'm just so sad to hear of Mary's passing. She was a wonderfully positive person. A true dog lady. An accomplished classical musician...a dependable soul who was a dog sport mentor to me. Her door was always open with wine at the ready. Mary's home in Salem was always my first port of call when traveling up to trial at Packleader, or Frog's Breath...she introduced me to many lovely people...now long time friends.



She could talk herding tirelessly and took such care in explaining the AHBA courses and what they were designed to exhibit. We would sit in front of a fire in her living room with a glass of wine and talk into the wee hours of the morning.

Oddly, I came to know Mary through a herding trainer and judge in the UK! I'd travelled to Yorkshire in about 2008 or 2009 to stay with ISDS judge Jackie Goulder and observe and film her training a Boxer! Jackie had just started to train a few Beardies, Mary's breed, and they had been friends for a while. Jackie asked if I lived near a place called Salem, and surely I must know Mary Lott! Well, no...but soon I did.



Several years later Mary invited Jackie to come to Oregon and stay with her so she could take her around to learn about The American Herding Breed Association. I came up from California and the three of us made a west coast tour. That experience solidified my love for AHBA and the people it attracted, as well. It was Mary at the heart of it.

A few years later, Terry Parrish and I judged the first AHBA trial in the UK at Jackie's farm in Yorkshire. In 2017, Jackie became the first judge in the UK for the all breed herding program her friend Mary Lott had so passionately championed. Mary was so excited about the opportunities

for other breeds to participate in a herding trial program. She was a huge supporter of AHBA... behind the scenes...as was her way.

I will deeply miss her.



Mary posted this picture on Facebook when I was in route to her house..."Reegan, your Salem stop is ready for you and the Beardies are ready to bounce with the Boxer!" Such was her joy in making someone else's experience with their dog...a great one.

Lynn Leach:

Mary Lott will be remembered at Downriver as one of the special people with a kind and giving heart. She was encouraging and sweet to all that she met. Continuously helping with anything that she could to see that all-breed herding opportunities were available for anyone who wanted them. She loved her dogs, striving to teach them all she could, and never showing disappointment in them. I remember her staying in her campervan for her herding vacations here in Canada. We spent hours chatting about training ideas and giving her dogs the experience they needed to build their confidence to become independent workers. She would attend a clinic, or lesson somewhere, and then message me to tell me her successes and how we might try some of these ideas with others she had met while here. She shared her knowledge freely and was excited to see success for everyone. We will miss Mary – heaven has taken another one of the 'Great Ones'. Be at peace my friend.



Jackie Goulder:

I can't remember exactly how I met Mary. I think she must have picked up on some of the Bearded Collie people in the UK who liked to work with sheep. Her infectious enthusiasm was very much a factor in the UK beardie herding scene at that time. Certainly we communicated over, in particular a training booklet featuring a British Boxer, which soon involved Reagan Ray, who had been busy getting boxers involved in competition in the US. There was the annual three trial week in Washington and I travelled to stay with Mary in Salem. A beautiful place. The training and trials took place at three venues and was amazing to watch and photograph.

I have never forgotten the kindness and generosity of Mary, and her friends, throughout my visit. Mary remained in close contact over all the intervening years, oh what a blessing Facebook can be. She loved her 'hood, her dogs, her brother, her garden, her music and dragons of all sorts. She put 110 percent into training with the sheep, amongst all the other dog disciplines she excelled at as well, and she loved her friends. I shall so miss her popping up for some cheerful banter with my (equally witty) brother. It was the most tremendous privilege to have known Mary, I shall miss her a Lott.



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Currently a memorial celebration of Mary's life is in the planning stages, to be held at Fido's Farm in Olympia, WA, in July. Please check the AHBA Facebook page for more information, as it becomes available.