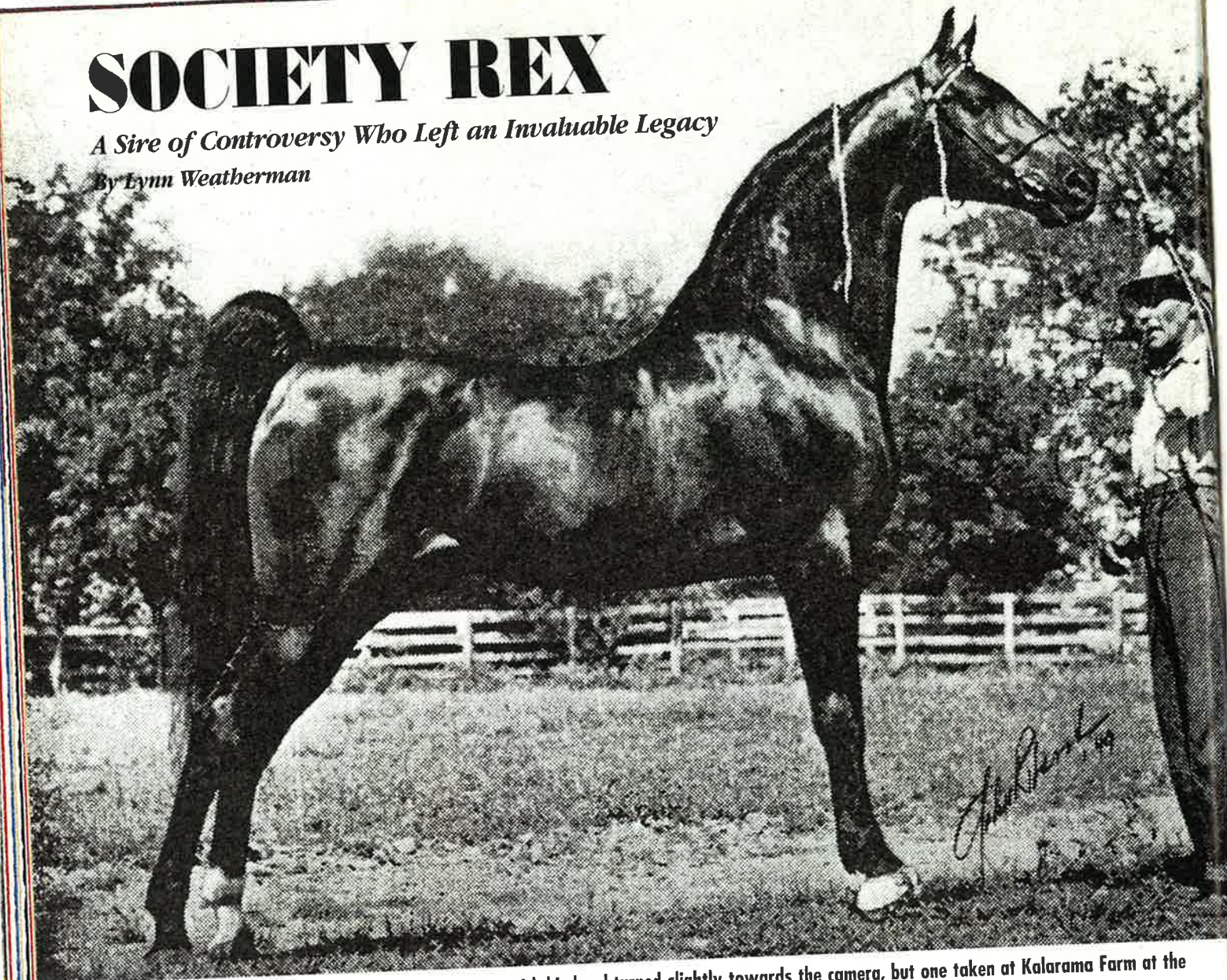


SOCIETY REX

A Sire of Controversy Who Left an Invaluable Legacy

By Lynn Weatherman



This is not the familiar Horst photo of Society Rex with his head turned slightly towards the camera, but one taken at Kalarama Farm at the same time. The horse's head is a straight profile as he is headed by the famous horseman Joe Walker. This picture is similar to the Rounds photo of Kalarama Rex and Joe Walker.

DESPITE the fact that the stallion Sun Flower won the fine harness stake at the 1914 Kentucky State Fair and the five gaited stake at St. Louis, he was apparently deserving of his reputation for being hot and difficult. He was the sire of some great broodmares, including Kate Haines, but they were unappreciated until their produce hit the show ring.

His daughter Spoonbill was bred by John Crozier, a wealthy textile manufacturer from Upland, Pennsylvania, whose horse interests were managed by Bob Moreland, Lexington, Kentucky. Spoonbill was foaled in 1920 at Crozier's Kingston Farm on Russell Cave Pike near Lexington. We are not sure how she got her unusual name. The only clue is that Crozier named other fillies in the same crop for birds, i.e., Sandpiper and Skylark. She was sold as a two year old, passing through several hands, and in March 1926 Spoonbill was sold at Tattersalls by the W. H. Kerr estate for \$210 to Robert F. Simpson, Nicholasville, Kentucky.

She may have been shipped directly from Tattersalls to

North Middletown, Kentucky, because early next May she had her first foal, Gypsy Sunflower, a filly by King Barrymore, the stallion designated to succeed his sire Bourbon King at A. G. Jones and Sons Farm. Gypsy Sunflower died tragically in a fire at Kalarama Farm in July of 1936.

Spoonbill's next foal was another filly by King Barrymore. Named Society Barrymore, she was sold to Dixiana Farm, and Charlie Dunn rode her to win the three-year-old five gaited stake at Louisville in 1933, establishing her dam as a premier producer. The next year, Society Barrymore topped the three gaited over-two for Wallace Bailey, riding for Dodge Stables. She was the Dodge Stables' three gaited stake horse for several years.

Robert Simpson died in 1930, and Mrs. Simpson may have had a special fondness for the next foal, which she named Heartsease King. Mrs. Simpson "farmed" her broodmares at this time; "farmed" was a popular synonym for leasing mares. Spoonbill went to W. C. Mountjoy of Lawrenceburg who bred her to Hobbie Star. She produced the filly Dancing Star who would become the dam of Moonshine Flier and Dancing Glory.

Kalarama Rex is King

In the middle 1930s, breeders of American Saddlebreds were beginning to pay attention to the Sire Rating established in 1929 by W. Jefferson Harris, professor of animal husbandry at the University of Kentucky. Kalarama Rex was rated number one in the nation in 1935. Judge I. H. Thurman, the founder of Kalarama Farm, Springfield, Kentucky, died in 1930, leaving the operation of the establishment to his son L. Ray Thurman. His wife Alice was her son's financial partner. Ray Thurman was breeding all the good mares he could to the stellar son of Rex Peavine. In 1936, Mrs. Simpson farmed Spoonbill to Kalarama.

On April 7, 1937, Spoonbill produced her most famous offspring, Society Rex, at Kalarama Farm. Two years later, she would have a full brother named Kalarama Command, who won the two-year-old five gaited stake at Louisville and had a good career at stud at Blythewood Farm, Cleveland, Tennessee. Kalarama Farm finally purchased Spoonbill in 1941, but she did not have another foal until 1947, a filly by Gallant Kalarama.

Named for his second dam and sire, the bay colt Society Rex was a precocious youngster and was picked from 14 others foaled at Kalarama to represent the farm in yearling competition. He made his show ring debut at Harrodsburg, led by Joe Walker, winning the class at the Mercer County Fair. Walker was the longtime black trainer for Kalarama. At the Kentucky State Fair, he was fourth in the ASHA Futurity and fifth in the breeders stake.

As a two year old, Society Rex was shown just one time, at home at the Springfield show, where Frank Bradshaw drove him to win the two-year-old fine harness and the fine harness stake. He was used at stud for the first time the next spring, and again his only show was at Springfield, where Bradshaw rode him to win the junior five gaited and placed second in the championship.

His biggest year in the show ring was 1941. He topped the stallion-gelding class and the junior fine harness stake at the Lexington Junior League horse show with Frank Bradshaw in



This McClasky photo of CH Lady Carrigan and Garland Bradshaw is owned by Harold Poile of South Africa.

the buggy. Ray Thurman took over the lines at the Indiana and Kentucky State Fairs, and the four-year-old stallion was junior fine harness champion at Indianapolis and reserve in the stake. At Louisville, he was fifth in the junior stake and sixth in the championship, which was won by Vanity, with second to Noble Kalarama and third to Mountain Raven.

Frank Bradshaw said that Society Rex took a bad rap after the 1942 Mercer County Fair, his last show. "It was really hot," said Bradshaw, "and he had given his all in the stallion stake. They kept working them in the championship until he just couldn't go anymore. He didn't quit, he was just worn out and there's a difference. Anyway, in Kentucky, this gave him the reputation of being a quitter, which was a long ways from the truth." Many people will be surprised to hear that, because in many other parts of the country, Society Rex and his get had another reputation, perhaps more deserved. They were hot, excitable to the extreme.

Frank Bradshaw said he really liked Society Rex himself, but for the most part he didn't do well with his get. He said his brother Garland had better luck with the Society Rex horses.

World War II then put a serious crimp on equine activities and ended the show career of Society Rex. With war raging and the horse business slow, Ray Thurman and his aging mother decided to end their partnership with a dispersal sale on September 22, 1944. The great Kalarama Rex was to be sold, but he died on September 12.

Seventy-two head went before the auction block and they averaged \$1,068.45. Society Rex topped the sale at \$7,500 with Ray Thurman bidding for A. Hastings Fiske of Indianapolis, Indiana. Thurman continued to manage the breeding career of Society Rex at Kalarama Farm until late in 1948 when another auction was held.

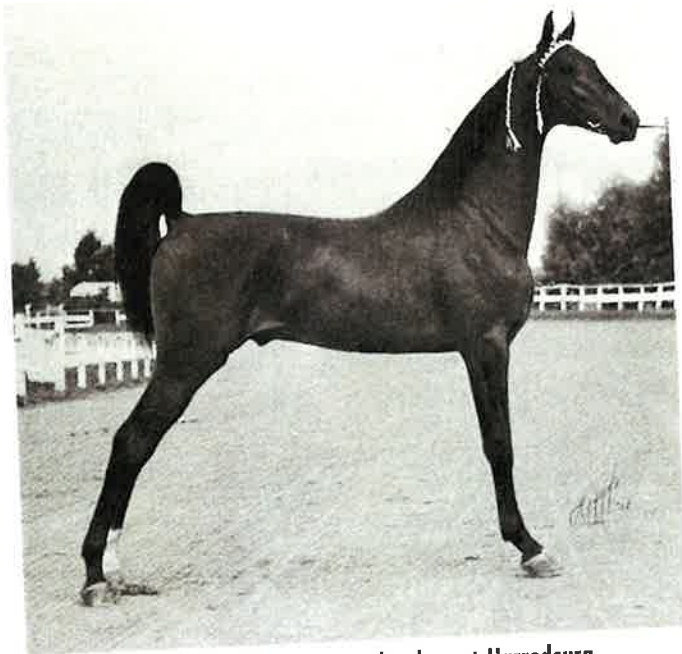
Society Rex was bought by W. H. Anderson of Asheville, North Carolina, owner of Mar-Beth-Top Farm, Springfield, Kentucky. (Today this is High Point Farm.) He paid \$13,000 for Society Rex and sent the stallion to stand at Minton Hickory Farm, Barbourville, Kentucky. His motivation was perhaps the fact that Society Rex had sired a grand filly named Lady Carrigan, out of his mare Mountain Raven. Unfortunately, the mare would not get in foal to Society Rex again.

One of the first good ones sired by Society Rex was the beautiful grey mare Society Ann, out of Hi Dixie by Peavine's Highland Chief. Bred by Kalarama Farm, she was purchased as a three year old in 1945 by A. S. Billings, Omaha, Nebraska, and turned over to Arthur Simmons. She was shown all over the country, winning most of the time.

One of the legendary incidents of the show ring occurred at the Boone County Fair, Columbia, Missouri, in 1949. This was the same year Simmons moved his operation to Mexico, Missouri. Also, Stonewall King died just before the fair and was buried at the end of the show ring of the new fairgrounds. Society Ann was beaten in the three gaited championship by Lovely Rose. An exasperated Art Simmons jumped off the mare outside the ring, turned her loose and slapped her on the rear, saying, "If you can't beat her, then take care of yourself!" She ran all over the fairgrounds, but was finally caught uninjured.

Society Rex spent three of his most productive seasons at Minton Hickory Farm.

Late in 1950 W. H. Anderson died; S. R. Cross, Huckleberry Hill Farm, Marion, North Carolina, became the new owner. Society Rex was sent back to Kalarama and then again to Minton



Society Rex as a yearling. He won the class at Harrodsburg.

Hickory. Trainer Jack Boyd, Simpsonville, South Carolina, was the Huckleberry Hill overseer, and Society Rex divided his time between Minton Hickory and the Jack Boyd Stables.

S. R. Cross died in a 1953 airplane crash. A most unusual method was devised for the sale of Society Rex — a silent auction conducted by the heir's attorney. Nine bids were submitted in sealed envelopes and were opened on February 15, 1954.

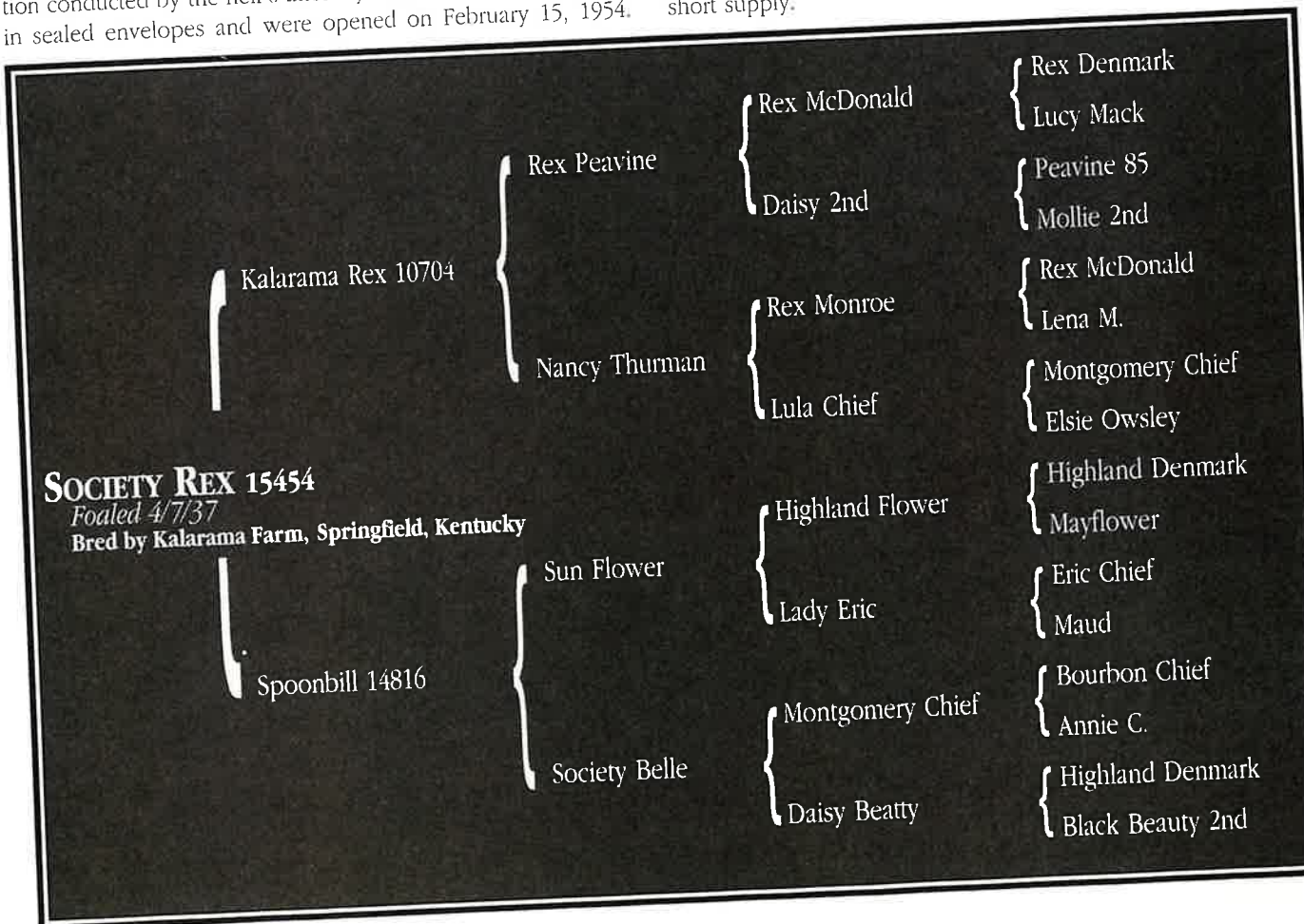
The successful bidder was C. Y. Thomason, Greenwood, South Carolina, also a client of Jack Boyd.

Society Rex remained at Minton Hickory until the spring of 1957, when he was brought to Greenwood. Sam Brannon had been hired as manager-trainer, and the horses were kept at the Greenwood Fairgrounds. Brannon said Society Rex was "easy to deal with. He was a bit peculiar in that he was a little crabby in the stall. He wouldn't offer to bite, but would step on your feet if you weren't stern with him. He was a great breeding horse and I felt honored to have had something to do with him." On June 12, Society Rex was found dead in his stall and was buried in Greenwood.

The highest he made on the sire ratings was third, but contemporaries of Society Rex were Stonewall King, American Ace, Anacacho Denmark, and Anacacho Shamrock. He was the sire of high quality, leg-using horses. He had a total of 347 get, 173 colts and 174 fillies.

One horseman said his bay get were superior to the chestnuts — there were 168 bay or brown, 133 chestnuts, 30 black, 8 grays, 3 roan, and 1 golden horse. This is probably a generalization, but may contain enough truth to be an example of "color-linked characteristics" which have fascinated geneticists for sometime. The three best Society Rex horses were bay or brown, CH Lady Carrigan, CH Delightful Society and CH Something Wonderful. Yet the top show horses, Mahogany's Society Genius, Bold Caesar and Lovely Maid, were chestnut. Many of the good sires by Society Rex were chestnut.

Society Rex was a grand individual, a wonderful sire, but most important, in retrospect, today's major link to the Denmark blood of Rex McDonald and Highland Denmark, which is in short supply.



NOTABLE GET & DESCENDANTS OF SOCIETY REX 15454

Sire: Kalarama Rex 10704

Dam: Spoonbill 14816 by Sun Flower 4460

STALLIONS

BLANCHITA'S SOCIETY REX

| CH Mi Folie

HICKORY SOCIETY REX

| CH Daring Society

JERI-LYNN'S SOCIETY MAN

| Crescent's Society Gal

| Bobby John

KALARAMA'S GAY FLIGHT

KING'S SOCIETY

| Sacramento

LONGVIEW'S KING OF SOCIETY

MAHOGANY'S SOCIETY GENIUS

| CH Genius Society

| Mr. Society

| Kate's Scoop

| Earl of Windsor

| Freelance Agent

| Callaway's Cardinal

| CH Callaway's Crusader

| CH Callaway's Chandelle

| Sudden Danger

| Petticoat Junction

MAJOR MY DARE

| Society Shadow

| Sunday Meetin'

| McDonald's Jet

| Miss Baker

| Starlet's Miss Universe

MODEL OF SOCIETY

| Jack B. Nimble

NIGHT OF FOLLY

| American Folly

| Colonel Dixie

| Shot In The Dark

| CH Finisterre's Gift Of Love

| Folly of Ortiz

| Folly's Night Flyer

| CH Vanity's Showcase

| Folly's Supreme Dream

| BNB's Rambling Folly

| CH Folly's Gypsy

| CH Imperial Knight

| CH Knight of Melody

| CH Spring Valley's The Benefactor

| Havana Hijack

| Spicewood's Folly

| Spring Valley's Follyrama

| Spring Valley's Princess Elizabeth

| Preferred Property

| Summer Night E.G.

| Tanglewood Bo Diddle

| Carey's Night of Love

| Night of Roses

| Reprise

| CH Let's Dance H.P.

| CH Hanalei Bay

| Night Odyssey

| Rifles And Roses

| Bi-Mi Replique

| Mini Griggs

| My Bugatti Royale

| CH Lady Oracle

| Ch Love Them Roses

| Sheffield's Streetwalker

| Spring Valley's Deliverance

| CH Golden Deliverance

| CH My Montego Bay

| CH Our Golden Duchess

| CH Revelwood's Jacks Are Wild

| CH Shadow Run

| CH Shady Lady Luck

| Co-Ed's Leading Lady

RED EMERALD

| Forty Carats

| Purloined Emerald

REGAL SOCIETY

SECRET SOCIETY

| CH Sea of Secrets

| CH Nutcracker Suite

| CH Precious Secret

| El Rey Manchado

| Society Judy

| Gigi's Secret

| Flight 747

| Secret Service

| Society's Queen of Color

| CH Valley Queen of Color

| Secret Selection

| CH Kimbeland's Selection

| CH Kimbeland's Secret

| CH Summertime Colors

| CH Summertime Fanfare

| Absolutely Fabulous

| CH Silky Selection

| CH Kimbeland's Secret Fashion

| CH Kimbeland's Diamond Lil

| CH Four S Exciting Evening

| CH Summertime Dream

SOCIETY BOURBON

| Society's Dianna

| CH Freedom Hall

| Pal-O-Mine's Royal Reverie

| CH Sultan's Starina

| Sultan's Dianna

SOCIETY FEUDIST

SOCIETY KALARAMA

| High Point Flaming Society

| High Point's Society Leader

| Society's Flaming Dawn

SOCIETY MASTERMIND

| CH Bonheur's Wild Raven

| Bonheur's Hells-A-Poppin

| Colonel Jo Zach

| Pioneer King

| Miss Mar-Nel

SOCIETY MOONSHINE

SOCIETY'S CROWN JEWELL

SOCIETY'S LEADING MAN

| CH Park Avenue Playboy

SOCIETY'S WILD GENIUS

| CH Wild Tempest

| Magnum P.I.

| Orbit

| CH Dr. Something Special

| CH Sunrise Silhouette

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

| Dangerous Assignment

| The Girl From U.N.C.L.E.

SPECIAL SOCIETY

| The Golden Rule

| CH Red Oak's Imagination

STONEWALL'S SOCIETY

| Eternal Fire

| CH Beverly's Sweet Someone

DAUGHTERS

BOHEMIAN SUE

| Denmark's Society Sue

| Denmark's Radiant Society

| Be Happy

| CH A Sweet Treat

DANGEROUS SOCIETY

| CH Burning Tree's Brandywine

CH DELIGHTFUL SOCIETY

GRASSLANDS' DEBUTANTE

| Just Plain Jane

| CH Hide-A-Way's Lotta Firefly

| Cameo's Farewell

| Hide-A-Way's Laura Belle

JEAN MARLIN

| King's Commando

| Major Command

| Jewel Storey

| SLS Sportin' Life

| CH In Reality

| CH City Sights

JERI-LYNN'S SOCIETY BELLE

| CH Kimbeland's Selection

CH LADY CARRIGAN

| Raven Wing

| Carrigan

| Pal-O-Mine's Royal Reverie

| CH Carrigan's Gift

| Broadlands Gifted Lady

| Carrigan's Lady

| Reverie's Mayday

| Raven's Video Report

LOVELY MAID

| Buck And Wing

SENIORITA SOCIETY

SOCIETY ANN

SOCIETY BONNETT

| Cora Sutton

| CH Cora's Time

| CH Best Of Time

| CH Times Best

| Time Willing

| Cora's Vanity

SOCIETY BRUNETTE

SOCIETY MAID

| Ironwood Mac

CH SOMETHING WONDERFUL