

After Westminster, Rumor Has It: pedigree pups this summer

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After winning "Best in Show" at the 141st Annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show on Feb. 14, 2017, native royal "Rumor Has It" is about to transition into her post-career life-phase of motherhood later this year.

Since this news is coming from co-owner and Rumor-handler Kent Boyles, it's probably more than just a rumor.

"Hopefully, if everything goes right," vouchsafes the 30-year veteran dog trainer and German shepherd breeder, "we'll mate her in the summer."

Westminster's canine royalty may well become an Edgertonian Dam.

Long-time local resident Boyles is referring to his top award-winning German shepherd, Rumor, pedigree name "GCh. Ch. Lockenhaus' Rumor Has It V Kenlyn" — who's earned more coveted canine awards than room permits printing. Nonetheless, since the "Best in Show" title is the highest of the American Kennel Club's plethora of distinguished awards for pure-breed dogs, it epitomizes Rumor's pinnacle standing.

Boyles already has a sire in mind to promote with Rumor the next generation: a male shepherd named Mailo that Boyle has used before, hailing from the Washington, D.C. area with a proven track record of show awards and performance excellence, not to mention distinctive pedigree on both sides of the family. For example, the intended male's mother was winner of the 2009 German Seiger dog show awards, according to Boyles, which is one of Europe's premier annual dog shows.

In fact, a couple of dogs owned and trained

by Boyles that are scions of Mailo have recently returned with fresh wins from competitions.

And leading a new pack of winners on the horizon is "Tony," who is one-half brother to Rumor, having the same Sire, but a different Dam. It must be remembered that besides training, handling and showing dogs at North American shows, Boyles also breeds dogs, specifically, German shepherds.

And though Boyles travels to Europe on occasion, these are usually to scout for an appropriate mate for the male or female shepherd he may own. "However," Boyles confides, "though we haven't done international shows beyond the U.S. national and Canadian national shows, our 'Micah' will soon go over to Europe to compete in shows in Germany."

At the U.S. national level, two of Mailo's aforementioned scions — brothers, actually — garnered recent awards: "Johnny" for Winning Dog and "Peabo" for Reserve (Runner-up) Winning Dog. At the Canadian national level — the other arena in which Boyles mainly competes — Peabo took home the Winning Dog award.

"At the 2016 U.S. National, we took both sides of Winning Dog, the male one for Johnny, the other for female, Billie, who is half-sister to Rumor."

Undertaking a campaign of continuous show dogs for any given year is a serious investment in time and money. Presently, Boyles and his partner, Liz Oster, co-own Tony, officially known as "Marquis Hermes V Kenlyn"; but, if they undertake a major campaign, they will need a lot of money to fund and promote the program.

Boyles has finished more than 400 campaign

championships in his distinctive career — many of them for dogs Boyles and his staff have trained at their Edgerton facility, the Kenlyn German Shepherds training compound located at 11714 N. Eastman Road. However, some of trophies come from dogs he not only trained, but bred; and the adept trainer is planning to pass Tony through the gauntlet of 100 dog shows in a single year.

"That's only been done by 42 animals in the history of dog shows," Boyles asserts.

One of them was Rumor, who entered 185 dog shows during the 2015 run-up to the 2016 Westminster show, where she came within a hairsbreadth of winning the Best in Show award for that year. After Rumor's performance there, Boyles and co-owners Pamela McElheney, Deborah Stern, Pamela Buckles and Patti Dukeman thought that it might be best to retire her from competition before she was over her prime, believing that rearing a brood would leverage her prize-winning genes for future generations.

However, in December 2016 the owners reconsidered their options, finally deciding to enter Rumor into the 2017 Westminster show for a final run. Though not the 185 shows preceding the 2016 competition, Boyles wanted to test the waters and see if Rumor even had the desire to compete. So, he took her to 11 shows during January 2017, traveling to Michigan, Ohio and Virginia to enter, as well as in Wisconsin.

Rumor won 11 group awards of 11 show entries, alongside six reserve/runner-up "Best in Show" awards. She also won two "Best in Show" awards. Both Boyles and Oster were impressed and thought Rumor had done as well in these show as she had done anywhere before. The green light was on.

The 141st Westminster Dog Show took place Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 13-14, 2017. Over a two-day period, Boyles would lead Rumor through their well-rehearsed program to seize top spots for breed and the show's best.

On Monday, Boyles and Rumor leapt into the ring at Madison Square Garden and successfully passed through the competitive hurdles to snatch top honors in a field of 31 Best of Breed winners comprising the Herding Group.

On Tuesday evening, Rumor competed for the 2017 Best of Show with dogs from 49 states and 16 foreign countries. A favorite from the 2016 competition, Rumor was well-remembered and loudly applauded. When she won, it brought down the house.

That officially gave Rumor her 104th win in all-breed best in shows awards.

When her total competitions are taken together, Rumor is a canine veteran of hundreds of shows, winning American



Kenlyn's Anke is a service dog that helps blind students become acclimated to working with service dogs. (Photo submitted by Kent Boyles)



Tony, Rumor's half-brother, won the "Bred By Exhibitor Herding Group" award at the 2016 AKC Royal Canin Invitational. Rumor won the award in 2015. (Photo submitted by Kent Boyles)

Kennel Club's (AKC) "2015 American's Top Dog Amongst All Breeds" Award as well as an unbelievable 101 "Best-in-Show" awards in 2015 alone, culminating with AKC's prestigious 2015 "Best-in-Show" Award at the AKC Eckanuba Invitational in Orlando, Fla.

Rumor also garnered the 2015 Purina Championship Cup and, additionally in 2016, she won the German Shepherd Best of Breeds and Herding Group Number One titles at the 140th Westminster Kennel Club show in February 2016, where she was runner-up for Best of Show.

Interestingly, at the 2015 AKC Royal Canine Invitational, Rumor won the "Bred By Exhibitor Herding Group" award, which was later won in 2016 by Tony, Rumor's half-brother.

Of course winning all these awards has a price: fame, and what goes with it. Since taking the 2017 Westminster "Best of Show," Rumor has been featured on "Good Morning, America," "The View" and "Fox and Friends."

In Wisconsin, Boyles and Rumor were honored at the State Capitol by the Assembly on April 4, 2017 as "Hometown Heroes" during its regular session that Tuesday afternoon. 43rd District Rep. Don Vruwink (D-Milton), whose bailiwick Boyles resides in, nominated Rumor for the award based on her "Best in Show" at the 2017 Winchester Dog Show. The entire Wisconsin Legislature honored Rumor as Vruwink presented the commendation to Boyles.

Dog and trainer were also treated to an invitation to the Governor's Mansion later that afternoon, where Gov. Scott Walker welcomed Rumor, trainer and ensemble to the lovely, lakeside grounds greening at springtide.

"All this has made

Rumor a great ambassador for dogs, letting people know what all dogs do for us humans," Boyles explains. "Dog shows can demonstrate how well a dog performs, but dogs perform all kinds of wonderful things for us in daily life."

Boyles expands on the many roles service dogs have played in the lives of the handicapped, veterans, the elderly, and even the lonely, whether at home or in institutions. Dogs not only supplement and, at times, substitute for human ability (or its lack thereof), they are a universal source of companionship worthy in its own right, giving a sense of unconditional acceptance and enduring affection to the emotionally distressed or distraught.

"Companion dogs have done wonders for vets suffering from PTSD," Boyles affirms.

The exemplary dog breeder and trainer observes, "Few young people realize how many service dogs are in demand today, and the number will only increase."

"And then there's the medical applications of dogs that are able to sniff out cancers in people better than any equipment. The ways dogs help humans are many and varied."

Continuing, Boyles notes, "For a young person who sees the importance of the work of well-bred, well-trained dogs, they can write their own ticket. Part of what I want Rumor to serve as is an ambassador to youth, trying to get them more involved in the service and sports aspects of dog training."

Boyles says, "We've got a full set of training courses available to the public and we encourage kids to get involved early with their pet. We'd like to be known as 'the one stop shop' for all your dog's needs.

"Though we do show and service dog training over here," Boyles clarifies, referring to his main center of operation, which is the training facility on N. Eastman Rd., "we have a complete range of boarding, grooming, dog supply, doggie daycare, and obedience training services at our main facility," which is Kenlyn Kennels, located on 11433 N. Kenlyn Rd., Edgerton.

Lynette Boyles is co-owner and manager of Kenlyn Kennels, which features an indoor and outdoor facility with ample play and exercise spaces. They also offer a Boot Camp Program that emphasizes customized training to meet behavioral goals, as well as in-board training.

With a complete set of training courses designed for dogs of all breeds, including obedience training for all ages and levels, Kenlyn Kennels offers their customers the kind of specialized understanding each dog needs to bring out its best.

"We feel very, very fortunate," Boyles expresses earnestly, "especially to our local customers and supporters who have done so much to help us over the years. We appreciate our customers and our fan base. They're been great! They've been incredible!"

Boyles & Co. are riding the high crest of the wave right now. There's Rumor's attained glories and renown. There's also the high promise of future wins with Tony and his cohorts during new show campaigns. But as important as those are — accomplishments achieved and accomplishments anticipated — they might, and understandably so, be over-shadowed by the arrival of pedigree offspring that may have a penchant for sports and show superiority.

And they'll probably be cute to boot.



Kent Boyles with Rumor after the "Best in Show" announcement at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. (Photo courtesy of Miquel Betancourt)



The "Best in Show" award presentation at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. (Submitted photo)