

## SIBERIAN HUSKIES



# LINES FROM LINDA

by LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR

**A**fter waiting 31 years, in 2011 Patricia “Trish” Kanzler penned the following letter to me.

### THE LETTER

I have been meaning to write this letter for 31 years to let you and your family know that your father is the most important person in my life. In the late 70s, my family had a dog that started to do some incredible winning. We had bred and sold two dogs that were BIS winners, but had never owned any. Then along came “Cinnar”. He was a light red male; a color that was considered very unusual for the time.

God shined on us and we were having an incredible career together. My family is not wealthy and we are not much for networking, but the moon and stars were lined up and we were winning. After our 13th BIS, Judge Betty Evers asked what number it was and I said it number 13.

Betty replied that was an unlucky number and that I should hurry up and get another one. I laughed and thought it would be nice to have more but it was not anything I could control. Soon after that show, disaster struck.

# THE LETTER

BEHIND THE CAMERA  
WITH TRISH & LINDA



American/Canadian CH Innisfree Sierra Cinnar winning Best In Show at Westminster Kennel Club in 1980. Shown by 23-year-old Trish Kansler, the youngest handler to capture this honor to date. Left to right: Sheila, owners Kathleen & Lt. Col. Norbert A. Kansler.



Innisfree Siberians guided by Kathleen and Norbert Kansler.



Kathleen and Norbert celebrating their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

## “ALL I REMEMBER IS THE BUILDING GETTING VERY QUIET, YOUR DAD, MR. AYERS JUDGING ALL THE DOGS, AND THEN AWARDING CINNAR BEST OF BREED.”

We had a show in Virginia that was a few hours from home and judging was late in the day. My mom, Kathleen, was getting dressed and my sister, Sheila, and I were getting the dogs from the kennel and loading them in the car. Sheila had let Cinnar out of his run and he was bouncing up and down at the next gate. I went to open the gate and saw that Cinnar was missing the top of one ear. I said to Sheila we had a problem and I took Cinnar into the house to show Mom. Cinnar was unaware there was a problem, but for us humans we were devastated. His neighbor, a bitch, had removed his ear, probably doing it

while fence fighting. (Siberians rarely fight when running around and playing, but behind fences they think fence fighting is entertainment—that is why they often have broken or missing front teeth and canines.)

Mom called the vet; we drove down and had the vet look at the ear after we futilely looked around the dog run for the missing ear piece. Deciding there was nothing to be done we drove back home and decided to go to the dog show with all the dogs.

Obviously we were all in a state of shock as we were trying to figure out what to do about Cinnar. Mom had immense respect for Henry Stoecker and thought if he was at the show—

even though he was not listed as a judge—that if he said to never show the dog that it would be the end of it. Mr. Stoecker was not at the show.

We arrived at the show with the three dogs and said nothing to anyone about our personal disaster. While I was outside in the parking lot grooming the other two dogs that were competing that day, a friend of ours named John Woodson, to whom we had sold a nice black Siberian male that he had finished and regularly showed in the Best of Breed class, came up to me and did

his regular banter about what he was going to do so he could beat Cinnar this time. While he was doing his trash talking, he said that maybe he would just cut off Cinnar's ears with scissors this week. While I was grooming the dogs, I was thinking to myself, 'Boy, is John going to feel terrible about his comments when he finds out Cinnar is already missing an ear!' I just laughed a bit and John went on his way.

My sister Sheila took the first dog in and showed it. My mom, Kathleen, came out and told me to groom Cinnar up and show him. Now at this time I was lower than a snake's belly and was just working on automatic. I groomed Cinnar up and took him in to show.

I can still see in my mind the dog show and the layout. The ring was on the left side of the building. Cinnar was a popular dog not only in the breed, but also with a lot of other handlers and exhibitors. It was not unusual for several extra people to be at ringside to watch judging.

Cinnar and I entered your father's ring with the other specials. All I remember is the building getting very quiet, your dad, Mr. Ayers judging all the dogs, and then awarding Cinnar Best of Breed. When he did, I burst into tears. While standing at the numbers he asked me why I was crying. I told him because my dog's ear had been bitten off. He looked at me and said kind of abruptly, "Well, you didn't bite it off did you?" I sniveled and said, "No."





"1980 Best in Show; Ch Innisfree's Sierra Cinnar, Siberian Husky" (Courtesy of www.westminsterkennelclub.org)

# "MANY DOGS IMPORTANT TO THE BREED WERE PRODUCED BY INNISFREE IN THE 1970s, BUT THE MOST OUTSTANDING WAS AMERICAN/CANADIAN CHAMPION **INNISFREE SIERRA CINNAR.**"

Later that day your Dad awarded Cinnar the Working Group.

The next day we lost the breed. My entire family feels that had it not been for your dad there would never have been a next day, much less his 30th Best in Show, the Garden win or the American and Canadian National Specialties. I pray and thank your dad every week and wanted you to know how important he is to my family.

*Sincerely,*

*Patricia "Trish" Kanzler*

## THE FAMILY

Fast forward and this inspiring story of Trish and Cinnar is about to become a motion picture.

Naturally I knew of Kathleen and Norbert Kanzler, their three children Trish, John and Sheila and their Innisfree Siberian Huskies. But they lived far away near the Canadian border in Chateagay, New York. I did not know them personally.

Innisfree started almost seventy years ago and is a family venture. It has been so successful because of the family's teamwork enabling them to enjoy showing and working in Siberian harness for fifty years.

Kathleen Kanzler (McGivney) was born in Detroit, Michigan of third generation Irish ancestries. Her love for animals developed while she was a teenager. Stories by Albert Payson Terhune on his famous Sunnybank Collies were her favorite reading as were the Arctic adventure stories by Jack London. Kathleen bought her first purebred dog, a Collie, in 1947 and decided on the kennel name "Innisfree" to reflect her Irish heritage. She trained this dog in obedience and as a companion. She was instrumental in organizing the

Junior Collie Club of Detroit and served as its first President.

While studying Animal Science at Michigan State University, she met her future husband and embarked on a life-long adventure that took her to various parts of the world and many exciting experiences. Her husband, Norbert was an Army Officer and the family moved often, to include an assignment to Ethiopia. In 1960, the Kanzler family returned to Michigan after a four-year assignment in Alaska. Kathleen brought her foundation Siberian Husky with her on her return from Alaska. Kathleen had become enamored with the working abilities of the Siberian Huskies during her four years in Alaska and was determined to develop a strain that would not only retain their working abilities, but also excel in the show ring.

Kathleen's career as an AKC judge began in 1971 and it also took her all around the globe. She is respected for her writing and sharing her knowledge and teaching seminars. Many dogs important to the breed were produced by Innisfree in the 1970s, but the most outstanding was American/Canadian Champion Innisfree Sierra Cinnar. "Cinnar" was shown by Kathleen's daughter, Trish, who was the youngest handler ever to win Best in Show at Westminster Kennel Club—a record that stands to this day.

Cinnar's career amassed thirty American Best in Show wins and fifteen specialties including the American and Canadian Nationals in 1979. Cinnar was the top-producing sire in the breed for many years and after all these years he remains in the top ten with over one-hundred-twenty American champions. He produced champions that went all over Europe, South America and Can-

ada. Cinnar is known to have had the most influence of any Siberian for setting type, movement and temperament. His qualities are timeless and he would still be considered a wonderful competitive dog today.

## THE FILM

TV and movie writer/producer Daniel Helfgott, and his dog, Kipling, are preparing to launch an historic Kickstarter campaign to fund "A Little Magic: The Trish & Cinnar Story," the greatest movie ever made about a real show dog. Daniel tried the traditional way to sell the movie but ran into resistance from Hollywood, which didn't believe people would want an inspirational and heart-warming movie about a girl and her show dog. So they are going



Daniel Helfgott with his wife Janet Turner with Kipling, Helfgott-Turner Productions, Inc.



Writer/Producer Daniel Helfgott on location in St. Petersburg, Russia for upcoming film on World War II.



Flyer for the movie.



Writer and Producer Daniel Helfgott with Trish and young Innisfree movie stars that will portray Cinnar.

to dog lovers everywhere to prove Hollywood wrong.

Daniel Helfgott and his wife, Janet Turner, were introduced to the dog show world when they got a new puppy. “Kipling” was a Tibetan Terrier, and forces seemed to conspire for making him a show dog. It was something the couple had never done before, and they didn’t know what to expect. But after attending their first show, they were hooked. It didn’t hurt that Kipling (show name Sunsi’s Rumble in the Jungle) started winning points immediately. Shown by professional handler David Murray, Kipling became a Champion after only 3 weekends, and then a Grand Champion after only 5 months of competing. He was only 13 months old. This was a meteoric rise, and Dan and Janet had dreams of seeing Kipling at Westminster.

It was during this time that Helfgott and Turner first heard Trish and

Cinnar’s tale. After finding that no film had ever been made about them, and that no heart-warming and dramatic film had ever been made about the sport, they sought to immortalize the story, turning dog show legend into a magical cinematic experience.

“A LITTLE MAGIC: The Trish and Cinnar Story” tells the true story of underdog Trish Kanzler, a young girl who—against all odds—went on to win Best in Show at Westminster in 1980 with her dog, Cinnar. Cinnar was a red Siberian, which was not prized as a breed color at that time. And on top of that, a pre-show tussle left him with part of an ear bitten off. Yet, despite these overwhelming odds, their bond together was incredible, and their amazing journey can only be described as a real life fairy tale.

Helfgott-Turner Productions, award winning TV and movie writer/producers, have brought together an amazing team of filmmakers including Director Roger Young, who has directed more than 40 films and has 3 Director’s Guild Awards, an Emmy and has worked with tons of stars including Brad Pitt and Tom Selleck; Director of Photography Donald M. Morgan who has shot more than 70 films and has won 6 Emmys and numerous ASC awards; and Composer Patrick Williams, who has scored more than 200 movies, and has numerous Oscar, Emmy and Grammy nominations and wins. Plus, Writer-Producer Daniel Helfgott has made numerous award-winning films and television shows about ordinary people overcoming tremendous odds, and always about underdogs. The entire team has spent their careers helping to turn great stories into films, and all four of them are dog owner and dog lovers.

The project is endorsed by Wayne Ferguson, President of the Kennel Club of Philadelphia which sponsors the National Dog Show, Mari-Beth O’Neill, Vice President of the AKC and head of the charity Take the Lead, and top US and Canadian Judge James G. Reynolds, who all believe that this movie will help the sport. In fact, a portion of the movie’s profits will go to support the charity, Take the Lead.

The producers are working directly with Trish Kanzler and her kennel, Innisfree Kennels. Trish is providing maple syrup from her own farm as one of the campaign rewards. Trish says, “I support this film because I believe it will encourage young people to go into the sport.” She also believes the movie highlights that this is the one sport where anyone can compete—rich or poor, young or old, able-bodied or physically challenged, professional or amateur.

## THE CAMPAIGN

Unique rewards especially for dog lovers will be offered as part of the Kickstarter crowd-funding campaign, but the one that seems to have dog lovers excited the most is the opportunity for YOU and YOUR DOG to be in the movie. A few of these will actually involve the chance to be at Westminster (at least in the movie) and even get into the ring for Best in Show. In fact, that little puppy who started all this—Kipling—will finally get to Westminster as well... if only in the movie!

The Kickstarter campaign starts on Monday, February 8th, just one week before Westminster, and the team is asking dog show supporters and dog lovers of all kinds to contribute. To find out how go to [www.aLittleMagicTheMovie.com](http://www.aLittleMagicTheMovie.com) where they can also sign up for the newsletter and get behind-the-scenes information about the film, make suggestions for casting, and learn about fun contests, including how they can put their dogs in the movie!

Years ago in a Valentine my mother, Hazel Ayers, wrote to me, “Weave a rainbow of memories from all that lies behind you. Keep a heart filled with dreams for all that lies ahead.” See you at Westminster! ■

