

A March Through ACBA History

LENORE GERGEN ACBA Hall of Fame 2001

JACBA Fall 2001

Talent and competence...integrity, dedication, longevity...and genuine affection for cavies and for those who are involved with them. These are the distinguishing characteristics of Lenore Gergen and her contributions to the cavy fancy and the American Cavy Breeders Association in particular.

The lifeline of any club, whether it be local or national, hinges on the capabilities and output of its secretary and/or treasurer. As few as three short years ago, the ACBA was still in the process of working itself out from under a heavy, dark cloud of conflict and discord. In 1998, Lenore assumed the position of ACBA Secretary-Treasurer. This was the onset of the road to recovery for the ACBA.

Lenore would be the first person to disavow credit, preferring instead to praise others' contributions for turning things around. Just a few steps back from the brink of financial bankruptcy, Lenore accounted for every income and expense dollar that has enabled the board to make informed budgetary decisions. She is attributed with ACBA's current solvency and cash flow that now allows the association to better serve its membership.

Keeping lines of communication open with the board, officers and the membership can be a daunting task, but Lenore has seen to it with a flourish of sincerity and stability. Membership lists are kept updated, meeting agendas are prepared, accurate minutes are recorded and quarterly reports for each district director are distributed. Member inquiries and requests are responded to quickly and both board and officers are kept apprised. The office of ACBA Secretary-Treasurer has an established sense of trust that goes along with it.

As with any organization dependent on volunteers, there is participant turnover and personal events that can keep a volunteer from being able to complete their duties. During these times, Lenore has juggled publication of the JACBA, Sweepstakes recording and rounding up of awards. She helped the ACBA Standards

Committee by tracking what was being shown and where by district during grouping reorganization. She has standardized the membership, NOI and sanction forms for ACBA. She handles the paperwork for ACBA sanctioned shows and prepares numerous reports for each JACBA.

When and how did Lenore get her start to such involvement in ACBA?

Over ten years ago (since 1990), Lenore, with her husband Gene, joined the ACBA after they had enjoyed guinea pigs for more than fifteen years without ever realizing there was an organized fancy of showing in existence. They have been in attendance at every ACBA Specialty show and ARBA Convention since 1992.

Lenore's first project for the ACBA was as editor of the Guidebook in the form we enjoy today. She was able to put out a 100 page Guidebook after securing articles from breeders and judges and talking with a few old time breeders who kept copies of dated cavy periodicals. This Guidebook became available for distribution at the 1992 ARBA Convention in Columbus.

During that same convention, Lenore found the ACBA cavy booth empty with no one there to operate it. After talking with a few people, her efforts were rewarded with a box of merchandise and awards. She set it up and ran it. By the time of the ACBA Specialty Show in Pennsylvania, there was a booth with new ACBA merchandise and as they say, the rest is history! To this day, Lenore makes sure (with a few well-placed pushes on occasion) that Gene has ACBA Membership Services in top order and that there is an ACBA booth at every specialty show and national convention, well stocked with cavy merchandise.

Leading up to Lenore's appointment as secretary-treasurer, she served as the elected ACBA District 3 director from 1993 through 1997, was elected ACBA Vice President and was

the ACBA Sweepstakes Recorder for over four years.

Lenore's love of cavies and her love of those who feel as she does has translated into her dedication to the club that backs this fancy. However, her contributions have not been nor are limited to the ACBA.

She has served as the representative for the Owatonna Area Cavy and Rabbit Club on the Minnesota State Rabbit Breeders Association board. Previous to that she was state club representative for Suburban Twins for three years, which due to her efforts was the first time a cavy club was recognized by the state association. During her term, she got cavies represented in the annual state show. Prior to her involvement, cavies were shown under a rabbit judge and with her efforts, cavy breeders have since shown under cavy judges. She served as the state sweepstakes secretary for three years and as show secretary, always with the proviso that cavies be included.

She was a co-founders of the North Star Show Circuit, a seven state regional club and served as secretary for three years and then vice president and finally president. Again, her show secretarial proficiencies were utilized for both cavy and rabbit shows. Again, she served as sweepstakes recorder and also had a hand in editing and publishing the club's bimonthly newsletter.

As a co-founder of the River Valley Cavy Fanciers, an interstate club, she got them off to a good start serving as their first club secretary. The Owatonna Cavy and Rabbit Club has used her services for the last six years as secretary of their annual show (which sees about 1700 cavies and rabbits shown) and has tenured as secretary, vice president and president for the club.

Lenore has always had a love of animals and an affinity towards those of like mind. She is the

second daughter of a family that made St. Paul, Minnesota

home. As her mother tells the story, she was always bringing in some stray that "followed" her home and then her dad would have to make a trip out to the cousin's farm with the new family member.

After attending St. Cloud State University, Lenore embarked on a secretarial career that eventually led her to the position of administrative secretary to the vice president of then Super America Service Stations. She met Gene, was wed 28 years ago and brought a guinea pig home almost immediately. More followed.

After moving to the country, she came home one day and announced, "Guess what I bought— a pet store!" She ran that store for 17 years. And from that point on, she started getting others interested in guinea pigs. It's hard to tell how many people she's gotten into cavies and the fancy over the years. There is always time to talk and help anyone who loves "that little ball of fur." She'll spend as much time as it takes to help them.

Lenore, along with Gene, has raised and shown Americans, American Satins, Abys, Aby Satins, Teddies, Teddy Satins and White Crested over the years. Even though allergies restrict the amount of time she can handle and play with the cavies, she and Gene maintain a herd of about 75-85 animals in three breeds and five varieties.

As Secretary-Treasurer, Lenore Gergen is one of the best representatives the ACBA could ever have. She has been heard to remark that her best and most dear friends are fanciers. That feeling of warmth spills over to new members and acquaintances. She loves her cavies and will continue to do all she can to promote them. And she does it well. She is deserving of recognition in the ACBA Hall of Fame.

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