



Sometimes God Picks the Prettiest Flowers

Eulogy to Ch. Gaelforce Postscript "Peggy Sue"

By Dr. Vandra L. Huberⁱ

I'm afraid misfortune of devastating proportions has hit our house. On June 26, 1996 Am. Can. Ch. Gaelforce Postscript "Peggy Sue" (She went BIS at the Westminster Kennel club in 1995) was diagnosed with liver cancer. She has been close to death all week. At 4 a.m. July 3, 1996 she died in her puppy bed. She was 5 1/2 years. We buried her in our garden next to my foundation bitch, Am. Can. Ch. Maggie McMuffin V. She had her favorite carrot toy, some dog biscuits. I found a Scottie garden statue and placed it on top of her grave to stand watch. We planted some lovely Scotch Moss and Forget-me knots.

We still are uncertain what type of cancer it was. We believe that it was lymphosarcoma which attacks dogs between 5 and 7 years of age and is more common in Scotties than many breeds. This form of cancer is usual treatable and life can be extended for 6 months to three years. But it didn't happen with Peggy. Her cancer was concentrated in her liver, one of the worse and most unusual places for cancer in canines.

I am fortunate that the only board certified oncologist in Washington State, Karria A. Meleo, worked five miles from my house. So I feel my beloved Peggy Sue was getting the best of the care. My primary veterinarian Susan Torganson was also there for me. We started chemotherapy Monday and she seems a tiny bit better Tuesday and seems to be tolerating it well. Thirty six hours past without serious reaction to the chemotherapy beyond some diarrhea. So that was good. She also received some special sythetic plasmas that adds protein to the blood and was to help the eliminate the extensive edema in her little body (28 pounds versus 20 pounds). her laboratory tests on Tuesday were encouraging in that they had not worsened since the week before.

She looked a little more alert and lost 2 lbs of fluid (good) from Monday to Tuesday. And she was climbing out of the cage at the oncologist after her plasma treatment. Peggy wanted to go home. She moved around a bit more when we took her out to urinate on the grass.

I learned the day Peggy Sue started her treatment that Lacy "Lonesome Dove" a record setting BEST In SHOW wire fox terrier bitch that broke Shannon the Scottie's record for BIS also had lymphosarcoma -- in the nodes in the neck. She was treated with a protocol similar to Peggy Sue. Her handler/owner said it was hard on her but she fought back. She has been in remission for several years (usually expectancy is 1 year or less). She even got two Best in shows to break the record after the cancer. So this had given me hope. But it was not to be.

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I still have waves of overwhelming sadness and regrets about "if only" I had caught it earlier. Dr. Maleo, Peggy Sue's oncologist said the treatment would have been the same regardless -- maybe not the critical care plasma -- but otherwise the same. So I am trying to look at today rather than yesterdays "what ifs".

I do not know what is planned for Peggy Sue in the great beyond. But I know even as she was dying she gave me many precious gifts. Time is one gift. Each moment I have learned is ever so fragile and precious. While she was sick, I would watch her breath and marvel over the miracle of life. I've come to realize in short order just how very wonderful life is -- each up and each down. And I'm realizing again how important it is to smell the flowers and see the beauty of leaves bending in the breeze, a blue sky with soft clouds.

Tuesday we (Peggy and I) watched a squirrel playing in a tree outside -- way up high. I used to take time for such things but hadn't for a while. Peggy helped me see again. Tuesday after her plasma treatment we sat outside together. I watched Peggy Sue sit in the grass as if she was soaking in the strength of the sun, the beauty of the flowers and the power of the breeze -- one last time.

Her eyes haunt me -- not with pain (I truly don't think she suffered) but as if she is still soaking up my sadness. She was alert till the end and it comforted me that she would perk up when I would come in the room. I tried so hard to be there for her. Michael and I slept in shifts so she was never alone. But in the end she knew how difficult it would for me if I would have to make a life or death decision. So with dignity, no cries of pain, she just went to sleep. I thank her and God for that.

Another gift she has given me is to make me stare cancer in the face and learn more about it. April was a hard month for me. Most of you don't know but Peggy Sue's five week old puppies got sick. Runny yellow diarrhea -- the precursor of parvo. We were able to nurse them back to strength and all of Peggy Sue's puppies survived and are doing great. Peggy Sue's co-owner Joe Kinnarney flew out and took them to North Carolina to prevent further problems. Joe's been the best of co-owners for Peggy Sue and for me. But even his vast experience as veterinarian and surgeon couldn't save our Peggy Sue from cancer.

At the time all this was happening, my dad was diagnosed with inoperable lunch cancer. Since April I had not as yet dealt much with my father's cancer. I'd been afraid to research the cancer, deal with the fear of losing him. I was critical with my mom for not getting second opinions. I understand better how my mother is happy with the doctor dad has. Cancer puts a shroud on everyone --victims and family. It zaps energy but also teaches us the importance of hope.

I also feel fortunate that Peggy Sue was home with me for the last six months. and that I have had the opportunity to see her beautiful puppies being born, Peggy Sue licking them clean, nursing them with enthusiasm and Peggy Sue teaching them to stand up for themselves.

While the choice was made to share Peggy Sue with the dog world for several years, I have few regrets. Some people only saw her in the limelight. Some people only saw me soaking up her wins. Only a few saw me as I held her at the end of a show and cried each time I said good bye until the next time. But I told myself she'd come home to me eventually -- after she had done her work in the ring. I held on to the joy I saw in people's faces when they saw her at her best. I could do this, because I also knew I left her in the trusted care of her special friend, her handler Maripi Wooldridge. Maripi loved her as much as I did. The same can be said for Joe Kinnarney, Camille Partridge, her breeder, and my dear husband Michael Krolewski.

For those who don't know much about the campaigning a dog, some owners are owners in name only. That is, the dogs spend their lives with their handler. Some folks want to win so much, that they give female dogs drugs to stop them from ovulating. We NEVER did that. Nor did we dye her. She was what she was. Peggy was too special to all of us. We always took a week off a month so Peggy could play and run in the sun. It had to be fun for Peggy Sue and each of us. Mostly, it was.

In one way Peggy Sue lived on borrowed time for a long time. I almost lost Peggy to death at 10 months of age. After playing out in the yard, Peggy Sue came running towards me and just fell over and was in a coma for two days. Dr. Susan Torganson who has been my vet for 10 years stayed with her almost around the clock. She called me twice in two days to say "this was it." But it wasn't. Peggy Sue hung on. We never found out for sure what it was (a mushroom or a fungus we think). But finally Peggy Sue just woke up. She had work to do.

Most folks only recall Peggy Sue with her handler Maripi. But I am proud to say that I personally put the majority of points on Peggy Sue. Her first breed win was under Mrs. Mildred Bryant at a tiny show in Idaho. I had sent her with Dennis Springer to learn to walk on a lead. Dennis won the breed with Peggy Sue bouncing around. He didn't show her in the group. Mrs. Bryant asked him in the group ring where the little Scottie bitch was. Dennis replied in her crate. She said, "Big mistake. You just lost the group!"

Her next special win was in Utah under Rick Chausodian. She was in the classes. I was trying to make a major for another older Scottie. I had my friend Brent Knudson take her back into the ring. Mr. Chausodian had him pick her up. He looked into Peggy Sue's eyes, held her face in his hands and said -- "Well, you've got to be best of breed. In Puyallup Washington, Don White, now deceased, gave her a second major. He just kept watching her. First she was in fifth place, then fourth, then third and then first in her class. Peggy Sue was that way. She made you pay attention.

Maripi had me hold her back (needing one point) so she could go to Great Western where she finished under now STCA President Shirley Justus over more than 30 bitches. Then I brought her back home then. I wanted to take her Canada and show her at the BC All Terrier Club show. In the group ring, Ed Bivin was sitting ring side. He grabbed my arm and said -- who is that? I said that's my Peggy Sue. Mr. Bivin later awarded BISS at the STCA Rotating specialty in Washington State last summer.

The judge that day in Canada was Anne Rogers Clark. She narrowed down her choices to the top winning Westie in Canada and Peggy Sue. She brought them out to look at each other. Peggy stood her ground, kicked her rear legs in typical Scottie fashion. In typically Annie fashion, she said "put her over there." With a twinkle in her eye she pointed -- Best in Specialty Show from the 12-18 bitch class. The entry was over 200 terriers. She did need to help me stack Ms. Peggy Sue for the picture and she ASKED for a picture. I was honored. I showed her to Edna Joel a month later and put the first All Breed Best in Show on her at the Victoria Kennel Club. And I showed her at her first Montgomery County (she was the second youngest special in the ring that day).

As most of you know, there are many great show dogs. The majority either are great in the all-breed ring or in the specialty ring. I am proud to say that Peggy Sue won in both. There was her first specialty win under Breeder-Judge Elaine Rigden. I was so nervous. Jackie Seelbach had to keep me calm. Then there was her Montgomery Best of Breed under Fred Stephens. I thank him for having the courage to put her up -- even though he and I spar in our own backyards. Mrs. Clark gave Peggy Sue her first All Breed Best in Show in Florida. At the STCA rotating specialty in Kansas City, Judge David Merriam was just starting to go over Peggy

Sue. Just then, 20 chairs conveniently crashed to the floor. Peggy just got pissed, pulled into herself, looked over at where the commotion was coming from and showed all the better. Maripi and I laughed about it afterwards. Peggy just sat and smiled. Her second Montgomery specialty win was under Mareth Kipp who commented on her proper Scottish Terrier head and expression, her fluid movement and meticulous presentation .

And of course there was the Garden. It was nerve wracking and wonderful. First, there was the breed competition with Maripi and Peggy in the ring, Joe Kinnarney, my husband Michael Krolewski and I outside of the ring, wondering what Holloway would do. We were all tense. I saw it in Maripi's eyes -- but not Peggy Sue's eyes. Maripi and Peggy shined. After judging was over, Holloway teased Maripi by saying "I had you worried, didn't I?" Then it was off to the group with Stephen Shaw. I thought I would die when Maripi tossed a piece of liver and he handed it back to her. His face looked so stern. Once again, Peggy Sue with Maripi's guidance was stars -- each hair in place, each movement carefully orchestrated. T'was a magnificent sight to behold. And then there was Best in Show. I recall thinking. Isn't it nice. Jackie Hungerland really gave her a good look. Now which other dog will she pick? When she said she'd have the Scottie please...Well, the rest is history. Hundreds of letters, calls, television appearances, FDR's daughter in law calling and love poured in from around the world.

We showed her three more times after that. We showed her in Seattle at the rotating specialty under Judge Ed Bivin and Washington State Scottish Terrier specialty under Nellie Holland And finally Montgomery last fall -- one last time where she went Best of Breed under Scottish breeder-judge Carol Aanan.

In January, 1996 she was bred to McVan's Duke of Earl. She came home to me then. She settled on our bed as if to say "so what else is new since I've been gone." Peggy Sue's puppies were born in March -- Three girls (two blacks and one wheaten) and two boys (a black and a wheaten).

During her career Peggy Sue accomplished many things. I like to think that Peggy Sue helped to refocus attention on balance, type, and correct size. In my opinion she had the most beautiful head planes I have ever seen. In the process she stole the hearts of millions. After Westminster, two thousand folks turned out for Peggy Sue's home coming in Seattle. The many warm letters and gifts were beyond my belief.

While these accomplishments seem lame in face of her death, she:

- a) Won 6 Scottish Terrier National Specialties, more than any other Scottie in history;
- b) 21 Scotty specialties;
- c) 30 All Breed Best in Shows;
- d) More than 160 Best of Breeds;
- e) Defeated more Scotties in a single year than any other Scottie in breed history, and most important;
- f) She left a legacy, namely five loving, happy health puppies, and
- g) Many people who love her and hold her memories dear

Joe Kinnarney joined the Peggy Sue team her second year of campaigning. Without his support and love, I would not have been able to share Peggy Sue with so many folks. He saw Peggy Sue at Montgomery and she made him shiver with excitement. He met with Maripi shortly there after. Could Maripi find him a Scottie like that? Through Peggy Sue, we have become friends as well as partners. I could not have gotten through her successes as well as her illness without Joe. I am thankful also for my husband Michael. Many of you don't know him because he's always staying home taking care of puppies. But he loved Peggy Sue as I do. He was there when she arrived at our house and when she died. And he laid her in the ground for her final rest.

I thank each of you for the love you have sent her way and my way. I ask each of you to hug your Scotties tight and enjoy each today. Go take a walk and smell the daisies of summer, the daffodils of spring, the crispness of autumn, and the calmness of winter. Watch your Scotties kick up their heels, catch a ball and talk to you. And thank your God for life -- each moment and each day.

Finally, I ask you for your continued prayers for all our Scots and other canine friends who get struck down by this terrible disease. Cancer now strikes down more than one in four Scotties and other canines.