



PEGGY SUE by Maggie Johnston

“I don’t want a puppy”. Famous last words from someone who ALWAYS strives to have the last word.

Every morning for nearly a week I had walked past a stall full of friendly, playful Dalmatian puppies and kept my eyes purposefully diverted. I was attending the 1997 Louisiana State 4-H show in Baton Rouge to help several of the young people that I had been coaching. They had qualified for the state finals and now all had hopes of winning first or second in their respective classes and moving on to the Southeastern Regionals.

Sue Woodson, a friend and 4-H Mom caught me sneaking a long look early one morning at the puppies and told me that the owner was a friend of hers and a very motivated seller. I told Sue in no uncertain terms that I was only LOOKING and walked on.

The next day after much personal soul searching as to time available for “child” rearing, I went directly to the puppy stall and my future best friend, companion and soul mate stepped or rather leaped into my life. I made my purchase and asked the owner/breeder Peggy Ivins to please take my unnamed puppy back with her to Vivian, La. and I would come and pick her up in a few days. I did not want to have to handle a 6 horse trailer full of horses and a car sick puppy for the 5 hour drive back home. Little did I know that this puppy would NEVER have a car sick day in her soon to be well traveled life.

A few days later I drove over to Vivian and picked up my still unnamed puppy. After trying out several names, Peggy Sue seemed to be the logical choice. Peggy for the breeder and Sue because without Sue Woodson’s gentle nudges toward the puppy pen, I would never have stopped long enough to pick one out.

Peggy Sue is my second Dalmatian. The first was a liver and white female that I named Sugar. She was with me for 14 years. Contrary to what most people perceive, Dalmatians are friendly, eager to please and respond well to training just like most other dogs. They do require a place to run off steam and maybe that’s where some get into trouble. The two that I have had seemed to thrive in a horse environment. I guess that should be expected since they were originally bred to be carriage dogs and run under the coaches of the wealthy English aristocrats. I don’t have a coach but do have a pretty constant supply of horses.

Since Peggy Sue and I became a family, we have had the opportunity to do a lot of traveling to horse shows across the country. This was especially true when I coached Caroline Brown on Barlnk Double Tuff. The last year that she and I showed him, we traveled from Camden, S.C. to Tuscon, Az with many shows in between. I also try to plan a couple of trips a year in upstate N.Y. I'm from there and still have family and friends I like to visit. Peggy Sue and I just returned from one of those trips with a side trip to Ky. to look at a horse for a customer and from there on to Oklahoma City for the Holiday Classic Show and then on home to Magnolia, Ark. It was a 4000 mile trip and she was in the front seat the whole way. Now if only she would learn how to drive!