Written by Carol Pomeday
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Brook Berth held Hoss (left), Westminster Best of Breed Boston terrier, and her dog Edna. Photo *by Sam Arendt* **Local dog handler Brook Berth not only had the opportunity to show a dog at the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club Show in New York, she helped prepare the show's top Boston terrier.**

Still flush with excitement from her first trip to the Westminster Kennel Club Show in New York last week, Brook Berth of Jackson, a graphic artist for Port Publications in Port Washington, left Wednesday for the International Kennel Club Show this weekend at McCormick Place in Chicago.

Berth assists dog handler Carlos Puig of Round Lake, Ill., who showed the top Boston terrier Monday, Feb. 14, at Westminster and competed against other breeds for the Best of Show title at Madison Square Garden.

Hoss, a 2-year-old male Boston terrier with the unlikely AKC name Ken's N' Roobarb N' The Horse Ya Rode In On, beat 21 other Boston terriers at Westminster. He is owned by Ken Roux of Dixon, Ill., and Victoria Wilt of Baltimore, Md.

Berth, who has raised and shown Boston terriers for four years, has two terriers, a male and a female, sired by Hoss and born to Berth's 4-year-old Boston terrier Gertie, an AKC champion.

The male, Frankie, must mature more before he is shown, Berth said, but the female, Edna, finished her championship at 8 months.

At Westminster, Berth showed a Boston terrier named Hot Rod owned by Elizabeth Wieland of Pendleton, Kty. It was Berth's first time in the prestigious show ring.

"The owner's dream was to watch her dog show at Westminster," Berth said. "I wasn't as nervous as I thought I would be. I was fine, and we did OK. We weren't expecting to win breed with him, but we were hoping Hoss would win."

Berth traveled from Illinois to New York City with Puig, two other assistants and 13 dogs in a van. They stayed at the Hotel Pennsylvania across from Madison Square Garden.

"It's really cool in Madison Square Garden," Berth said. "It's real fancy. You walk in to set up and see the green carpet."

Berth groomed, fed, exercised, showed and carted the dogs back and forth between grooming and exercise areas, show rings and the hotel room.

"It's very hectic. You're carting them through New York City traffic, going up and down ramps," Berth said. "Each day different dogs had to go over (to Madison Square Garden) on dollies."

One person always stayed with the dogs, whether they were in a hotel room, the van or at a venue, Berth said.

An unexpected twist came Monday when Puig, who raises long-haired dachshunds, had his best dog entered in a Best of Breed show scheduled to start the same time as the Boston terrier breed show.

Another assistant started Hoss while Puig showed his dachshund, who won Best of Breed.

"I could see the owners were nervous," Berth said. "He made it and they did a last-minute handler change. The first week I was with Carlos, I got nervous about that also, but I realized he always makes it."

There was pressure to bring home the Best of Breed title for Hoss, who was ranked going into the show.

Puig, who is an all-breed handler, came home with numerous Westminster awards for himself

and his clients.

In addition to Best of Breed awards for Hoss and Puig's dachshund, a Cavalier King Charles spaniel and a English springer spaniel received Awards of Merit, a Pomeranian made the final cut for Best of Breed and a Bedlington terrier, a miniature
schnauzer and a Kerry Blue terrier were named Best of Opposite Sex for their breeds.

"We really did well this year," Berth said. "It's unusual to do so well overall."

Keeping all the dogs happy and calm is always a challenge, she said. They were kept in individual crates in the hotel room when not being shown.

"They've traveled a lot with Carlos, so they're used to it," Berth said. "You learn which ones get along and can be together and which ones have to be exercised alone.

"It was long, exhausting days. We got up at 5 a.m. to exercise the dogs and weren't in bed until midnight."

Berth, who showed goats for 4-H projects while growing up on a Town of Fredonia farm, said she tried showing her black Lab in 4-H without success.

"He fell asleep on the long 'Down,' and I couldn't wake him up," she said.

Her great-grandmother had owned a Boston terrier, and her parents Kim and Mark Nugent decided to get one when Berth was in high school.

Berth fell in love with the breed. When she went to the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, she bought her own Boston terrier, Gunther, who stayed in the house she shared with her roommates.

After she was married, she and her mother went to a dog show and sat next to a woman who showed Boston terriers. She had a dog for sale — Gertie — and Berth was back in the show ring.

Berth spent almost every weekend last spring and summer at dog shows, either showing her own terriers or dogs for Roux or Puig. She expects to enter as many shows this year.

Berth often brings her Boston terriers, which she dresses in fancy outfits, to the Port Publications office, where co-workers also bring their dogs, including two large, black Newfoundlands.