

Linny's Kennel Specializes in Siberian Huskies, Boarding

■ Union Facility Coined Linny's Hilton Doggie Hotel

By Joan Elliott
Missourian Feature Writer

As Kane runs to his master, tail wagging and nose nuzzling, Linda Linnemeyer-Batts lovingly strokes the Siberian Husky's thick fur and tells him what a good boy he is. She notes Kane's eyes — one blue, one brown — and comments, "God hand paints each one."

Linnemeyer-Batts is the owner of Linny's Kennel on Meade Farm Road in Union. She owns 17 show-quality Siberian huskies (although she said breeders just call them Siberians) and also runs a boarding facility. She has 41 runs in two sizes, aptly called suites and lodges. The indoor portions are air conditioned and heated and both the indoor and outdoor portions are covered.

Each unit has its own "doggie door" so the animals can go in and out at will and the entire kennel is power washed every day to keep things clean and fresh smelling.

"The kennel is my bread and butter and allows me to have my huskies," she said, "But it's not just that. I love watching people's dogs. Dogs are very social and want to have fun. Here they have fun."

But first she makes certain that the dogs she plans to board are up-to-date with their shots. A copy of the pet's shot record is required and the animal must be free of all parasites. Special needs for care or medica-

tions must be written out.

A large fenced yard is located between Linnemeyer-Batts' home and the kennel so her dogs and the kennel dogs have opportunities to run and play, although never together.

"If someone brings two or three dogs, I'll let them run together but I never mix clients' dogs," she said.

Linnemeyer-Batts has had as many as 90 dogs at a time, since the lodges can accommodate three small- or medium-sized dogs from the same family at one time. "I even have a lady from Indiana who brings her dog here when she visits family in Chesterfield Valley," she said.

She noted that first timers may get scared when they arrive and the other dogs start barking so she spends extra time with newcomers and even brings them with her in the office until they feel settled. "The second time the dog comes he has more fun because he knows his owners are coming back for him," she said. "The third time the dog is pulling the owners in the door because he's so eager to get here."

Linnemeyer-Batts said many of her customers refer to her kennel as Linny's Hilton Doggie Hotel or The Ritz. She fusses over all the dogs and wants them to have fun so Mom and Dad won't worry.

The kennel was built in 2002 after Linnemeyer-Batts outgrew the one she'd built in Hermann

"The love you get from a dog is awesome. This is a business I can do and still be a stay-at-home mom."

— Linda Linnemeyer-Batts

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It's a Love Thing

That's what Linda Linnemeyer-Batts calls the gratification that comes from raising Siberian huskies. She is pictured with her buddy Raven at Linny's Kennel, located at 783 Meade Farm Road in Union, where she boards up to 90 dogs at a time. *Missourian Photos.*

HUSKIES

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and moved to Union. She designed the unit herself, having learned a great deal about designing from her architect grandfather.

"My grandparents were my role models, good Christian people," she said. "They gave me unconditional love and acceptance and taught me to work hard for whatever I wanted. They always called me their special angel."

Getting Started

Linnemeyer-Batts grew up in South St. Louis and, at age 16, got her first Siberian, which was all white, from the Humane Society on Macklind. "His looks attracted me, also his orneriness," she said. "I've always loved dogs and saw myself like Ellie Mae Clampett."

When it was time to consider a career, Linnemeyer-Batts decided she would either raise Siberians or become a veterinarian. Since she didn't have money for the latter, she chose the former, but not before taking a job at Chrysler.

"I always watched other people's dogs and my family and friends encouraged me to do that as a business," she said. "So in 1990, I quit (Daimler)Chrysler and put every penny I had into a kennel in Hermann with 18 runs. I also had five huskies."

Linnemeyer-Batts read lots of books about huskies and found a breeder in Virginia with whom she communicated who gave her lots of information.

She decided right from the

start that she would never be a commercial breeder. She sells only to individuals, always making sure they're right for the dog and this breed is right for them before turning over one of her precious puppies.

She sells two categories of puppies – pets and show dogs – the latter costing twice as much. "You can tell at eight weeks if a dog is show quality," she said, "and I don't adopt the puppies out until they're eight weeks old."

These dogs, Linnemeyer-Batts points out to prospective owners, are bred to run; pulling sleds is what they do best. So if they're released they'll run. "They're little escape artists or little Houdinis," she said, chuckling. "Some owners wouldn't want that."

Linnemeyer-Batts has some dogs just for breeding, some retired and some for show. The latter must be in excellent condition – with strong hips, no juvenile cataracts, no tight tails, no overbite and not clumsy – in order to become a show dog. Males must be a maximum of 60 pounds; females a maximum of 50 pounds.

Her handler, Jamie Orr, takes one or two dogs at a time to shows, which can be as many as 20 weekends a year.

"That way I can stay home with my kids, my husband and my 'customers,'" she said.

Her dogs have won numerous awards – "Winners Dogs," "Best of Breed," even a "Best of Show."

"The love you get from a



Ready for Attention

Kane stands up in his kennel, waiting for some extra attention from his master, kennel owner and Siberian lover Linda Linnemeyer-Batts.

dog is awesome," Linnemeyer-Batts said. "This is a business I can do and still be a stay-at-home mom. But mainly I got into this because of my love of the breed as pets. I've always loved Siberians."

Linny's Kennel can be reached at 636-583-5008.