HARK A SNARK!

Did historical basenjis really bark?

As I shuffled through drawers to better organize my basenji files, I happened upon a copy of a TIME magazine article dated March 17, 1947 entitled ***Woof!.*** Oh, how I wish I'd found this article last year when I cited several historically recorded sources showing that barking basenjis did not originate**,** as some would have readers believe, from any type of bastardization of dominant black or brindle native African stock.

The TIME article briefly touched on basenji traits, stating they *"...tracked game for chiefs in the Belgian Congo, emitting only an occasional soft "groo," plaintively yodeling during mating season, but never barking."* The article then threw the reader a resounding curve ball when it reported the following occurrence at the British Basenji Club's annual show of March 1947, *"...a barkless Basenji barked."* The unfortunate lad: Chanza of Sunnyshane.

A disgruntled Veronica Tudor Williams, then Acting Club Secretary to the host club, was quoted as saying*, "It was a most unfortunate noise, but hardly a bark. It was a sort of woof."* However *"earwitnesses"* disputed any attempt to play down the noise and reported that Chanza did indeed bark, though perhaps *".."a wuffly bark", but a bark nonetheless."* Despite the club secretary's assertion that Chanza *"must never be allowed to breed"* he produced 7 litters **prior** to his fall from grace, for a total of 31 puppies; genes which thrive today through proliferate descendents such as Recruit (Reveille kennels), Flambeau (Khajah kennels) and Hans (Kenset kennels) via Prune.

With nary a dominant black, nor brindle to be found when tracing these sires back to the barking Chanza, there is little sense in continuing to argue that either color introduced barking to the breed by way of tinctured blood; you can not introduce something that's already lurking in today's gene pool. That said, neither can barking be used as a basis for breed purity, not when it has been historically found, time and again, within the breed's original genetic makeup.

To find this article in its entirety go to:
http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,793400,00.html