



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB<sup>SM</sup>

*2007*  
*AKC Parent Club*  
*Conference*

Sponsored by  
*American Kennel Club*  
*Eukanuba*  
*AKC Companion Animal Recovery*

Organized by American Kennel Club Staff and the AKC Delegate Parent Clubs Committee  
Pat Laurans, *AKC Delegate Parent Clubs Committee Chair*  
Peter Piusz, *AKC Parent Club Conference Chair*

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## Welcome

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Pat Laurans  
AKC Delegate Parent Clubs Committee Chair

Peter Piusz  
AKC Parent Club Conference Chair

Dennis Sprung (on video)  
AKC President and CEO

Pat Laurans welcomed participants, thanked AKC Companion Animal Rescue (AKC/CAR) and Eukanuba for sponsoring the conference, and acknowledged committee members and AKC staff for their hard work.

Participants, she said, are a very special group: “You are individuals who love dogs in general, and your breed or breeds in particular. You are longtime enthusiasts who give of your time, abilities, and energies on behalf of dogs, your breed, and the sport of dogs. You volunteer, organize, educate, and rescue. You do whatever you can to help your club. You are the historians of the past, the guardians of the present, and our best hope for the future.”

The Parent Club Conference enables breed representatives to “deal with problems collectively, rather than individually,” Laurans said. It provides a venue for clubs to “share information and ideas, build lasting relationships with one another, and strengthen their relationship with the American Kennel Club.”

Conference Co-Chair Peter Piusz said it was “nice to hear the buzz as you all enjoy each other and see what it’s like to be together with other Parent Club people.” He encouraged participants to take advantage of the resources available onsite, and to take the opportunity to share ideas and concerns in person.

Piusz said the AKC would try to help clubs build on the experience at one National Specialty, in which participants were invited to sign their armbands and deliver them to the mayor of the host community. In the face of negative legislation—ideally, in advance of that legislation—he encouraged clubs to highlight the local economic benefits that occur when a dog show comes to town.

He also underscored the “tremendous” power of electronic networking, noting that club members, communicating from the ground up, had addressed a recent issue around rescue funding. “It was on the list where people brought the clubs together as a unified whole to move that program where people wanted it to be.”

Via a video taped message, AKC President and CEO Dennis Sprung welcomed participants, acknowledged the two co-sponsors, and thanked Laurans and Piusz for their commitment to the success of the conference. “Many of you have traveled far to be here today, and I know you will be very pleased with what these panels of experts have to offer.”

Sprung encouraged everyone to participate fully in the conference “so that all of us may learn from your personal experiences.” Parent Clubs face similar issues, and “it is the network of people around you that will help educate and prepare all of us for the challenges of improving our sport and our organization.” More than ever before, Sprung said, Parent Clubs will be crucial to the effort to fight discriminatory legislation, maintain show sites, build dog-friendly communities, and protect breed heritage.

## **Eukanuba Welcome**

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Bud Most  
National Events Manager  
Eukanuba

Bud Most described the Parent Club Conference as “our opportunity to give a little back to the breeder community that has done so much for us.” He recalled a period in the 1970s when commodity prices were high and most pet food companies moved to cheaper vegetable sources of protein. Paul Iams refused to compromise nutritional quality, even if it meant losing 50 cents on every bag of dog food; he came within two weeks of losing his business.

“The people who noticed the difference were the breeder communities,” where changes in coats, stool quality, and overall health led buyers to gravitate to the one brand that had not cut back on quality. “This is one of our opportunities to thank you for the hard work to enhance the well-being of dogs.” He assured participants that Iams and Eukanuba are pro-breeder and support breeder activities.

Most emphasized the importance of continuous improvement for breed clubs, Iams, and Eukanuba. “There’s no perfect dog out there—except maybe for mine,” he said. The same quest for perfection has led Iams to introduce a number of nutritional firsts, including controlled caloric and mineral content for large-breed puppies, and ingredients that help regulate intestinal bacteria or maximize intelligence and trainability in puppies. The next stage will be targeted diets that use nutrition to address health issues identified in specific breeds.

## **General Session: AKC—Parent Club Communications: The Roles and Functions of the AKC**

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### **Moderator:**

Pat Laurans  
AKC Delegate Parent Clubs Committee Chair  
*German Wirehaired Pointer*

### **Speakers:**

Lisa Peterson  
AKC Director of Club Communications

Michael Liosis  
AKC Director of Club Relations

Robin Stansell  
Vice President, AKC Event Operations

Mari-Beth O'Neill  
Assistant Vice President, AKC Customer Service

John Lyons  
AKC Chief Operating Officer

## **Parent Club Resources, Tools, and Services from the AKC**

### ***Lisa Peterson***

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Every month, Lisa Peterson said, more than 1.6 million unique users take advantage of the many resources and services provided online by the AKC. “We don’t just sanction dog shows,” Peterson said. “We help you do your job better.”

Online, the AKC offers the National Specialty Show Site Directory, which contains information provided by Parent Clubs on the strengths and weaknesses of various show sites. Also featured are the New Titles of Record Report, updated monthly, and a host of event planning and management services that allow event organizers to list information on upcoming events, access judge’s panels, and even submit agility trial results.

Club Communications helps Parent Clubs develop their own public relations strategies. This redesigned section of the website is “loaded with materials for clubs to access,” Peterson said. Parent Clubs can print or download media templates, television and print ads, flyers, and AKC rules and regulations. Parent Club newsletter editors will also find free content they can use in club publications in the AKC Syndicate. The website provides information on AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Day. AKC plays a proactive role in conjunction with Parent Clubs in supplying accurate breed information for DVD inserts for films such as *Eight Below*, *The Shaggy Dog*, and *Firehouse Dog*.

## How Club Relations Works with Parent Clubs

*Michael Liosis*

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Michael Liosis said, “Generally, we know who you are. You are volunteers. You donate your precious time to your Parent Clubs. We also know, generally who you are not—you are not constitutional attorneys, parliamentarians, or CPAs. Keeping those facts in mind, we are here to assist you, hopefully before things get off track since it is more difficult to undo something than it is to prevent something from going wrong.”

A statistical analysis was presented on the overall growth of clubs since 1981, especially parent clubs. Of the current 157 parent clubs, 139 are members and 46 (33%) were elected since 1981.

Club status approval was discussed and parent clubs were encouraged to contact AKC when learning of the formation of new local specialty clubs. We always tell newly formed local specialty clubs to contact their parent club. Copies of letters approving new local specialty clubs are sent to the corresponding secretary of each parent club.

From time-to-time, we also contact the non-member parent clubs (currently 18) and advise them of the benefits of AKC membership, the most obvious being the ability to select a delegate and have that person attend AKC Delegate Meetings.

When parent clubs submit requests for approval of bylaws we check to see that they don't impact or conflict with another portion of the bylaws. If we find something that is contrary to federal or state law or the Internal Revenue Code, we are obligated to bring it to the club's attention. Our aim is to inform and educate, not to penalize or frustrate. We have for almost 10 years asked the parent clubs to send us proposed amendments before they are balloted on by the members. This eliminates the possibility of clubs going to the time, trouble and expense to ballot their members and then be told by AKC that the amendment cannot be approved. Unless specifically required by state law, we will not approve language that is legalese in nature. Non-member clubs, contrary to some belief, are held to the same format and content requirements. The difference is that they do not require our approval before their amendments go into effect but they must be submitted to AKC.

When we are contacted about alleged bylaw violations, we check the document on hand and respond to the person. The issue must be bylaw-related and substantive, not personal. If there is a need to contact the club, then we will do it. The order of authority in every club is state law, the constitution and bylaws, the club's Rules of Order and finally, the standing rules. If anything conflicts with state law it is null and void.

Effective communication requires that clubs notify AKC immediately after each election of their new officers. Otherwise, AKC notices, approvals, press releases will not get to the newly elected officials or the club membership. Anything having to do with a Delegate must be sent directly to the Office of AKC's Executive Secretary—James P. Crowley. The delegates must be approved by AKC's Board of Directors and the delegate body and are required to go through a publication process.

A new aid that was developed was brought to the attendees' attention. Within the last six months, AKC's Club Relations web page has been added and contains an overview, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), a glossary of terms and a policy section.

## **Using the National Show Site Directory and Understanding the New Requirements to Hold a Show**

*Robin Stansell*

[Click here for National Show Site Locator presentation.](#)

[Click here for New Requirements presentation.](#)

The origin of the National Show Site Locator was an old notebook compiled by members, Robin Stansell said; this book was passed around for many years. Parent Clubs holding events used it to record the suitability of various show sites. Although the notebook contained invaluable information, its success was limited because few people knew it existed.

The National Show Site Locator has been available online since 2004, and Parent Club event organizers have added to it approximately 90 times since then. Information on the site can be searched by state or by breed. Anyone can review the directory, Stansell said, but if a Parent Club wishes to add or change information on a particular site following a show, it must first establish an ID and password. This can be done quickly and easily online.

"Clubs may be regularly consulting the directory," Laurans said, "but unless every single club updates the information on a site, whether it's positive or negative, it won't be complete." She recommended that Parent Clubs designate someone to evaluate each show site online immediately following the event.

Stansell reviewed the new requirements for exercise pens at show sites, and for eligibility to hold a show. The AKC has changed exercise pen requirements to improve sanitary conditions, address safety concerns, and attract new exhibitors. Some sites have been reluctant to host specialty events because the grounds can be left in an unsanitary state afterward. "Everyone is not as judicious about picking up after dogs," Stansell said. "It can be like walking home through a minefield. When people leave an event with something on their shoe, they're not happy."

Ensuring an adequate amount of fenced exercise space reduces the chance that a dog will be exercised in a parking lot or other unsafe area. "We don't want a club to be held liable for an accident that happens when a dog dashes through a parking lot because there were no enclosed exercise areas," she said.

The new requirements for All Breed Shows indicate that a minimum of two gated exercise pens must be provided, of sturdy construction with a minimum size of 6' x 8' x 4', or 48 square feet for each pen. For shows with suitable outdoor exercise areas and clean-up supplies, the following number of pens must be provided based on the number of entries, with one pen for every 500 dogs. Shows without suitable outdoor exercise areas must provide pens for every 300 dogs. In the event of inclement weather, at least

two of the pens must be under cover. Specialty shows must have at least two exercise pens suitable to the size of the breed.

Stansell reviewed the AKC's new eligibility requirements for Parent Clubs planning to host a show. Every club applying to hold a show must host at least one of the following five activities within 10 miles of the club's territory and within the calendar year, to be approved for the next calendar year's show(s):

- Independent AKC-sanctioned match
- AKC educational match
- AKC CGC test
- Active public education program
- Other educational/outreach programs

Two of these "Category A" activities must be held within 10 miles of the club's territory if the club held no show within 10 miles of its territory during the previous year.

Every show-giving club must conduct and document at least two of the following 11 activities in its area within the calendar year, to be approved for the next calendar year's show(s):

- Conformation and/or obedience/rally, or agility training class
- Breeder referral service
- Two educational programs for club members and either public or formal judges' education
- Dog show tours
- Registered handler seminars or workshops
- New exhibitor briefings
- Opportunities for provisional judges
- AKC show committee seminars
- Disaster planning
- Meet the Breeds events
- Health clinics

Stansell said a club must complete four of these "Category B" activities if its shows are held more than 10 miles from the club's territory. He noted that many clubs are already conducting these activities in the course of their normal public education programs and will only need to document their efforts. The list of activities should be taken as suggestions only, and is not ironclad. The purpose is simply to increase opportunities for Parent Clubs to interact with the community and invite participation in the sport.

## **How Special Services Can Assist Parent Clubs**

*Mari-Beth O'Neill*

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Mari-Beth O'Neill invited Parent Clubs to take advantage of many of the specialized services available to them. Club officers may use AKC Direct, which offers a toll-free telephone number, PIN-code access, and a direct referral to the AKC department best suited to help resolve the club's issues. AKC Special Services also regularly updates breed rescue and breeder referral information, working with Parent Clubs to be certain that information submitted by rescue organizations is accurate.

Special Services works with Parent Clubs to update standard and alternate breed colors. "We can even help with colors you don't want listed," she said. "A photograph is required to validate the color." Other breed standards can also be reviewed and changed. "When I first began working in this area, I was told that there were normally no more than one or two changes to breed standards a year." This is no longer the case—currently, as many as 10 breeds are actively revising their standards.

Special Services registers and retires kennel names in cases where a breeder has retired and the club wants to protect the name, so someone else does not immediately pick it up. Special Services can also provide a list of juniors competing in Junior Showmanship by breed, to help clubs recognize young people and develop programs for them. O'Neill said she works with Parent Clubs to revise information presented in the breed brochures sent out to new registrants. These brochures were first produced by the Golden Retriever Parent Club almost 10 years ago, and are used by approximately 80 clubs today.

## **Preservation of Parent Club Heritage and Archivist Project**

*John Lyons*

[Click here for presentation.](#)

John Lyons read to participants AKC President Dennis Sprung's and AKC Chairman of the Board Ron Menaker's letter to Roger Goodell, Commissioner of the National Football League. The letter called organized dog fighting "heinous and repulsive," and "strongly condemned" it. Sprung said the activity for which NFL player Michael Vick was recently indicted is "anathema to everything the American Kennel Club stands for." He urged Goodell to suspend Vick immediately.

Using historic photographs like one of President Roosevelt kneeling at his Hyde Park estate with his beloved Scottish Terrier Fala, Lyons illustrated how memorabilia preserved by Parent Clubs can capture an era for generations to come. "Think of the loss that would have occurred if some dog person hadn't thought to preserve this photo and send it to the AKC," Lyons said. He urged participants to "start a conversation with your members about the importance of preserving club heritage." Artifacts like brochures, photographs, and letters are often kept in a club member's attic or basement. They may be better protected in the AKC archives, where the environment is controlled and a professional archivist maintains the collection to national archival standards.

The AKC established its archives in 1998, in part to preserve the culture of the country, the clubs, and the sport. The accumulated artifacts also track the development of breeds. "Having pictures shows the evolution of the breed, and why it looks the way it does today," Lyons said.

The AKC does not charge Parent Clubs for storage and maintenance of artifacts, nor does it charge for shipping the records to the AKC archives. The AKC asks Parent Clubs to execute a Deed of Gift signifying that the items become the property of the AKC, but will cooperate with Parent Clubs that wish to arrange special showings of historic materials. Lyons advised Parent Clubs to contact the AKC archivists to determine which of their records would be accepted for storage in the archives. He said some of the items they welcome include artwork, yearbooks, audio and visual tapes, pedigrees, ribbons and rosettes, constitutions and bylaws, original research, catalogues, photographs, and negatives.

## **The National Specialty**

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### **Moderators:**

Karen Mays  
*Borzoï*

Ricky Blackman  
*Clumber Spaniel*

### **Panelists:**

Wally Jones  
Former Show Chair, Dachshund National  
*Dachshund*

Lee Brown  
Show Chair, American Spaniel Club Summer Specialty  
Co-founder, Peach Blossom Cluster, Perry, GA  
*Cocker Spaniel*

Robin Stansell  
Vice President, AKC Event Operations

### **Wally Jones**

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Wally Jones spent nearly 20 years as a breeder and exhibitor before competing in an All-Breed show; this illustrates his partiality to the National Specialty, he said. Jones co-created an 84-page manual on planning and producing a National Specialty show, and said that conference participants can request this searchable manual, or a condensed, 18-page version, by contacting him at [wjones@wyattfirm.com](mailto:wjones@wyattfirm.com).

“A successful National Specialty is a profitable one,” Jones said. He recounted the story of Shirley Schultz, a member of the Great Lakes Dachshund Club, whose passion for purchasing quirky dachshund-themed objects often led her to buy extras for the club. Shirley helped make their Specialty successful by donating these items to the sales table. “We sold items that couldn’t be found elsewhere, and we only allowed our own table, no booths,” Jones said. “Over the years, we have cleared \$18,000–\$25,000 from our sales tables, so don’t underestimate them.” Jones recommended that Parent Clubs select small

items, such as luggage tags, because they are inexpensive and don't require much inventory space. Luggage tags can be personalized with Parent Club information, and are popular sellers, as are buttons. They can be designed around the host club's logo, and since show attendees enjoy purchasing buttons from each show they attend, they sell out almost every year.

A financially successful Specialty requires fundraising, and Jones recommended a combination of hospitality events, participating projects, and sponsorships to help achieve the financial goals of the show committee. Parent Clubs can reach out to local clubs to raise funds for the show. Some Parent Clubs rotate the location of the show around the country, asking local clubs to host the event, as the Dachshund Parent Club does. The local club slated to host the following year's show might wish to arrange a hospitality event at the current show, such as a breakfast to promote the upcoming event. Parent Clubs can also request that local clubs participate in a fundraising project.

Jones described the Dachshund Club's quilt project, in which local clubs were asked to donate \$10 for materials, and to create a quilt square representing their club. The quilt squares were then sewn together, and the quilt was raffled off at the National. The raffle brought in \$5,000, and the cost of materials was borne by the local clubs. One year, a club member found white cloth Dachshund figures at a craft store. Each local club decorated its own white Dachshund, and show attendees paid to vote for their favorites. The creations were raffled for cash afterward. Jones also encouraged event managers to seek sponsorships. Pet food companies often contribute prizes and money that can be shared between the Parent Club and host clubs. "Sponsorship funds go directly to your bottom line," Jones said.

Parent Clubs should create a budget well in advance of the show, and consider ways to make each aspect of the show produce funds. "Everything has to be a profit center," Jones said. To cover the cost of complimentary dinners for judges and their guests, for example, a Parent Club might increase the cost of dinner tickets for show attendees to compensate for the free dinners. Similarly, charging fees for parking motor homes can cover the cost of generators and other equipment used by motor home drivers.

One controversial concept is reserved grooming space. Although general access to grooming space must be provided, some exhibitors are only too happy to pay for reserved space. "Since you have to have grooming space," Jones noted, "you may as well make money from it."

Jones recommended that Parent Clubs determine the "break-even rate" for hotel rooms—the lowest rate at which the hotel can sell the rooms and still cover its costs. One way to determine this rate is to watch for specials on low-attendance weekends such as Memorial Day. The objective is not to secure the rock-bottom rate for conference attendees, Jones said. "You want to make sure the hotel is happy enough with the room rate that they'll give you the convention space for nothing."

Parent Clubs should know before signing the contract roughly how many rooms will be required, based on attendance at previous shows. Often, clubs must guarantee the number of sleeping nights they will use, and may have to pay for unused rooms if they do not project accurately. Likewise, clubs should require the hotel to guarantee that it will not make rooms available at a lower rate at any time during the event. If the rooms are

offered at a lower rate through an online service or elsewhere, conference attendees may reserve their rooms through the less expensive carrier. Parent Clubs would not get credit for those stays. Jones said hotels sometimes state that for every block of rooms reserved, they will provide a certain number of free rooms. If that is the case, Jones recommended that the free rooms be used to house judges.

Although many hotels require that clubs purchase food and drink only through the hotel itself, Jones said there are ways around this. Hotels will sometimes overlook a special hospitality event, such as a breakfast provided onsite by a host club. Using an outside tent to stage a hospitality event can also be an exception. In all cases, he advised Parent Clubs to have the local host club and the Parent Club both sign the hotel contract to help prevent a local club from walking away from the event and leaving the Parent Club solely obligated.

Jones said a National Specialty should not only be financially successful, but fun for the people participating. “People come to these events not just because they want to exhibit. They’re taking a week of vacation. They want to have a good time.” Clubs hosting National Specialty shows should “play up” their cities. Jones recalled a show in Chicago that held a special evening event in the Chicago Museum of Natural History. “Seeing that place at night, when the lights came up, was really great,” he said. Clubs should take advantage of outdoor locales, hosting events at lakes and other outdoor venues.

The last consideration Jones cited was safety. He reminded event managers that many airlines would not transport dogs between May and September. Scheduling events during the hot months could mean low attendance, since people who live too far away to drive would not be able to get their dogs to the show.

### ***Lee Brown***

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Lee Brown recommended that planning for a National Specialty begin with a board proposal four years in advance of the show. Board proposals should be succinct and should include a budget. “You want to give yourself time to raise money for fun events. We raised \$58,000 one year and \$54,000 the next.”

Site representatives may be willing to visit the board to present the costs and benefits of hosting with them. The Georgia National Fairgrounds and Agricenter in Perry, Georgia—the site for the Peach Blossom Cluster—sent the board a promotional video that showed its indoor and outdoor facilities in detail, as well as ways the space could be subdivided into smaller rooms for meetings, storage, and workshop purposes. The video even showed the site’s auxiliary amenities, such as extensive parking for mobile homes.

[Click here for promotional video.](#)

Brown compared the advantages and disadvantages of hosting a National Specialty versus an All-Breed or Cluster event. The primary benefit of joining an All-Breed show, she said, is sharing the costs, such as fees for facilities and judges. While hosting a larger event also means that space costs will be increased, that is often offset by greater income from increased entry. Other advantages may include advertising, free materials such as rosettes, golf cart transportation, on-site photographers, and on-site security. The larger

facilities necessitated by an All-Breed show generally have a wider range of amenities, such as RV parking and drop-down electrical outlets that can make grooming set-up easier. Larger state-owned facilities like the Georgia National Fairground and Agricenter often do not use unionized workers, which can lower costs for moving supplies with forklifts.

“It is also possible to start a Specialty before or after a Cluster,” Brown said. “When we do this, we ask the participants to stay for the entire Cluster.” Planners should identify conflicts with other events taking place within a 200-mile radius of the planned show.

An essential part of planning a National Specialty is determining the amount of space needed, which varies according to the nature of the site selected. For example, a ring should be big enough to fit the anticipated number of dogs, and small enough for the judges to be able to find them. To determine how much space is necessary, clubs must decide in advance what activities will take place. Conformation, agility trials, obedience, and field trials require different amounts and types of space. Clubs should also consider the space required for crates, grooming tables, and tubs. It is critical that grooming tables be in an air-conditioned area, Brown said. Large facilities like the Agricenter may have hot and cold water tanks and nozzles available.

“When you’re selecting a site, think about your need for storage. Is there a storage room where you can lock your trophies at night?” Brown also recommended that clubs use care when locating trophy tables. “You don’t want to place your trophy tables right in front of the ring, because that takes up good seating space.”

Brown recommended careful consideration of electricity and lighting issues. If possible, she said, negotiate a flat rate for electricity, because electricity costs “can price you out of a venue.” Clubs should also ascertain whether they can use splitters, especially in grooming areas. Without splitters, groomers can overload circuits and create significant problems for everyone. “If you choose a hotel, be aware that some of them have lighting that is distracting to a judge trying to look at a dog’s movement.”

When selecting a superintendent, it may be helpful to prepare a comparison chart for the board’s consideration. Clubs should look for people with experience for the role of committee chair. “Pick people who are capable of working independently. Hand them the job description and the deadlines, and then let them work. You don’t have to dog them all the time if you’ve got good people,” Brown said. She requires that prospective committee chairs sign a “Consent to Serve” form, indicating that they agree to fulfill the responsibilities of the position.

Brown emphasized the need for a good graphic artist, since many fundraising opportunities center on the logo. In the past, Brown has relied on donated art for the logo. After board approval of the design, she has incorporated it into prints, throws, T-shirts, and other memorabilia to sell at the event. Items promoting an upcoming show can even be sold at the current show. Quality materials and unique ideas are essential to this effort. At a recent show, Brown ordered champagne flutes that conference attendees could purchase and use at the champagne fountain. She has also sold, raffled or auctioned painted mailboxes and toy boxes, wooden stools, and state-themed baskets donated by local clubs.

Brown's final recommendation was that Parent Clubs use a credit card machine during the event. This does not necessitate a power supply, because charges on manual slips can be called in each night while conference attendees are still onsite. Monthly maintenance charges for credit card machines can be suspended between shows.

Time constraints prevented Robin Stansell from presenting a detailed explanation of the National Show Site Directory at this session.

[Click here for presentation.](#)

## **Breed Standards**

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### **Moderator:**

Ruth Ann Naun  
*Border Terrier*

### **Presenter:**

Mari-Beth O'Neill  
Assistant Vice President, AKC Customer Service

### **Panelists:**

Janet Jackson  
*Yorkshire Terrier*

Linda Friedow  
*Belgian Tervuren*

Peggy Wolfe  
*Neapolitan Mastiff*

### ***Mari-Beth O'Neill***

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Breed standards are an important part of the ongoing effort to maintain and protect the future of individual breeds. Mari-Beth O'Neill explained the process by which Parent Clubs develop, and both the clubs and the AKC, approve changes in standards.

In 1987, when the AKC established a common format for breed standards, approximately one third of the Parent Clubs opted out of a process that they saw as an infringement on their ability to formulate and describe their breeds. Although one of the first objectives was to eliminate point scales in breed standards, this system became one of the first concessions when some club members objected. In November 2006, the AKC revised guidelines for writing and revising breed standards.

The process of revising a standard begins with the formation of a breed standard committee to review existing provisions, solicit updates, and listen to members' concerns about where the breed is going. O'Neill emphasized that the breed standard defines "perfection for the breed, not the common denominator." When debates go on and compromises are made, she said she sometimes fears that members "are leaving what is

excellence and what you really want the epitome of the breed to be. We all strive to breed the perfect dog, and we need a definition of what that is to be.”

O’Neill recommended small standard committees of no more than three members, and urged clubs to contact her office as early in the process as possible. Committee recommendations are reviewed by AKC staff, and then submitted for board approval before they can go out to club members for balloting. Clubs have full authority to decide whether the review process will deal with just one aspect of a standard or focus more broadly.

O’Neill recalled her own experience with the Manchester Terrier, in which the introduction of a blue at a breed show triggered a near-unanimous vote in favor of a disqualification for colors other than black and tan. “There’s almost always somebody who votes against,” whether the objection has to do with the scope of a revision or the grammar and spelling in the document. She said it is up to Parent Clubs to control the revision process through effective communications, using member newsletters, websites, and annual meeting presentations to make everyone aware of the process before ballots circulate.

“You want to be able to protect yourselves from people who say they never knew you were doing this,” but it is also important to explain the rationale behind a change, O’Neill said. Balloting must comply with constitution and bylaw requirements, usually the same ones that apply to mail votes for club officers. Some clubs have learned from experience that ballots sent just prior to membership renewals can create confusion with the renewal process. O’Neill said that balloting must also inform members that a five-year moratorium on standard revisions will take effect once a change has been approved.

After balloting is complete, the results are resubmitted to AKC staff and the board, published in the Secretary’s Page of the *Gazette* for comment, then submitted for final approval. When the process concludes, the club receives final notification, and the AKC establishes an effective date approximately three months later to allow time for the standard to be reprinted. The AKC takes responsibility for mailing the new standard with an explanation of the revisions to judges.

### ***Janet Jackson***

There are three essential ingredients for any Parent Club considering a change in its breed standard, Janet Jackson said: the club’s own constitution, the guidelines covered in O’Neill’s presentation, and Mari-Beth O’Neill herself. She described O’Neill as “a student of history” who is dedicated to helping AKC members preserve the heritage of their breeds.

The Yorkshire Terrier Club began its most recent standard revision process with a question about a possible disqualification for long tails. “Little did we know that things were happening out there rapidly,” Jackson said, “to the extent that long tails wouldn’t be the main issue in a few more years, because colors were coming.”

In 1999, the club received its first complaint about a breeder producing Parti-Colored Yorkshire Terriers in California. Club representatives followed up with the AKC and received assurances that the standard allowed four color choices—black and tan, black and gold, blue and tan, blue and gold—with no provision for markings.

By the time a second complaint surfaced five years later, Jackson said, the AKC had adopted DNA registration and was no longer prepared to deny registration on color alone. Meanwhile, the club was tracking the introduction of an expensive new “designer” breed that was said to be a mutation from the Yorkshire Terrier, with features that never showed up in the purebred dogs.

The club raised no objection when the AKC was asked to recognize the new breed, requesting only that “Yorkshire” not be included in the breed name. All new breeds come from crossing established ones, Jackson explained, so “if their pedigrees are sufficient to satisfy the AKC, we’re all for it.” However, the experience led to a unanimous motion at the Yorkshire Terrier Club’s 2006 annual meeting supporting a disqualification for Parti-Colors or any other departure from established coloring. Members passed a second unanimous motion against opening any other aspect of the standard to review.

The three-member review committee encountered just one problem with wording. In common with the Kerry Blue Terrier, Yorkshire Terriers are born black and take on their adult coloring over time. A disqualification in the Kerry Blue Terrier standard states that dogs must be blue by the age of 18 months, but some of the best-colored Yorkshire Terriers don’t turn until age two. It was difficult to find wording acceptable to AKC without addressing the age at which dogs must be blue. The goal was not to change the original description of color but to address the ‘new’ colors.”

Once that issue had been addressed, Jackson said, the club board unanimously approved the revised standard and the subsequent process was very smooth. The standard was submitted to AKC staff in mid-December, approved by the AKC Board in January, balloted immediately, and approved by 87% of members in a vote that closed March 1. The vote received final AKC approval in July, and will take effect in October. Meanwhile, the club is preparing a PowerPoint presentation to show judges how the Yorkshire Terrier’s coloring evolves over time.

### ***Linda Friedow***

The American Belgian Tervuren Club began a full view of its breed standard after its May, 2003 National Specialty. The Judge’s Ed committee had heard comments expressing confusion with certain parts of the existing standard, particularly color, teeth and white. Linda Friedow said participants in the club’s nine-member review committee included “a couple of fairly controversial people,” because “I thought it was beneficial to hear what they were saying in the context of the committee, rather than talking behind our backs.”

The club notified members of the review, set up a website to collect comments and concerns, and allowed six months for members to send input and suggested wording. The club ended up with seven major changes in wording, along with a general effort to simplify the text and turn some negative descriptions to positives. Heeding advice from the first two AKC Parent Club Conferences, Friedow said the committee also looked at spelling, grammar, and punctuation, knowing that “if you submit it misspelled and it’s approved that way, you live with it for five years.” That decision raised flags at the balloting stage, with some members complaining that the language updates had been thrown in to confuse the review process.

The review took 18 months, with a deep and sometimes heated discussion within the committee. “They were willing to work at this, and to keep working at it,” Friedow said. By May 2006, the club was ready for balloting, and hired an independent firm to oversee the mailing to about 1,100 members. The ballot was announced in club publication and via the membership e-mail “Announce List”. While the words “Official Ballot” appeared on the envelope in large type, the envelopes did not include the club logo, which led to some confusion surrounding the balloting process. The club and the AKC worked together to assure that everyone could vote, while verifying that no one had voted twice.

The new standard was approved, but a couple of disgruntled club members later complained about the process to the AKC board, bypassing the AKC staff. “My phone was ringing, my e-mail was full,” Friedow said, and rumors began to circulate about the integrity of the vote. Although the new standard received AKC approval in the end, O’Neill said the experience had demonstrated the importance of clearly marked envelopes when using independent balloting companies.

### *Peggy Wolfe*

The United States Neapolitan Mastiff Club of America first wrote its standard in the AKC format in 1995 (nine years before breed recognition), revised it in 2001 when the breed was moved into the Miscellaneous Class and made minor revisions again in 2004 when the breed was moved into Working Group.

To write a standard from scratch, “You have to start with a philosophy of what you’re going to be doing,” Wolfe said. “Our very firm philosophy and we all agreed upon this, was that we wanted the standard in America to describe the same dog that is described by the standard in Italy.” The problem was that there were at least four different versions of Italian or FCI standards for the breed. “They’re all a little tiny bit different,” she told participants. “You have people here who say, ‘that’s not what the Italians say.’ And you say, ‘which Italians?’” Then it turned out that some aspects of the Italian standard were said even by the Italian experts to be incorrect, so the club’s three-member committee agreed to factor in the changes that seemed likely to occur.

Through the process of developing its standard, the breed acquired two very important acknowledgements: a letter from the AKC stating that the original standard was presented in an accepted format and would have been approved for an AKC breed, and correspondence from a key Italian official confirming that the two countries’ standards describe the same dog. “That was a huge benefit in educating our people and our judges,” Wolfe said.

The standard went through minor revisions in 2001. Three years later, when the Mastino was up for full recognition, the AKC board requested the removal of the disqualification for “lack of appearance of massiveness” and a revision of a specific reference to the breed’s temperament. The disqualification was replaced with the statement that “absence of massiveness shall be so severely penalized as to eliminate from competition.” Wolfe said the new language made sense as a way to prevent puppies and young dogs from winning awards if they have not achieved full massiveness, without disqualifying them from competition.

The lesson from the Neapolitan Mastiff experience is that “the biggest problem in standards is words,” she said. “What we’re trying to do with the standard is explain a visual understanding in words.” With judges trying to learn and understand 12 breeds at once, there is a strong temptation for them to want a standard meaning of key terminology like “massive,” “moderate,” or “full dentition,” when they appear in different standards. This is problematic since the authors of the different standards may not have meant exactly the same thing when they used those words. Nowadays we are all affected when other breeds attempt to clarify words or meanings in their standards too. Wolfe said, “I want to thank the Rottweiler people for helping us redefine the meaning of the word ‘is.’”

### *Questions and Discussion*

A participant asked about the listing of colors and a dog’s certification of registration. O’Neill said the AKC asks applicants to send photos when coloring is not standard.

O’Neill told participants that the Parent Club owns the breed standard and controls its use through copyright. The AKC copies standards for educational purposes, referring requests for wider publishing to Parent Clubs for approval.

A participant said her breed had amended its standard several years ago to include a brindle coat as well as the pre-existing tricolor, and is now seeing the emergence of a “trindle.” A contingent of club members supported an amendment to recognize brindle-coated tris, but the AKC advised that the issue could be addressed through judge education. O’Neill said the club could decide the issue on its own authority.

Temperament standards and the requirement for two descended testicles are included in the rules applied to dog shows and need not be included in breed standards, O’Neill said. Provisions for temperament and aggression toward other dogs vary widely, reflecting differences in the purposes and functions of different breeds.

A participant described the extensive judge education effort her club had undertaken to fully explain the standard for the salt-and-pepper coat that is unique to its particular breed. O’Neill acknowledged that Parent Club representatives might face a frustrating trade-off between accepting inconsistent championship decisions or overwhelming judges with too much information.

A participant asked what breeds are doing to revise their standards language on docking and cropping. O’Neill said that while the practice is only permitted in the western hemisphere, responsible owners must have the right to choose whether to dock or crop their dogs.

“What we do with our standards is almost irrelevant at this point,” she said. “We have to fight for our rights throughout the country.”

A participant expressed concern about attempts to improve rare breeds by adding stock that appears similar but is not the same. He asked whether the AKC had considered protecting bloodlines by defining breeds by genetic history as well as appearance. O’Neill said the organization will continue expanding breed recognition through DNA; however, the science is still a few years away from the ability to identify a specific breed.

Participants discussed whether published breed standards should be used with a broader audience as well as judges. “It’s for the breeders and the puppy buyers and for everyone,” a

participant said. "It's a blueprint for our breed." O'Neill said it is up to Parent Clubs to educate prospective buyers.

A judge said each breed should have two standards: one for judges and one for breeders. He noted that many clubs hold separate educational programs for the two groups. "That's a wonderful thing that we all ought to take under advisement," he said, "but to put some of these things into a judges' breed standard won't make sense."

## Online Services from the AKC

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### **Moderator:**

Bill Blair  
*Pekingese*

### **Presenter:**

Charley Kneifel  
AKC Chief Information Officer

Bill Blair acknowledged that in the past, there has been insufficient support at the AKC website. "But a delightful turnaround has taken place. Charley Kneifel has brought online services to the AKC."

### *Charley Kneifel*

Charley Kneifel, AKC Chief Information Officer, asked participants to "make a wish list and a gripe list" and shaped his presentation based on their questions.

"The 'My AKC' login is in the top right corner of every screen," he said, describing basic navigation of the site. To establish a "My AKC" Account, he told participants to click the "Getting Started" tab in the upper right corner of any page of the AKC website. Create a unique account name, he said. "This does not need to be a last name. It does need to be something easily remembered." Participants would then create a password and answer a security question. Kneifel said, "The security question is very important. It allows us to reset your password." The "Getting Started" tab has detailed instructions for creating an account and an authentication code.

A participant asked why the site asks for a credit card number. Kneifel said, "The number is used to verify your identity only. No charges are made to your card." "If you have given your e-mail address, an authentication code can be sent to that address and used instead of credit card information." Few people choose this option, with 85% of members using credit card numbers.

Other features available in the "My AKC" section of the site include managing events, following point progressions, and updating personal account information. In the future you will be able to manage your events, and update information for the Breed Club or Parent Club pages. Kneifel said, "You can use the Club Summary page to request an update to event contact information by using the e-mail link on the page."

Kneifel noted improvements to the site that make managing events much easier, and described features that allow searches on individual judges for AKC events. To access the judge search, open a “My AKC” account, he said. Click on the “Events” tab at the top. On the left, under “More Links,” is a link to “Judges.” This feature allows users to search for specific judges or for all judges who are eligible for an event or category. “You can click on a link to see what events a specific judge is approved for, his or her past assignments, and future assignments.”

Kneifel also explained features that let a Show Chair view and maintain information about judges. “The Judge Panel Planning tool (JPP) which is one method for Event management, lets you see an entire weekend’s judging panel, when they are judging, if they are judging at back-to-back shows, if they have a contract with you, and other important information.”

“Using the ‘Quick Submit’ feature,” Kneifel said, “the Show Chair can enter the judge’s number and hit ‘submit.’ The judge should pop up. As long as the judge is approved for a breed, you can add the judge to that class. The information is immediately updated in the AKC system, and overnight, the information is promulgated to AKC website.” This feature also allows the Show Chair to manage individual judge panels and create a printable report of all judges. The report includes statistics on each judge and other relevant information. “The Show Chair can create and print a Conformation Report—a group-ordered breed list that can be sorted by judge. They can also generate an Event Summary Report listing the group breed, the judges assigned, and which judges currently have a contract. Judges can be un-assigned, and only eligible judges will show up on the list.”

One participant asked if the Show Chair and Secretary could look at last year’s event applications. Kneifel said that the majority of the information, such as Disaster Plans, is carried over, and the actual event application could be e-mailed if it was submitted on paper.

Another participant asked Kneifel whether it is possible to find other events scheduled for the same day as his event. Kneifel said this is not possible, “but you can cluster with the ‘Judges Panel’ feature, and you can line up simultaneous events on the screen.”

New features of the event search support show planning. For specific events, functionality has been updated to include the count of prior year’s competitors.

All official entry forms are now available online, and users can download the forms via the My AKC feature as long as they have installed the free Adobe Acrobat software. The forms may be printed and mailed to the Show Chair.

Event results are also available online. “We can even get electronic results through the Supers,” Kneifel said. Some Specialty and Parent Specialty results may be processed more slowly because “these results must be processed manually in date order and this can slow the process.”

Kneifel described how to navigate the “My Dogs and Litters” features of “My AKC”. “After you have logged in to your ‘My AKC’ account, click on the ‘My AKC’ button on the top right of the screen. This takes you to your ‘My AKC’ page, from which you may manage your account, update your information, and follow your dogs.” Users can follow

both dogs owned by the user, and dogs the user does not own but wishes to follow. Once a dog owned by the individual is entered and validated into the user's list, "all the AKC records on that dog are available. Owners can see even more than the general person. You can update and add small portions of information from this screen on a dog you own."

A participant asked how he is informing the public about new website features. "We have placed a full-page ad in the *Gazette*, we have advertised on the website, and there was an article about the new search features for the *Gazette*," he said.

"We work hard to get our AKC site to be the number one site on web searches. We try to be relevant for Google so that searches are taken to breed standard pages," Kneifel said. "We try especially to get the puppy searches to lead to the AKC site. We hope to drive people to what everyone considers the best process to buy a puppy."

One participant said she had encountered difficulties navigating the website using the Mozilla Firefox browser. Kneifel said all applications are tested using Firefox, Internet Explorer and a few other browsers. Another participant described the AKC website search function as "terrible." Kneifel explained the new search engine for information about Parent Clubs. "You can type in the name of the Parent Club, and it takes you to a summary of the club. You can find the territory the club covers and if it is locked down or fully visible. You will also find the club e-mail, address, and upcoming events."

It can be a challenge to change information about co-owned dogs. "Thirty percent of our dogs are co-owned," Kneifel said. Changing names and registering multiple owners can be an issue because signatures are required. "We are working on a PIN number to represent joint owner signatures."

E-mail and electronic communications present both advantages and disadvantages. "For some of your club's communication you may need to have a signed consent to send newsletters and other communications by e-mail, and some bylaw changes may affect what you can and cannot do online. We can encounter e-mail distribution issues. AOL has strict guidelines and the 'delete' and 'spam' buttons are side by side," he said. "We are not blocked often by AOL, but we are often delayed by AOL for several hours. Since over 25% of our members have AOL addresses, this can be a problem."

"There are benefits to sharing your membership list with AKC. We can verify membership in a club when a member purchases a breeder classified advertisement, and rally members quickly to fight legislation." A member asked whether the AKC shares membership lists. Other than dog registrations, he said, these lists are not shared. "We typically do not share officers, e-mail addresses, and other personal information."

All breed pages now share the same appearance. If the AKC has a flyer for the breed, it is on the breed page and available for downloading and printing. These are the same flyers AKC sends to anyone who registers a dog with the AKC. A participant asked Kneifel how to send a breed description to the AKC for a breed that has no flyer; he said they should be sent to Lisa Peterson, Director of Club Communications.

Participants asked about reports and information about pedigrees and litters of origin. Litters of origin are available only to owners and may be requested online, Kneifel said. "You can order third, fourth, and fifth degree pedigrees online." The website allows

owners to update litter histories on dogs they own. "All litter information is available to you once you register the dog."

Through the "Check Dog" feature, users can enter a dog's information and the site will generate a PDF file that may be downloaded to a computer. "This dog and all AKC information can be saved, and you can fill in forms from here," Kneifel said. Once a dog has been registered, "you cannot change breed, sex, name, registration number, date of birth, place of birth, or breeder."

Summary Reports may be generated online. "You can see a bitch and all her litters," said Kneifel. This is similar to what was previously available; however, "now you can see it more quickly and can see the litter of origin."

New Title of Record reports are sent to one officer within each Parent Club free of charge. This monthly report may be requested online and sent as an e-mail. One participant asked if other members of the club could receive the report. Kneifel said, "We don't like to issue names and addresses to respect privacy."

"We update sections of the site on a regular basis. We are rolling out new features regularly," he said. In the near future, users will be able to receive reminders before show deadlines for registration and confirmation of registration for Specialty events. Other features include more personalized views of show searches, the ability to save personal preferences, and the ability to access information about judges from other screens. "We are always working on competition management. We have two or three people who do nothing but update content."

"There's a lot to this site," Kneifel said. "There are over forty million dogs in the database, three million annual event entries, and multiple systems all interfacing with the AKC online." The system's three servers are 99% available. "In the past the website has gone down during big events such as Westminster and the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship, but that does not happen now."

Participants asked how to effectively share all that the AKC site had with their constituency and Kneifel said: "We will work on a one or two page flyer that you can hand out to your clubs and members that should aid in pointing out some of the features we have covered today".

He invited participants to "send any and all suggestions to my e-mail: [cxk@akc.org](mailto:cxk@akc.org)."

## **General Session: The Legislative Threat to Responsible Purebred Dog Ownership**

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### **Moderator:**

George Sexton  
*Rhodesian Ridgeback*

### **Panelists:**

Walt Bebout  
AKC Director of Canine Legislation

Larry Sorensen  
AKC Director of Public Education

Holly Stump  
*American Staffordshire Terrier*

George Sexton described the current “competitive political environment” as a “unique opportunity to energize membership and increase the pressure on legislators to protect the rights of responsible dog owners.” Many Parent Clubs are already doing what is necessary to combat canine legislation, he said, but he urged clubs to sharpen their focus. “We have to get out of this defensive mode we’re in. Right now, as the people in California can tell you, we’ve been playing catch-up.”

## **A Review of Current Legislation and an Overview of Available Resources**

### ***Walt Bebout***

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Walt Bebout said that while his department is small, it carries a large responsibility. Dog owners and breeders face numerous legal threats, including breed-specific legislation, mandatory spay and neuter legislation, statewide breeder bills, guardianship versus ownership legislation, and consumer protection (“puppy lemon”) legislation. Breed-specific legislation threatens the integrity and existence of numerous breeds. Mandatory spay/neuter laws place unreasonable restrictions on both volume and hobby breeders. Espousing the concept of “guardianship” instead of “ownership” creates animal rights and jeopardizes dog ownership everywhere. Laws aiming to protect consumers who buy dogs with health problems can place unreasonable requirements on breeders of all sizes. Notably, much of this canine legislation simply fails to solve the problems underlying the legislation, Bebout said.

To meet the challenges posed by canine legislation, breeders and owners must examine what motivates elected officials. For example, officials often propose breed-specific legislation on the heels of a dog attack in a community. Similarly, mandatory spay and neuter legislation is a common response to animal shelter population concerns. Bebout said that if breeders and owners consider these motivations and use the resources of the

AKC in the political process, they could help create positive results for responsible dog owners.

The political system itself presents additional challenges, Bebout said. There are 50 state legislatures, 3,141 counties, and more than 30,000 municipalities in the United States. Legislation can arise in any of those settings. While the AKC tracks bills introduced in state legislatures, no tracking system exists for local governmental bodies and agencies. The AKC depends on purebred dog owners to monitor local agencies and to inform the AKC of pending legislation.

Bebout said the AKC provides several services to help Parent Clubs track and respond to canine legislation. Members can subscribe online to "Taking Command," an e-newsletter published six times annually. The Canine Legislation Department issues legislative alerts to warn clubs and individuals of pending legislation. The AKC also helps Parent Clubs understand and respond to the local legislation threatening them.

"A most vital service is bill analysis," Bebout said. "When you hear about canine legislation in your area, let us know. We can analyze the ordinance and produce talking points for addressing the issues in the ordinance." On its website, the AKC offers numerous brochures Parent Clubs can use to refute misconceptions about purebred dog ownership and breeding. Parent Clubs may download and distribute information packets on breed-specific legislation, breeding restrictions, puppy lemon laws, and dogs in parks.

The AKC also encourages clubs to form state federations by joining with other canine organizations. More than 24 such federations exist today. With approximately 5,000 affiliated dog clubs, the AKC has the opportunity to create a network capable of effectively responding to canine legislation. Bebout underscored the need to explore untapped resources such as AKC registrants, AKC event participants, purebred dog owners, pet owners, and other animal interest groups, many of whom are natural allies.

"In the '60s, '70s, and '80s we did not have breed-specific legislation or mandatory spay and neuter laws. Pet guardianship did not exist as a concept. Now, we live in a changed environment," Bebout said. "If we do not sustain our rights as responsible dog owners, all our other activities with our dogs will disappear."

## **The Role of Public Education Coordinator**

*Larry Sorenson*

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Larry Sorenson emphasized educating the public as a pro-active means of combating canine legislation. "You've just defeated some nasty legislation. You feel like taking a deep breath. You say to yourself, 'Now I can get back to my dogs.' Right? Wrong. Now is the time to educate."

Canine Ambassadors, Public Education Coordinators and other club members can "get ahead" of canine legislation by hosting education booths at fairs and malls, donating books and videos to libraries and schools, giving classes to first-time dog owners, and holding "Meet the Breed" or "Day in the Park with the Breed" events. One group had 50 dogs at its first "Day in the Park," and two years later, the number had grown to 250.

The AKC Public Education site offers books, posters, community achievement awards, and teaching kits. When talking to people in their communities, Sorenson said Parent Clubs might want to begin by discussing something as simple as the canine-human bond. Owners and breeders can explain the benefits of owning a purebred dog, such as the predictability of appearance and temperament, and knowledge of health issues a specific breed may face. They can show the public what makes the breed different and discuss who should and should not own the breed. These basics can be presented in a variety of settings: 4H clubs, after-school programs, summer camps, and library “read to the dog” programs.

Hosting an AKC Educational Match is another important way to attract public support. At an educational match, AKC Parent Clubs can recruit new members, establish mentor relationships, and teach people grooming and handling fundamentals. “The key to our long-term success is specialty clubs. You are the ones who link people up with mentors and friends,” Sorenson said.

The AKC can assist clubs with publicity for an educational match by notifying clubs within a 50–75 mile radius of the event, and by inviting owners in a 150-mile radius who have registered new dogs during the previous 18 months. A typical educational match features morning presentations on dog show basics, club membership, and grooming and handling tips. Afternoon events may include obedience run-throughs, booths, vendors, and joint events with other groups.

## Elements of a Successful Response to Legislation

### *Holly Stump*

[Click here for presentation.](#)

“You do not have to be an AKC employee or a political scientist to be effective against all this canine legislation,” Holly Stump said. To counteract poor canine legislation, Stump recommends looking at the characteristics of good laws. Good laws must be effective against the actual problem. Parent Clubs should look closely at the specifics of the problem behind each piece of legislation. Is the problem that dogs are attacking police officers during domestic violence calls? Are loose dogs attacking people in local parks? Will the proposed legislation actually address the specific problem?

In addition to being effective, good laws must also be equitable; that is, they must hold the right person responsible for the right problem. The laws must not punish or infringe upon the rights of people who are not responsible for the specific problem at hand. Stump said good laws must be enforceable. They must not be vague, arbitrary, unreasonable or discriminatory. They must afford due process, equal protection, and the right to be heard. Much of the canine law recently proposed does not qualify as good law, Stump said.

To deal effectively with canine legislation, Parent Clubs must identify the opposition and whether it is operating on the front lines or behind the scenes. Parent Clubs must know the legislators and why they are taking the positions they are taking. They must understand how the issue developed, what the current laws are, and why the current laws are not working. Parent Clubs must identify their allies. “When you go into a town, find

that single selectman or town clerk or person on your side. They are the ones who will keep you informed,” Stump advised.

During a campaign against canine legislation in Fall River, Massachusetts, organizers realized that they faced an unusually extreme opposition to outside help. “We put a local face on it quickly,” Stump said. “We did a mailing to all licensed dog owners. We marched with them in a local parade and handed out flyers. We had 300 registered voters present at the council meeting.”

Stump said breed-specific legislation should concern all owners, all animal control officers, and all local and state legislators. Owners should become involved because any breed could be targeted. Animal control officers should become involved because breed-specific legislation is expensive and difficult to enforce. Legislators should become involved because breed-specific legislation does not protect constituents from dangerous dogs.

She discussed a 1987 Massachusetts law that targeted pit bulls, but that provided a definition of “pit bull” that was vague. Because the definition in the law did not accurately identify a “pit bull,” an ordinary owner might not understand that she was violating the law. For that reason, the court ruled that the law failed to meet due process requirements. Subsequent definitions of “pit bull” in legislation proposed as recently as 2005 led to similar confusion.

Stump showed conference participants photographs of 25 dogs that conformed to the definition of “pit bull” in Massachusetts legislation. Of the 25 dogs shown, only one was an American Pit Bull Terrier. Legislation should seek to control dangerous dogs based on their behavior, she said, not on their breed.

When confronting local canine legislation, Parent Clubs should turn to state federations of dogs, and should arm themselves with position statements that lend credibility to defensive efforts. Although each state operates differently, most states have a way to track pending legislation and to identify sponsoring legislators and committees. Stump recommended that Parent Clubs invite legislators to kennels and shows before canine legislation becomes an issue. “Don’t get discouraged if you only get the legislative aide,” she said. “Legislative aides probably do 90% of the work. If you don’t develop a good relationship with the aide, you probably won’t get anywhere.”

Parent Clubs should screen local media and town meeting agendas for “dog-related issues.” If a dog incident occurs, it is critical that the Parent Club contact legislators and other officials “before the hysteria starts.” Send information packets immediately, communicate concern, and offer to help. Items in such a packet could include a letter listing credentials to assist, position statements, prevention literature, relevant rulings, and examples of good ordinances. Parent Clubs should also contact other dog organizations to enlist their support.

“It is not easy,” Stump said. “I do hope that you go home feeling inspired to fight the battle, but not by yourself. You will need all the help you can get.”

Participants recommended that Parent Clubs get to know their legislators by attending meetings and fundraisers. They said it is helpful if veterinarians can lend support, and advised members to bring their own dogs to meetings whenever possible. Some

participants requested that contact information for all Parent Clubs be made available, so that legislative liaisons can contact voters in various districts during an anti-legislation campaign. During the recent campaign against California Assembly Bill 1634, the AKC contacted Parent Clubs and urged them to send letters saying that the club opposed the measure on behalf of its members in California. The National Parent Club Dog Rescue Organization can also communicate its opposition, which may counteract the support sometimes offered by small local rescue organizations. Panelists encouraged participants to remain active and alert, as CAB 1634 will be presented to the legislature in some form during the 2008 California legislative session. The bill had been in development for more than a year before it was presented and even had its own website.

Panelists said the time to solicit support from people outside the state of origin is when the bill moves into the appropriations committee. That committee evaluates the impact a bill is likely to have on the state economy. When a measure reaches the appropriations committee, non-residents who have attended or exhibited at shows in the area can write and express their intent to discontinue attending dog shows there if the bill passes.

## The Health Seminar

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### Moderator:

Bill Blair  
*Pekingese*

### Panelists:

Dr. Thomas Graves, DVM, Ph.D.  
Chief of Small Animal Medicine  
College of Veterinary Medicine  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
*Pekingese*

Erika Werne  
Director of Canine Research and Education  
AKC Canine Health Foundation

Eddie Dziuk  
Chief Operating Officer  
Orthopedic Foundation for Animals  
*Beagle*

***Dr. Thomas Graves, DVM, Ph.D.***

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Most veterinarians and breeders consider hypothyroidism the most common endocrine disease of dogs, but “I don’t personally think so,” Thomas Graves said. “It’s definitely the most commonly misdiagnosed endocrine disease of dogs.” However, opinion is divided over whether it is the most common.

Graves said lethargy is cited by 70% of reference sources as a clinical sign of hypothyroidism, followed by 65% for alopecia (hair loss), 60% for weight gain, 60% for dry hair and shedding, 40% for anestrus, 25% for hyperpigmentation, 15% for cold intolerance, and 10% for bradycardia. Dogs are checked for hypothyroidism when they present with chronic ear or skin infections, seizures, corneal disease, and aggression. However, Graves said, those symptoms might have other causes, or they could be markers for other serious diseases that may go untreated if a condition is blamed on hypothyroidism.

He cited weight gain as a common problem in both dogs and humans. “The epidemic is amazing,” he said. “If you survey vets and ask them what percentage of their patients are overweight, they’ll say 50% to 55%.” Among dog owners, “the number falls to 16 or 17%. Which one do you believe?” Either way, the sheer numbers dispute any notion that obesity is a clear sign of canine hypothyroidism.

Dogs with hypothyroidism do show hair loss and skin changes, including a thickening of the skin called myxedema that occurs in severe cases. But skin problems are also the most common presenting signs in veterinary clinics, for reasons that might have little to do with the thyroid gland: “The skin is on the outside of the dog, and people pet it,” Graves said. “If the pancreas were on the outside of the dog and people petted it every day, suddenly pancreatic disease would be incredibly common, and every clinical sign would be attributed to it.”

For data on the prevalence of canine hypothyroidism, researchers rely on thyroid registries maintained by the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) and the endocrinology laboratory at Michigan State University (MSU). Graves said the problem with the system is that the two labs assess thousands of blood samples and gather extensive statistics, but never see clinical cases.

The OFA tracks measurements of thyroglobulin autoantibodies (TgAA), Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH), and free T<sub>4</sub>, or thyroxine, a thyroid hormone that is not bound to protein. OFA’s top 10 breeds at risk for hypothyroidism are the English Setter, German Wirehaired Pointer, Shetland Sheepdog, Akita, Boxer, Welsh Springer Spaniel, Rhodesian Ridgeback, Flat Coated Retriever, Irish Setter, and Kuvasz. The Foundation’s bottom 10 are the French Bulldog, Miniature Schnauzer, Bichon Frise, Brussels Griffon, Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier, Greyhound, Boston Terrier, Chinese Foo Dog, Pekingese, and Pembroke Welsh Corgi.

According to OFA figures, only 50% of English Setters have normal thyroid function, a statistic that Graves and some participants disputed.

MSU’s top 10 are the English Setter, Havanese, Old English Sheepdog (which places thirty-third on the OFA list), German Wirehaired Pointer, American Pit Bull Terrier, Boxer, Tibetan Terrier, Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever, Maltese, and Beagle (fifty-sixth on the OFA list).

Graves reviewed the scientific evidence for and against some of the conditions that have been attributed to canine hypothyroidism:

- Hypothyroid is blamed for infertility, but the most common cause is breeding animals at the wrong time. A 1999 study compared six thyroidectomized dogs with three

normal ones and found no differences in daily sperm output, scrotal width, sperm motility and morphology, libido, or testosterone or luteinizing hormone (LH) concentrations. “The most common cause of infertility is us,” Graves said.

- Belief in the link between hypothyroidism and aggression is so widespread that Graves said he was recently asked to testify on behalf of a dog that had attacked several people and was about to be euthanized, because it had shown borderline low thyroid function. However, there are only a handful of cases in the literature, and the only case where T<sub>4</sub> was associated with reduced aggression involved a dog that had also been castrated and undergone behavior modification. However, canine aggression can be caused by neurological or metabolic disease, chronic pain, or orthopedic disease, all of which artificially lower thyroid hormones.
- The view that hypothyroidism causes otitis can be traced back to one clinical textbook that referenced two original studies: a study of mice, and the author’s unpublished personal observations. “Based on that, most dermatologists believe that hypothyroidism in dogs can present with chronic ear infections as the only sign,” Graves said. There is no evidence of a link in any other species.
- The suggested link between hypothyroidism and neurological disease is based on two retrospective studies, one involving four dogs, the other involving 29. However, the clinical symptoms and results of treatment were inconsistent with a diagnosis of poor thyroid function, and at least one dog in the smaller study had been treated with sulfamethoxazole, a drug that is known to cause severe hypothyroidism.
- Over-vaccination has been blamed for hypothyroidism. A 2002 study measured levels of thyroglobulin antibodies in five dogs that had been vaccinated repeatedly at eight, 10, 12, 16, 20, 26, and 52 weeks of age, five that received rabies vaccine at 16 and 52 weeks, and five that were unvaccinated. All the vaccinations caused increases in anti-bovine Tg. The tests failed to account for non-specific antibodies, and follow-up histopathology in 2006 showed no connection between vaccination history and inflammation of the thyroid gland, leading Graves to conclude that the positive antibody test results could not be explained by hypothyroidism.

Similar inconsistencies arise when veterinarians try to diagnose canine hypothyroidism, largely because testing is far from straightforward. In humans, a diagnosis based on high TSH and low T<sub>4</sub> is almost 100% accurate. In dogs, low T<sub>4</sub> can be an indication of several other diseases, and TSH tests are neither sensitive nor specific. Many drugs affect thyroid test results, and low T<sub>4</sub> levels are perfectly normal in some breeds.

Diagnosis by therapeutic trial is another way to test for hypothyroidism, but Graves said the practice often leads to misdiagnosis and delayed treatment. He cited the case of a nine-year-old mixed breed dog with weight gain and hair loss, whose clinical condition showed no change after a year of thyroxine treatment. A closer look at the test results led veterinarians to discover an adrenal tumor that was five to six inches wide by the time it was diagnosed.

Meanwhile, very little is known about the long-term effects of unneeded T<sub>4</sub> treatment or the resulting increase in metabolic rates on heart, blood pressure, or lifespan. Graves reviewed the complex interactions between the thyroid and pituitary glands and the hypothalamus, noting that TSH changes throw the whole system out of balance.

“I don’t think it’s scientific to say, ‘let’s try this drug and see.’ I’m glad the people who do that are not cancer specialists—‘Let’s cut off your leg and see if the cancer goes away.’” Ultimately, Graves said, the diagnosis must be based on clinical signs as well as lab results.

***Erika Werne***

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Since its formation in 1995, the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation (CHF) has invested more than \$18 million in more than 400 studies. In addition to the landmark effort to map the canine genome, the Foundation has supported research on specific genetic diseases, clinical studies, and educational programs involving more than 80 universities and research institutions, 214 researchers, and nearly 200 clubs, individuals, and other organizations as sponsors.

“This is where your clubs and foundations come in,” Werne said. The CHF receives \$1 million per year plus in-kind office space from the AKC, but that seed money “wouldn’t take us nearly as far as we’ve been able to get” as a result of Parent Clubs’ front-line support.

Results of the latest canine health survey will be presented at the Foundation’s 2007 Parent Club Conference, which will take place October 19–21 in St. Louis. Werne said she anticipated few changes from the list of top 10 diseases in the 2004 survey: cancer, eye disease, epilepsy, hip dysplasia, thyroid disease, heart disease, autoimmune disease, allergies, patellar luxation, and renal dysplasia. However, she said the Foundation’s ability to target its research funding depends on specific reporting from clubs: listing “cancer” as a concern makes it difficult to flag the incoming research proposals that correspond to a breed’s precise needs.

All principal investigators must sign and adhere to the CHF’s Guidelines for the Care and Treatment of Animals. The Foundation does not fund research that involves inducing disease or euthanizing healthy animals. Genetic research is based on blood samples and cheek swabs, and clinical research must involve free-living dogs.

To introduce a new health research program, a Parent Club must:

- Develop a health survey that suits the breed (samples are available from CHF)
- Identify an independent university investigator or a grad student to run the survey (CHF can help)
- Communicate the breed’s health priorities through the CHF survey

CHF matches researchers with Parent Clubs by issuing requests for pre-proposals and posting specific requirements on its website, and through its direct relationships with individual researchers. All project applications must undergo a standard review process, even if they have been solicited by the Foundation or endorsed by a club. Each application is reviewed by three or four subject specialists, then reviewed by a grants committee and approved by the CHF board. Breed-specific research usually hinges on support from the specific club. “Sometimes we ask for a lot of money,” Werne said, but the Foundation will put up the major share of the funds if it sees a smaller club making best efforts.

Throughout, club support is crucial. “If it’s a problem in your breed, usually you have one loud and demanding person in the club who makes everybody participate” and turn in samples. “Participation is just as important as funding.” She said peer review plus funding plus participation in sampling is the success formula that gives CHF the answers to help club members breed better dogs.

### *Eddie Dziuk*

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Eddie Dziuk said the OFA shares Thomas Graves’ view that a diagnosis of hypothyroidism cannot be based purely on endocrine tests. “You have to include the clinical exam of the dog as well, so we really don’t differ that much at all.”

In a progress report on the DNA repository established by the Canine Health Information Center (CHIC), he reported, “The face of canine health research has changed dramatically” with the mapping of the canine genome. Molecular-level research has increased exponentially, and the ability to map specific, positive genes “has given us a leg up in trying to control and, in some cases, eliminate inherited disease.” He attributed the original vision of a centralized DNA bank for health research to the late Bob Kelly, a former director of both AKC and CHF.

The mission of the DNA program, a joint effort of OFA and CHF, is to collect and store canine DNA samples and corresponding genealogic and phenotypic information to facilitate future research. Its specific objectives are to:

- Speed the progress of research by expediting sample collection.
- Provide researchers with optimized family groups.
- Allow breeders to take advantage of DNA-based disease tests as they become available.
- Increase the likelihood of genetic discovery by fostering “a team environment between breeders and the research community.”

Dziuk said a guiding purpose behind a centralized database is to expedite sample collection for molecular researchers who would otherwise have to spend 6–12 months collecting DNA specimens from affected dogs and littermates, unaffected littermates, and families. When participants at the September 2005 Delegates’ Meeting asked researcher Dr. Elaine Ostrander what breeders could besides sending money, “it was textbook picture perfect for me when she said: ‘PROVIDE SAMPLES.’”

The database is set up to track familial relations, and its ability to track generations will grow over time: 10 or 20 years from now, researchers will be able to follow up on new genetic discoveries by conducting retroactive tests on stored DNA. A “soft benefit that hits home” is the opportunity for closer cooperation between researchers and breeders. “If you feel you’re part of the team and the researcher group knows it can depend on you, it really fosters that environment,” Dziuk said.

He emphasized that the repository and the AKC DNA database serve two different purposes, and the two systems never share samples.

DNA samples can be collected using blood tests or cheek swabs, and the repository contains both: blood is processed at the University of Missouri, while swabs are sent to a University of California–Davis facility that is still extracting usable DNA from 15-year-old samples. Blood gives a much larger yield of higher-quality DNA, but the cost and invasiveness of the procedure lead to lower participation rates. Swabs are inexpensive, non-invasive, and require no specialized training, but they offer lower yields and may not work with some of the newer research technologies.

CHIC's pilot DNA collection program began in 2005, with a collection clinic at the Golden Retriever Club of America's National Specialty. Dziuk had hoped to collect 100 to 150 blood samples, but had more than 600 at the end of the first day, and nearly 1,000 by the time the show concluded. He recalled purchasing Styrofoam coolers to store the extra volume, then transferring them to the bathtub in his hotel room and buying ice to fill the tub.

Two years later, the repository contains more than 3,000 DNA samples representing 60 different breeds, various diseases, and healthy dogs as a control group. Once again, the value of this resource will increase over time: with ongoing tracking, researchers will find out how long a healthy six-month-old puppy remains free of cancer. CHIC has already supplied samples for studies of lens luxation in the Miniature Bull Terrier and mast cell tumors in the Golden Retriever.

So far, CHIC has facilitated DNA transfers from four independent banks containing samples for the Miniature Bull Terrier, Otterhound, Field Spaniel, and Poodle, and clinics have taken place at several Nationals.

### *Questions and Discussion*

Dziuk described to a participant the difference between the DNA repository and the Canine Phenome Project at the University of Missouri. The Missouri database captures physical and behavioral traits that go beyond health, but while the database administrators are interested in collaboration, they still have full control of all samples. Samples in the CHIC repository are available to the entire research community.

A participant asked whether kelp tablets would help the Akita with hypothyroid, on the theory that a Japanese dog would have a history of sharing a human diet that was high in iodine. Graves said no evidence supports this idea, or suggests a link between thyroid disorders and iodine deficiency.

A participant asked whether thyroid testing has any value for breeders. Graves said some screening tests for genetic disease are sensitive and specific, but none of the available tests for hypothyroid have strong predictive value, either positive or negative. "Unless you had a real problem with proven hypothyroidism in a line of dogs, I don't see why you would screen for it," he said.

Graves agreed with a participant's comment that normal levels of thyroid hormone differ across breeds. Werne said an AKC/CHF-funded study of reference ranges had concluded its first year with data for a half-dozen breeds, and seemed likely to continue. Graves said free T<sub>4</sub> levels are measured in a number of different ways, and only one of the available methods uses a validated test. "So if you're dealing with reference ranges, I'm not even sure you know what you're measuring."

A participant asked whether her club should continue with studies to document a lower reference range for thyroid function in its breed. Graves said the research might have value, but warned that the club should be careful to collect all samples at the same time of day, record diet and body condition scores, and factor in age, reproductive status, and the stage in the reproductive cycle at which the sample was taken.

A participant asked about AKC/CHF's procedures for tracking project milestones and reporting results back to clubs that fund research. Werne said progress reports and copies of scientific reviews of sponsored projects are sent to clubs' health committee liaisons; abstracts of all completed studies will be online toward the end of the year. For work in progress, funds are only released to researchers when milestones are reached. When projects run into logistical snags, the Foundation works with researchers to find solutions, but projects are cancelled when they have to be.

Another participant said it is frustrating for club members to hear nothing about projects to which they have contributed money, time, and samples. Werne said AKC/CHF is happy to help clubs produce plain-language project summaries for their newsletters.

The participant asked whether the four clubs that transferred their DNA banks to CHIC had owned the samples or convinced researchers to give them up. Dziuk said the clubs had retained control of their samples. Responding to another participant, he said blood samples and cheek swabs donated to university programs become the property of the institution, and are not automatically available to CHIC.

He said dogs already in the CHIC database are "grandfathered" when better genetic data leads to a change in the list of reference diseases for the breed.

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## How to Grow and Sustain Parent Club Membership

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### **Moderator:**

Tommy Millner  
*Briard*

### **Presenter:**

John Lyons  
Chief Operating Officer, AKC

### **Panelists:**

Jo Durrance  
*Pembroke Welsh Corgi*

Bill Weber  
*Briard*

Tommy Millner welcomed participants and said of a recently conducted survey, "we hope to provide a baseline of the current state of our Parent Clubs."

***John Lyons***

[Click here for presentation.](#)

“The purpose of this survey is to gain a better picture of Parent Clubs, gather input on membership, see the views and trend of these clubs, determine what recruitment action we should take, ascertain what tools Parent Clubs use, and discover what tools and resources AKC can develop and offer in the future,” John Lyons said. The survey was e-mailed with a link to Parent Club officers and delegates, and recipients were encouraged to talk about it. Each club could submit one response for the entire club. The response rate was 87%, with 137 of 157 Parent Clubs surveyed responding.

Respondents were asked for their office or position. In 76% of cases, clubs reported that the President or Secretary completed the survey; of the clubs that responded, 83% had been in existence for 20–75 years.

“When asked what benefits were offered by the club, the number one answer was volunteer opportunities,” Lyons said. The Ethics Code was identified by 92% of respondents, while 87% said Events, 78% said Merits and Awards, and 65% said the Newsletter.”

Clubs were asked their requirements for membership. Most required sponsorship, a Code of Ethics, an essay, time in the breed, a home visit, and an AKC event; however, 6% had no requirements for membership.

When asked what barriers they saw to club membership, “56% of the clubs said there were none.” Of the clubs that listed barriers, Lyons said, sponsorship was identified most often. “The typical complaint we heard was ‘If I don’t know anyone in the club, how am I supposed to get a sponsor?’” Clubs hoping to increase membership were more likely to identify barriers.

When asked about the age of their membership, the majority of clubs—63%—reported an increase. “The average age of a Parent Club member is 35–50 years old. In a way, this is understandable since the trend in worldwide population is also toward an older citizenry.” The world’s fastest-growing age group is 80 and older, Lyons said.

Clubs were asked about their membership experience. Most clubs were satisfied with the experience level of their members, Lyons said. “Clubs had a higher level of confidence in their members than we were led to believe.”

Most clubs—98%—reported defined levels of membership: single, family, junior, and associate. “More than half our Parent Clubs have between 100 and 500 members, and 75% have stayed the same or increased membership in the past 10 years,” said Lyons. However, with 25% of clubs losing members, we have room for improvement.”

Clubs were asked their goal for membership. Maintenance of current membership was identified by 37%, while 62% of clubs wanted to increase membership. Larger clubs were more likely to want to maintain current membership, and the smaller clubs wanted to increase. “We can’t explain the 1% who want to decrease membership,” Lyons said. The data showed that of the 63% who wanted to increase membership, 47% actually experienced increases. “Of the 1% who wanted to decrease membership, 100% actually had increases,” Lyons said.

Clubs were asked about the factors that influenced membership. “Of these factors, breed population, media coverage of the AKC, and breed coverage in the media, movies, and on TV were the most influential,” Lyons said. Regarding the most effective means of

increasing membership, “soliciting at shows was number one.” This included AKC flyers that accompany dog registration, local media coverage, and the Stud Book. Clubs reported that having forms available online, the updated website, recommending membership to puppy families, being in the top 10 on search engines, and advertising in *Dog Fancy* and *Dog World* all helped them increase membership.

Lyons noted that 33% of clubs do not use the Title of Records report. “This can be a good tool for your club. You can see who’s out there competing in your breed, yet not a member of your parent club,” he said. Most clubs use the report “to gather statistics on dogs.” Only 13% reported using the report to solicit new members. “Owner names and address are on there. This is your lead for new members,” said Lyons.

Among the conclusions drawn from the survey, Lyons said it is significant that 26% of Parent Clubs lost membership over the last 10 years. Clubs view the experience and expertise level of their membership in a positive light, and clubs’ aging membership may be a reflection of the population in general, rather than on clubs’ activities.

“AKC Education Match shows strive to bring in the public who are not participating,” Lyons said. “It is a way of introducing the public to dog shows in a way that is not intimidating.” Breed flyers and e-mail confirmation of registration were also cited as tools to reach potential members. “You can include your Parent Club information on your breed flyer. The AKC doesn’t control the content, but you can revise it to add membership solicitation. E-mail confirmation of puppy registration could be linked to the Parent Club site. We could offer this in the future.”

Commenting on Lyons’ presentation, Millner said, “Some of the data was predictable and some was surprising. There is any number of different types of clubs. There is no one, simple template for Parent Clubs.”

### ***Jo Durrance***

Jo Durrance spoke about the successful closed club. “When I asked our club ‘why are we successful?’ the answer I got was that we have new members prove themselves before they are accepted,” she said. “We have more than 500 members, and each year 10–18 complete the membership process.” The club loses an average of 10 people per year, five of them to death, but over the past 20 years the club has increased in membership by two-thirds.

Durrance reviewed the process for becoming a new member in her club. “Our application is our first line. Acceptance bestows our seal of approval on you.” A potential member must be proposed and endorsed by two members in good standing, and a member may only propose or endorse two people each year.

Next, the membership committee accepts the application. “The forms are extensive for both applicant and proposer. Your activities are checked out. A home visitation is made, and the board votes,” she said. “A synopsis is sent to the newsletter. The general membership votes, and you must have a 75% approval to get in.”

“We have a lot of committees, and sometimes we agree to disagree. But we all have a commitment to having a good club.”

***Bill Weber***

Bill Weber spoke about membership in an open club. “Back in April I awaited a packet. When the packet came, I got a phone call. ‘Hey Buddy, would you do me a favor?’— Always a bad thing. Sure, I will sit on a panel. Then I opened the packet, and ‘Bill Weber’ was already on the program!”

Weber said his club is 79 years old and has about 745 members. They registered 284 dogs and 53 litters during the past year. “That is less than 1% of the entire number of dogs that AKC registered last year, but our membership numbers are 23% of all Parent Clubs.” He described his club as similar to others. The dues are comparable, and “like everyone else, the age of our membership is increasing.”

Weber described his club’s open application process. An applicant needs two members, from outside his or her household, to sign his or her application. The members must have been members for at least one year. The applicants are published and members respond; to be accepted, the prospective member needs a two-thirds approval from the board meeting. Weber said membership applications had been steadily increasing. “Two months ago we had 29 applicants.”

The AKC breed brochure is the only “official” tool the club uses to recruit new members. “All else comes from our breeders. Breeders can drive this effort. They talk one-on-one to buyers. Then they need to follow up with the new owners.” Weber noted that “pet people” would likely represent the largest demographic among club members in the future. “Most of your puppies will go to pet homes.”

Weber said one membership problem he currently faces is members who do not renew. “The key lies in getting renewals. Are you serving these new members?” He suggested working to serve pet owners during Specialty shows. “Get social people to find new members and make them feel welcome. Make sure they have a reason to stay. Be sure they like the publications, too.”

***Questions and Discussion***

A participant asked Durrance who checks the number of prospective members a sponsor has signed, and who visits the home. Durrance said the membership Committee checks the numbers, and the proposer or endorser visits the home. If distance is an issue another member in good standing can do the home visit and file a written report. The same participant asked the panel how to deal with applicants unable to find a sponsor.

Millner said, “That’s why it was identified as a barrier. The other side is that everyone cannot be in. They are not always the best members without sponsors.” Durrance said, “Ask what they’ve been doing. I’d tell them to be active. Prove themselves.”

A participant asked, “Are we looking for volume or for people who will make a contribution?” Closed clubs get participants, while open clubs get “pet people” or members willing to work on the newsletter. “I’m not sure that’s worth it.” Weber responded that new members “actually do make a good contribution.” He said they would get involved, even if they do not volunteer. “But if you ask them, they are enthusiastic. You have to ask. You can find some real diamonds in the rough.”

Panelists were asked how they publish the list of new applicants. Durrance said her club publishes them once a year in March, and the resumés are mailed to members once a year.

A participant whose club is over 100 years old asked the panel what to do about Life Members. “We are not getting money. We are losing dues and not replacing those dues with new members.” Durrance said her club does not have Life Members, and they are considering initiating electronic mailings to save on postage. “All our money does not come from dues. Our Ways and Means Committee raises money for the club.” Weber said his club has stricter criteria for becoming a Life Member. “It is more than just ‘number of years as a member.’ It is years of membership, leadership, and they must have performed service to the club.”

Questions were asked about membership denial, the confidentiality of membership applications, and legal issues of denying membership. Panelists agreed that the applications remain confidential. Liosis said, “All applications must be treated uniformly. Get input from both sides.” As long as boards follow club bylaws, they should anticipate no problems; “problems come when you do not follow protocol.” The law will not get involved if documented processes are followed, he said. You are acting in the best interest of your club.”

A participant asked the panel if they thought agility and obedience people and pet people should be voting on breed standards. Durrance said probably not, but ours do. Weber said breed standards are the “800-pound Gorilla. They are always there, but seldom used. Even pet people will consult a breeder.” He said he had found that pet people who vote are responsible individuals.

A participant asked what to include in a new member’s packet. The panel suggested a welcome letter, a volunteer form, a copy of the bylaws, a roster, and contacts to call or e-mail for more information.

The panel was asked about the difference in open versus closed membership, and whether there was a difference in the rate of a club’s volunteers. Durrance said that in her club, there are always more members coming in than going out “but only by three or four or five.” Weber said his club had a certain turnover rate, and they have the same people volunteering all the time. “We try to keep everyone active. We ask for volunteers,” he said. “Mentoring is so important. Take new people under your wing and make them feel important.”

Durrance said they ask old and new members to help. “Some jobs are difficult, and people get burned out. Sometimes it is hard to let new people, less experienced people, take on big jobs. Sometimes you just have to grit your teeth and let them try.”

## General Session: Becoming an Effective Spokesperson

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### Moderator:

Peter Piusz  
*Rottweiler*

### Presenter:

Lisa Peterson  
AKC Director of Club Communications

### *Lisa Peterson*

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Lisa Peterson emphasized the importance of public relations. “It is important for each Parent Club to develop their own program and select a spokesperson.” Public relations, she said, involves “good media relations and working with the press. It is not just being quoted in the paper. I once worked with a reporter for over one month—educating her. We only got one tiny mention, but the entire article was our position.”

Peterson offered examples of public relations, including local news coverage of Breed Shows, a *Wall Street Journal* article about the fight against breed-specific restrictions in homeowner’s insurance policies, and articles from magazines such as *Sports Illustrated* and *Prevention*. Good public relations helps the club and the breed, Peterson said. “The best way to accomplish this is to get out in the local media. You can influence public opinion, dispel myths, and keep your breed alive in the future.”

Before approaching the media, Peterson said, clubs should get organized. “What is your goal? What is your message?” She also suggested that clubs measure the effectiveness of a public relations campaign, for example by reviewing the level of participation by Juniors in National Specialty events. How many Juniors participated in past events? Did more participate after the public relations campaign?

AKC Club Communications offers media training to club members; Peterson advised clubs to “choose your media person and target the local area where your National Specialty will be held. This is a good opportunity to excite the press. For example, ‘today the largest single gathering of Norwegian Elkhounds will descend on the Garden State.’” She encouraged clubs to train their media representatives. “A spokesperson should be friendly, positive, and articulate. He or she must be knowledgeable, professional, and well dressed.” Solid colors look best on TV, she said, and representatives should remember to smile. She played clips of AKC coverage on local and national news programs, noting how important it is to smile when on camera.

Peterson offered suggestions for interviews. “Do stay focused, prepare message points and write them down, reinforce key messages, assume all is on the record, know your audience, use sound bites, and be quotable. Don’t lie, speculate, say ‘no comment,’ forget key messages, repeat negative words or questions, fill in awkward silences, or use jargon or acronyms not commonly used.”

In approaching the media, Peterson said the club should develop a media kit that includes a club fact sheet, a breed fact sheet, photos of the breed, a spokesperson bio that tells the person's credentials in the breed, business cards, and copies of the latest club newsletter.

"Once your club has established a relationship with a reporter, always follow up. They'll come to you later for a quote." To deliver a quote a reporter will use, Peterson suggested that participants "use short, catchy phrases to capture your point, such as, 'Designer dogs, it's a crap shoot,' or 'Deed, not breed.'" She said that it can "come down to one fun sound bite. And remember, you cannot say 'bitch' on TV."

Peterson suggested other ways to capture media attention. "The media loves lists such as top 10 lists. The media also loves to follow the money." The positive economic impact of club events in the area could attract a reporter.

"Letters to the editor are a good way to respond to issues in your area and to successfully project the economic benefits of your shows." She gave other examples of good "media tools" such as surveys and health studies, and mentioned a club whose members wore buttons at their National Specialty that said, "Ask Me." This created "roaming spokespeople. They were friendly and proactive."

"Don't fear incorporating AKC messages when you talk to the media," Peterson said. "Identify yourself as an AKC member club. AKC has a 123-year history. It is a big family." The media can sometimes have a hard time grasping that the AKC is a club of clubs. "We are the world's largest and the only not-for-profit dog registry."

She discussed how the AKC has approached controversial topics such as dangerous dogs, dog bites, and "designer dogs." For example, when a woman was bitten by an Akita during an AKC dog show, "the AKC issued a statement that demonstrated we took the incident seriously. We were sympathetic and got our message out. We educated the public about Akitas and how rare such an event is."

Club websites are "your virtual spokesperson," Peterson said, a valuable tool that should be updated often. The club website can reach the club, breeders, the pet-buying public, and the media. "The AKC press center has a template for your own media contact. Send the media there." Peterson suggested signing up for *AKCommunicates!*, a quarterly e-newsletter published by AKC as an excellent media tool to learn more about public relations. "Don't forget to make your website positive."

Peterson invited members who are available to be presented to the media as an expert to submit a form to AKC Club Communications. "The AKC needs you."

## General Session: AKC Companion Animal Recovery

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### Panelists:

Jason Miller  
AKC Companion Animal Recovery (CAR)

Dr. Carmen Battaglia  
AKC Companion Animal Recovery (CAR)

Tony Bacci  
AKC Companion Animal Recovery (CAR)

Greg Beck  
AKC Companion Animal Recovery (CAR)

### *Jason Miller*

AKC Companion Animal Recovery (AKC/CAR) is the largest non-profit recovery service in the United States dedicated to recovering animals. The program's most recent achievement was the introduction of a high quality, inexpensive chip. Jason Miller said Parent Club members should also be proud of the 20 veterinary student scholarships that AKC/CAR funds at a value of \$5,000 each, and a disaster relief program that began with the California wildfires and Florida hurricanes in the early 2000s. It was put to the test most recently in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

"Our role is typically to help AKC clubs reach out in their local communities, help them donate, and then funnel the money out to the local clubs that need the support," he said. AKC/CAR contributed more than \$1 million to Katrina relief, including \$100,000 to the veterinary school at Louisiana State University and \$80,000 to Mississippi State for the purchase of mobile veterinary units. Similar mobile units have been purchased for the University of Florida and pledged to Auburn.

### *Carmen Battaglia*

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Disasters rarely occur Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Carmen Battaglia said. "Most of what's going on is when we're least interested, least prepared, least have people around, so disasters almost always catch you off-guard." Whether the disaster is a fire or a flood, a tornado or a hurricane, "nature always seems to be one step ahead of us. But in spite of all that, we do a pretty good job, I think."

AKC/CAR has moved beyond an approach to disasters in which donors send money to an affected community. "They're down in the middle of a place that's just been half blown away, so there are no stores open and they have all this money," Battaglia said. Any stores that have not closed are short of supplies, forcing local volunteers to drive long distances on errands that "take them out of the way of being in the response."

Instead, CAR asks members and supporters to send funds to a special restricted fund held in New York by the AKC, on the promise that 100% of the money will go into the front-

line response. Local veterinarians and shelters usually ask for specific vaccines, water, crates, etc., and AKC/CAR has vendor contracts in place to meet the demand. “We’re not interested in the credit, but from time to time other groups take the credit for what we do. It’s important to know that these things go on,” he told participants. “You’re donating the money that gets the job done.”

### ***Tony Bacci***

Tony Bacci announced winners of AKC/CAR’s lost dog contest, in which 119 small stuffed animals were chipped and “lost” in the conference facility.

“If you take a dog with a chip, you can go anywhere and have it scanned and read,” he said. One manufacturer is currently trying to control the marketplace for microchip identification by limiting the range of chips that can be read, but AKC/ CAR “is addressing this. Our position is that the breeder, the veterinarian, the shelter should decide, and there shouldn’t be any restrictions in the recovery business.”

By passing on any information it collects that will help with the recovery process, “we’re forcing the competition to play our game,” Bacci said. “We’re new in the market, but we’re driving the price and getting the market to respond to us.”

### ***Greg Beck***

Although the lost dog contest was fun for participants, Greg Beck reminded the audience of the heart-rending reality in shelters and veterinary clinics across the country. He said AKC/CAR was set up in 1995 to recover lost pets and “those have been our marching orders ever since.”

Since then, the program has registered purebred and mixed breed dogs with tattoos and any brand of chips. The recovery database includes turtles, birds, a wallaby, and a half-million cats: Beck reminded participants that indoor cats can wander in a natural disaster and end up in a shelter three towns away, with no identification.

With more than 3.5 million animals registered, AKC/CAR offers live telephone service at any hour, every day of the year. It completes about 100 recoveries per day, and has reunited 323,000 animals with their owners. “If a little bell went off every time, it would sound like Las Vegas, so my idea about ringing a bell for every recovery didn’t fly.” The service extends across the United States and around the world for any animals with up-to-date contact information.

He explained that AKC/CAR severed its relationship with the HomeAgain recovery service in 2005, but still sees and maintains records for chips from the older series.

In contrast to microchips, Beck said animal tattoos can fade over time, and can be hard to find when they are covered with fur. “You try rolling a Rough Collie over when it’s scared,” he said. “That’s a project.” Microchips are a mature technology, but have been installed in just 5% to 10% of the animals in the country, “there’s a lot of potential out there. You can carry the torch and help us spread the message.”

Beck reviewed the different chips now available on the market, noting that AKC/CAR had sought a reliable, durable product that was small and had a good track record. It settled on the Trovan ID Delivery System, a product manufactured in Europe that is used

around the world in many thousands of animals. It has the smallest available pocket reader and the smallest chip, made of low-reactive glass that has been approved for human use by the Food and Drug Administration. It features a two-piece lancet system, as well as a silicon-coated lancet and a sharper point that make implantation easier on dogs. He explained that the choice of system is driven by the capabilities of the reader, not the frequency of the chip, and said clinics should opt for the system used in the largest number of shelters.

In contrast to other vendors, AKC/CAR charges no annual fee and no fee to update records, has had long experience with animal recovery, and never “shares” its data with vendors or business partners.

Beck gave answers to some of the frequently asked questions that AKC/CAR receives:

- Smaller chips are less likely to migrate than some of the earlier, larger products.
- AKC/CAR does not offer the ISO chip because it was “unknown in this country” when the program was selecting a product.
- Most scanners in shelters will read the AKC/CAR chip, although one vendor is distributing a proprietary system in the hope of controlling the market.
- No dog’s identification number can be duplicated.
- The program is impacting the price of the chip. “We just want to reduce it to rock bottom so we can get more animals microchipped.”

Beck said AKC/CAR is promoting its microchip at veterinary conferences and via direct mail and e-mail, and encourages clubs to organize microchip clinics in conjunction with Responsible Dog Ownership Day. The programs raise money for the clubs, and one clinic in Raleigh, NC went through 150 chips in three hours. Surplus funds from microchip sales support animal rescue and relief activities and veterinary college scholarships.

### *Questions and Discussion*

A breeder said a competing vendor had sold her a batch of chips with her name attached, so that she would be listed as a contact if the owners did not register their puppies. Miller said AKC/CAR tracks every chip it distributes and contacts the purchaser if an animal is never enrolled. This creates an opportunity for the breeder to sign up as a dog’s primary contact for rescue purposes, with the owner listed as alternate. Battaglia recommended that participants register their animals with AKC/CAR rather than staying with other directories, since rescue organizations are likely to call the program first. The Raleigh facility accepts online enrolment and handles phone calls in Spanish as well as English.

A participant asked for published data on health impacts of implanted microchips. Beck said the low-reactivity bioglass in the chip is “very inert,” and has been used by military Special Forces. Miller said some studies have documented reactions to other chip varieties, but not to the AKC/CAR unit. Although chip implantation was previously recommended from the age of six months on, Miller and at least one participant said those restrictions are no longer observed.

He said AKC/CAR would soon be donating scanners to shelters in the 100 US communities at highest risk for natural disasters. The program offers half-price

enrollments for shelters, although the best prices are available with volume purchases of prepaid registrations.

A participant expressed confusion about the transition from the HomeAgain system. Miller urged the group to make sure they are filling out AKC/CAR forms for new registrations, but assured the participant that the program retained all registration records that predate the split.

One volunteer worked with the local humane society and animal control officials to offer microchipping at cost during Responsible Dog Ownership Days. In an effort to reduce the number of unclaimed lost dogs, the county announced that animal control would return lost dogs twice at no cost. The third return would trigger a \$250 fine. With the fourth, the fine would increase to \$500 and the owner would be brought before the county court. A participant said the project pointed to an opportunity for local clubs to build a relationship with animal control authorities.

## **Breed Rescue: Potential Liability and How Best to Avoid It**

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### **Moderator:**

Peter Piusz  
*Rottweiler*

### **Presenter:**

Kathy Coxwell  
Attorney  
*Bearded Collie*

[Click here for presentation.](#)

At a time when one California attorney has based an entire successful legal practice on dog bite law, liability is an extremely important issue for animal rescue organizations. Kathy Coxwell said the target of a lawsuit could be an individual, a for-profit group, a non-profit organization, or a group of like-minded people. Consequently every rescue group should be familiar with certain legal terms.

“Negligence” is defined as a failure to use a reasonable amount of care. “When you are in law school, all you talk about is ‘the prudent man,’ which is someone who always makes the right decision for the right reasons and never makes a mistake,” Coxwell said. “I have yet to meet a ‘prudent man,’” but rescue groups can be held responsible for anything they have or have not done that would have been reasonable under the circumstances.

“Negligence *per se*” is an action that breaks the law or is “palpably opposed to common prudence.” In plain language, Coxwell defined the term as “doing something stupid like walking your dog without a leash in violation of the city’s leash law, and it bites a little old lady in the park.” The legal definition of liability simply holds people and organizations responsible for the consequences of their actions.

The definition of “vicious propensities” has become increasingly important for canine organizations, Coxwell said, since it includes behaviors that would not normally be considered vicious. The term might be invoked if a dog injures someone by jumping on them, running between their legs, or chasing a cat, even if it is being playful or mischievous. The owner may be liable for the result.

The general rule of law is that the owner or keeper of a domestic animal must do everything possible to prevent injuries he or she can reasonably anticipate, based on knowledge of breed characteristics and the dog’s own propensities. The expectation extends to an individual who baby-sits a neighbor’s dog, but it is particularly difficult for a rescue organization to uphold: it is difficult to know an animal’s individual quirks, or whether it has had a history of abuse, “so you have to keep the dogs long enough to try to determine their habits.”

As the “transferor” when an adoption takes place, a rescue organization risks civil liability if it fails to tell the “adopter” everything it knows about a dog. Beyond the legal breach of duty, “you have a moral responsibility to those people with whom you’re placing a dog to tell them this dog chases cats, this dog likes to nip,” Coxwell said.

She recommended the organizations use formal paperwork to document the transfer of information. “Any failure on your part to disclose everything is going to set you and your rescue organization up for liability.”

Rescue groups sometimes ask whether the legal situation is really that serious. “It’s as serious as a heart attack,” Coxwell said. “A really terrible situation could bankrupt your club if you were found responsible and you didn’t have liability insurance.”

The first step to avoiding liability is to learn as much as possible about a dog, asking increasingly pointed questions if an owner seems defensive or evasive about the animal’s habits and history. The dog’s behavior should be documented extensively, even if its day is perfectly normal. When an adoption opportunity presents itself, it is important to make sure the home is suitable for the dog. “Just because you can adopt your rescue and you need to place it, it doesn’t necessarily mean you’ll take the first home that jumps up,” even if it means explaining to the first family on the list why they had to be bumped.

“Never, ever, ever misrepresent the safety or the suitability of the dog,” Coxwell said. “I cannot emphasize that enough.”

After the adoption, rescue groups must never retain ownership of a dog, since ownership confers responsibility for the dog’s behavior. Organizations should seek reputable legal advice to make sure their contracts are as tight as possible, and should ideally seek 501(c)(3) incorporation to avoid personal liability. There is no guaranteed way to avoid all liability, “but you must do everything you can to make sure you are covered to the max.”

The bottom line, Coxwell said, is to “learn everything you can about liability. Never cut corners when placing a rescue. Be honest and disclose fully. Don’t place any dog that you know might injure somebody. Have your organization purchase liability insurance if possible. And know your state and local laws.”

### ***Questions and Discussion***

A participant said her club had discontinued its rescue program because of liability concerns. Now, a group of members wants to re-establish the service, and the club wants to support them. “But they will not form a 501(c)(3), so therefore we will not acknowledge them as a bona fide rescue group.” Coxwell agreed that the group must make it clear that it has no formal association with the club.

Attorney Edmund Sledzik (*Lhasa Apso*) said the rescue group would be treated as a separate entity under the law as long as the club has less than 100% control of its activities. “That’s the advantage of creating an LLC (Limited Liability Corporation) or a trust.” For most breeds, the problem is that the Parent Club wants to retain control, along with the charitable deductions that follow. Sledzik recommended identifying a couple of club officers to serve on the board of the new entity, while keeping operations and authority separate. The participant said the club has no interest in controlling the rescue group, but objects to transferring rescue dollars to fund an unincorporated liability.

In response to another participant’s question about officers’ legal exposure, Sledzik said all individual liability depends on gross negligence. He offered contact information for two organizations that offer liability insurance for Parent Clubs and dog rescue groups set up as exempt organizations.

## **Disaster Preparedness**

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### **Moderator:**

Peter Piusz  
*Rottweiler*

### **Presenters:**

Marcy Zingler  
AKC Corporate Project Manager  
Disaster Preparedness Program

James Crosby  
*Curly Coated Retriever*

Susan La Croix Hamil  
*Bloodhound*

### ***Marcy Zingler***

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Since Hurricane Katrina, the majority of the public and the government have finally recognized the need for planning and accountability for pets in time of disaster. Marcy Zingler said Parent Clubs could be proud of their role in educating lawmakers about owners’ bond with their animals and how it affects human response to a crisis.

“Be Prepared” has never been more relevant in recognizing that disaster can strike in anybody’s backyard. Zingler urged everyone to plan all aspects of their own emergency

response, for themselves and their pets, based on two scenarios: being confined to home for several days, or having to evacuate. Either way, preparation should include:

- **Planning** multiple escape routes from the home and the neighborhood
- **Researching** multiple destinations, as well as evacuation routes in several directions
- **Equipping** vehicle and home with emergency supplies, including a highlighted map, fresh food and medication, bedding, water, bowls, leashes, medical, ownership and microchip records, a photo and detailed description of each pet, and collapsible carriers or crates. Maintaining a first aid kit with most components used for both humans and dogs.
- **Practice** for emergency situations and include your pets
- **Adding** and/or changing supplies of food and medications periodically
- **Reviewing** plans and destinations regularly
- **Establishing** an ongoing relationship with local authorities

Zingler recommended that Parent Clubs encourage all members to establish working relationships with the local emergency management offices, where authority is delegated in an emergency, and to coordinate their plans with other clubs across breeds and counties. In the aftermath of Katrina, local authorities are making lists of individuals qualified to help in an emergency, as authorities agreed that so-called “spontaneous responders” have not had a positive effect on relief efforts.” Local clubs must be a part of preparedness if they hope to fulfill their role as key contacts for the human, financial, and material resources required to help animals in an emergency.

In January 2007, the Animal Issues Working Group was convened by the Department of Homeland Security to adopt revisions to the National Response Plan addressing companion animal and service animal issues. With the passage of the *Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards (PETS) Act*, government emergency plans must now incorporate animal response, as animal issues are an extension of human issues.

Owners are assigned primary responsibility for their animals in the planning, response and recovery phases of an emergency. Service animals are an extension of the owner’s person under the *Americans with Disabilities Act*. Local authorities retain control over abandoned and stray animals.

Zingler said the Animal Issues Working Group reminds us that animal response is most effective when handled at the local level. “As leaders of the dog community, you are at the vanguard of marshalling those resources and authorities.” She urged Parent Clubs to be proactive with preparedness education and outreach to national constituencies, preparing a necessities list for their specific breed for distribution to local authorities.

“Above all, plan your response, and respond to your plan,” she said.

### ***James Crosby***

Hurricanes and earthquakes “are the sexy disasters, but they’re not the only disasters we’re going to have,” James Crosby told participants. A disaster can be a fire, a chemical spill, a terrorist attack, or anything else that disrupts local lives and infrastructure.

“The problem is that if you’re waiting for the cavalry to show up, it’s not coming,” he said. “At best, FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) and the feds are four to six days out. That’s not a criticism. It’s the way things are designed, folks...you’re the ones who are going to get you through,” which means animal response must be planned at the local level.

The first, most basic step for a local breed club is to set up a contact list, including details on any special needs. Accurate intelligence on the scope and impact of a disaster is a must, but based on his own front-line experience during Hurricane Katrina, Crosby said “the information that came out of New Orleans versus what was going on inside were two very different things.”

With information in hand, the next step is to communicate with regional and statewide breed club coalitions that can mobilize more resources than any one club. People in the middle of the situation will be busy staying alive, so help will come from a radius of 25 to 50 miles. However, even that support is two days away.

“It’s your neighbors, your friends, and the people from the next club over who will be your real assistants,” Crosby said. “Even the AKC with all its power, money, and experience is at a distance. They’re not the ones who will be able to respond to you initially. You’ve got to be able to help yourself.”

When wider support is mobilized, communication is critical. During the response to Katrina, Crosby recalled, responders would have thousands of pounds of food in one place and needy people and animals somewhere else. The food spoiled, and the survivors went hungry. Based on experience on the Gulf Coast, local authorities in future disasters will be much more determined to keep “spontaneous responders” off the scene. Borders will be closed, and access will be limited to volunteers with at least basic incident command training.

### ***Susan La Croix Hamil***

Susan La Croix Hamil said her first experience with disaster preparedness involved evacuating 300 animals from a 2.5-mile stretch of land in two hours. The experience of rescuing that many dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, and miscellaneous pets underscored the need to plan, rethink, plan again, and review the results with family, neighbors, the veterinarian, and other nearby resources.

In many communities, a key issue is that dog owners are “running over the radar,” La Croix Hamil said. If a household exceeds the maximum number of dogs permitted by local ordinances, some of the animals might be unregistered, unvaccinated and unidentified—an experience that demonstrated the importance of microchips, and of listing emergency contacts outside the owner’s immediate community.

The other problem is that animals in a disaster situation are severely stressed. Bites and scratches are bound to occur, but become a problem when an animal cannot be identified or a rabies vaccination confirmed.

La Croix Hamil said that in California, dog owners have worked with local authorities and animal control offices to prepare for disaster, despite frequent violations of local limit laws. The argument to animal control is that it is worthwhile to issue additional permits

for dogs that are vaccinated, microchipped, and licensed—and beneficial for animal control to know which breeders they can count on in an emergency.

“The local animal control office is your friend,” La Croix Hamil said. “Once they see that you’re a responsible pet owner, they will be more than happy to work with you.” She recalled receiving notice from the animal control officer in her home community of Laguna Beach, CA, at a time when temperatures were high, humidity was at 17%, and local firefighting equipment had been diverted to respond to a crisis in nearby San Diego. The weather eased before Laguna Beach was affected, but the call from animal control meant local kennels could prepare for a possible evacuation ahead of time.

La Croix Hamil emphasized the importance of lining up resources in advance, by finding out who has room for four or five dogs and a spare bedroom for a displaced club member. Parent Club members “are the masters at moving dogs,” but “I need you to think with your families, your neighbors, your kennel club people: what would happen if you had to move all your dogs today, for 24 hours or 24 days?”

### ***Peter Piusz***

Breed-specific issues became extremely important in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Peter Piusz said. Rescue organizations collected a tremendous number of dogs at a central location, and tried to make best use of the labor available to them. But when shelter workers were afraid to handle some dogs, the animals were left in crates and neglected, “hock deep in their own filth for several days.” The experience showed that breed clubs would have to have trained volunteers onsite to provide basic care and maintenance, “because the people running the shelters can’t do it. They’re too afraid to take the dogs out.”

### ***Questions and Discussion***

A participant said disasters in Alabama could cut off electricity for 5–10 days, so the best course of action for breed clubs is to buy a generator for the local shelter.

A participant said emergency plans must include provisions to evacuate animals if the owner is at work and cannot get home. Others cited serious traffic jams along evacuation routes and expressed concern about facilities and provisions along freeways and turnpikes.

Crosby said the new evacuation plan for New Orleans calls for major highways to go counterflow in the 60 hours before a storm is expected to hit. “The bad news is that you can’t get in at that point. You’re going to have to fly in.” He said arrangements had been made to place supplies at rest areas outside impact areas.

Zingler said North Carolina had purchased 15 transportable animal emergency shelters for deployment along the I-95 corridor, thanks in part to a grant from the AKC. The state has also designated specific rest areas along the route.

Crosby said Parent Clubs should make contact with the five animal welfare organizations that are recognized as emergency responders. The goal would be to make common cause in advance of the next disaster, by offering to relieve them of responsibility for any

purebred dogs they encounter. “Connect early,” he urged. “Some of these groups are not our friends. But they are first responders, they are credentialed, and they will be there.”

## **The Governance of Parent Clubs**

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### **Moderator:**

Karen Spey  
*Pointer*

### **Panelists:**

Dr. William Newman  
AKC Board Member

Michael Liosis  
AKC Director of Club Relations

Dr. Charles Garvin  
AKC Board Member

### ***Dr. William Newman***

[Click here for presentation.](#)

In his presentation, Dr. William Newman discussed ethics, membership, bylaws, and Articles of Incorporation. Articles of Incorporation “are important because they are your means of *not* being sued. They protect you as a group from being sued as individuals,” he said. “You must know where the club was incorporated, when it was incorporated, and what the club’s responsibility is in the state in which the club was incorporated.” Each state has its own requirements; for example, the club may have to send federal tax forms to the state and notify the Secretary of State when club officers or the Board of Directors change. He recommended each Parent Club have an attorney. “I’m sure you have at least one lawyer in your club,” he said. “Put him or her to work. Have him look over your Articles of Incorporation to be certain they follow the laws of your state.”

A good Bylaws Committee is important. “If you change one point in your bylaws, be sure it doesn’t change another point,” Newman said. Bylaws should always be followed “to the letter.” He encouraged Parent Clubs to review bylaws on a regular basis and make changes when necessary.

“Pick a treasurer with knowledge—get a CPA or an accountant, because they know the law and will follow it. Taxes should be filed by individuals with expertise.,” he said. A significant number of participants indicated that their clubs have a budget of six figures. For all clubs, regardless of budget, Newman suggested the following rules for Treasurers:

- Have a competent CPA as the Treasurer.
- Have specific rules in place stating to whom he or she reports.
- Mandate that a report be filed with the board monthly and with the members quarterly.
- Have that person bonded.

- Have a system in place by which bills are paid regularly.
- Have a rule requiring two signatures for any check over the amount of \$500.
- Balance the bank statements each month.
- Have an audit committee in place, with the power to review cash flow every month and to call an audit at any time.

He suggested the following membership categories: Junior, Associate, Active, and Life. In his club, the Mastiff Club of America, two active members must sponsor Junior Members. If they have been Junior Members for at least three years, they automatically become Active Members at the age of 18. Associate Members must be sponsored by two Active Members, and after one year, if there have been no complaints against them, they may become Active Members. Active Members can vote but may not hold office until they have been Active Members for three years. This ensures that all office holders have at least four years' experience with the Parent Club. An Active Member may become a Life Member after 30 consecutive years of active membership.

A Code of Ethics is necessary. "You can't legislate morals, and you can't legislate manners," Newman said. "If members must sign an agreement to abide by the code, when combined with a Grievance Committee, the code will work."

"It is important to put respected members of your club" on a Discipline or Grievance Committee," Newman said. "It makes it harder to fight them."

Newman encouraged participants to know their resources. "A successful man is the man who doesn't know everything but knows the man who does."

### ***Michael Liosis***

"I want to highlight issues that come up and how they might not really be issues," Michael Liosis said, referring participants to the AKC Sample Constitution and Bylaws for Parent (National) Clubs.

Article I, Section 2 of the sample includes the non-profit statement. Even if a Parent Club has had its tax-exempt status revoked by the IRS or does not qualify for IRS exemption, it does not affect the club's AKC status as long as the club remains a not-for-profit entity.

Ed Sledzik wrote an article for *Perspectives*, in March 2004, on the subject. If a club member's daughter or son is a CPA and performs a service for the club it is not a violation of the bylaws provided the fee charged is no more than what the person usually charges.

Article I of the bylaws identifies the types of membership for AKC clubs. "The Junior Membership is the most important" of these categories, he said. "We need to get kids involved in the sport. We should encourage and nurture children. When they become Regular Members, they will vote and be somewhat knowledgeable about club affairs.

Trying to be consistent, The AKC is a US corporation that approves clubs, events, judges and Delegates who are resident citizens of the United States. The current policy of the AKC, which dates back to the early 1990's, is that foreign members may not vote or hold office in Parent Clubs. Existing clubs have the option to amend their bylaws to either eliminate voting or office holding privileges or to apply it only to new applicants.

Article III defines the role of the board of directors of an AKC Parent Club. The size of the board is left up to the club to decide. Liosis recommended that clubs have a staggered system in place for electing officers and board members. “You don’t want everyone coming on and off at the same time,” he said.

Both state law and *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised* gives boards general management power (Article III, Section 1). *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised* discusses this important concept beginning on page 465 (line 32).

The boards of parent clubs may communicate via e-mail provided it is allowed in the state where the club is incorporated and the procedure is included in the bylaws. Members may opt to receive certain notices via e-mail. Both these policies are included on the Club Relations web page.

Article III, Section 2(d) defines the role of the club’s Treasurer. Liosis said the duties of the Treasurer include ensuring that the books are open at all times for inspection by the board; that a report be presented at every meeting; and an annual report of all money expended and received during the previous fiscal year be presented at the annual meeting. Ronald Menaker’s November 2006 Chairman’s Report and AKC’s CFO James Stevens’ Club Finance Guidelines (September 2006) offer some very useful tips. If the club or board does not meet monthly, the Treasurer should provide an informal monthly report between meetings. Liosis emphasized the need to “protect against civil or criminal problems with money.”

Article V, Section 1 states that committees are subject to the final authority of the board. “Committees are there to aid the board,” Liosis said. “It is important at the beginning to give your committees a framework within which they work – a budget, subdivision, and clear guidelines.”

Article VI explains the process of discipline within AKC clubs. “If charges are properly filed, the club is obligated to proceed,” he said. “While there is no absolute rule that states a board member with an interest in a proceeding must abstain from participating in the vote, any member with an interest in the decision should recuse themselves.”

Article IX, Section 1 and 2 describe order of business at a club meetings and board meetings. Liosis addressed the “unfinished business provisions, “ citing Roberts Rule of Order, which specify, “Unfinished business may not extend longer than a quarterly time interval between meetings.” Liosis said, “If there is more than a quarter between meetings, unfinished business does not apply.”

Of parliamentarians, he noted, “They are there to give opinions – not to run the meeting” (*Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised* pg. 449). Article X, which cites parliamentary authority, serves as a default in a way for matters not covered in the bylaws provided state law does not require otherwise.

In discussing the Code of Ethics, Liosis quoted *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, which gives clubs “...the ultimate right to make and enforce...rules...and to require that its members refrain from conduct injurious to the organization or its purposes.” The Sample Constitution and Bylaws does not specifically address Codes of Ethics. However, “through the grievance/disciplinary process, the board reviews complaints, both sides are

presented, and the board decides if a reprimand, suspension or recommendation to expel is in order.”

***Dr. Charles Garvin***

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Characteristics of a successful Parent Club are like breed standards. They are the ideal,” said Dr. Charles Garvin. “Effective clubs love purebred dogs, are representative of fanciers, and protect the rights of the individual within the club.” According to Garvin, the ideal Parent Club “is representative, works together, is orderly and democratic, follows its bylaws, has equal voting rights, and protects members from arbitrary decisions that only benefit the few.” Good Parent Clubs “represent the fancier to AKC and the AKC to the fancier. They know the AKC philosophy.”

“AKC clubs derive their power from the consent of the governed,” Garvin said. They follow the principle established by the Magna Carta that no one is above the law. He emphasized the importance of bylaws for “sorting internal affairs.... Parent Clubs are representative democracies. They are inclusive.” The club Constitution and Bylaws ensure that the club cannot be governed arbitrarily, he said. “When Roberts Rules are followed, they provide concepts for orderly meetings in which every member may be heard, decisions may be made without confusion, conflicts get resolved, and members’ rights are protected.”

“Clubs cannot be arbitrarily managed for a few against the wishes of the many.” Garvin recommended James Surowiecki’s book, *The Wisdom of Crowds*, and encouraged participants to listen to club membership. “The group can be quite accurate in certain circumstances.”

Garvin said club leaders must have “credibility, integrity, humility, and the ability to delegate.” A leader “must be trustworthy and have expertise and a history of success” to have credibility. He or she must also be able to delegate: one leader cannot do everything. Garvin said delegation is a “classic management dilemma.” A leader must decide how much authority, autonomy, and accountability to delegate. “With delegation comes a tolerance for imperfection,” he said. He recommended the book, *Good to Great*, by Jim Collins. “It studies and explains the traits of leaders who transform good organizations into great ones.”

“Leadership takes humility and a willingness to improve,” Garvin said. Leaders get better with the help of others. “How is your club going to be better next year?”

“Conflict is inevitable. It is not necessarily a bad thing.” He encouraged participants to “embrace and manage it” rather than avoid it, because conflict exposes other issues. To manage conflict, Garvin recommended that participants prepare for it, elicit solutions, have organized discussions, and communicate the result to the membership.

During conflict it is important to identify issues and “understand the priorities of all parties,” Garvin said. It is good to evaluate the possible solutions and “let the discussion play out among the members.” He explained that the goal of conflict is to reach a resolution that “combines the best elements from both sides.”

“The quality of the discussion determines the quality of the decision.” Once the conflict has been resolved, Garvin said it is important to document the decision and to thank participants. “It is important to embrace criticism. Sometimes the critics are right, and if not, you can learn from their style.”

### *Questions and Discussion*

A participant noted that her club has no constitution, and asked the panel to distinguish between Articles of Incorporation, Constitutions, and Bylaws. The panelists agreed that Articles of Incorporation might be substituted for a Constitution. However, they advised the participant to check with her state to be sure Articles of Incorporation would suffice.

One participant asked about the status of Junior Members and the process by which they become Individual Members, and another asked, “Does AKC have a minimum age for Junior Membership?” Newman said that in his club, Junior Members who have three years of Junior Membership might automatically become Individual Members once they are 18. Liosis said this is “club-specific.” Clubs must decide what works best for them. Regarding minimum age requirements, Newman said the AKC recommends the age range be limited to eight years old at the youngest. His club has rules that state Junior Members are aged 10–18. The participant asked about the official AKC policy for Juniors Showing, and Liosis said that Junior Showmanship regulations state individuals must demonstrate “the ability to control the animal.”

Participants had several questions for the panel about Codes of Ethics. One asked, “Can the board act on Code of Ethics violations or must the bylaws authorize this?” “The power to suspend membership is in the Constitution,” Liosis said, “but the actual penalty for violating the Code of Ethics must be stated within the code.” He recommended that clubs require all members to sign a membership agreement that states “failure to abide by the Code of Ethics may result in my removal from Breeders Lists, ads, or whatever specific penalties the club approves.”

A participant asked, “If our club adopts a Code of Ethics is it grandfathered in?” “No,” Liosis said. “All members must abide by the Code of Ethics immediately or when it is stated to start.”

Another participant asked, “If a non-member has a complaint, could the non-member file the complaint?” “If a non-member has issues with a member,” Liosis said, “he or she should contact another member, give that member the evidence, and let the member file the complaint.”

One participant asked about an issue facing her Parent Club. “Our lawyer has advised us to water down our Code of Ethics because it will not stand up in court. Can we still include the more restrictive elements?” “No,” Liosis said, “not unless another attorney gives you a different opinion.”

A participant asked whether there are restrictions to online voting. “Yes,” Liosis said. “Secret ballots may not be conducted online because secrecy cannot be guaranteed.” Board members may vote online after discussion has occurred. He reviewed online restrictions in general and told participants “there is no such thing as an online meeting. Roberts Rules stipulate that participants must be ‘in the same room.’ Members must be able to hear and speak concurrently. Video conferencing complies.”

## Club Education and Mentoring

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### Moderator:

Connie Butherus  
*Afghan Hound*

### Panelists:

Dr. Claudia Orlandi, Ph.D.  
Chair, Member Education  
*Basset Hound*

Erika Werne  
Director of Canine Research and Education  
AKC Canine Health Foundation

### *Dr. Claudia Orlandi*

[Click here for presentation.](#)

The University of Canine Education concept is an umbrella for two key educational programs, Dr. Claudia Orlandi said. These programs are: (1) breed universities and (2) breed university lending libraries. The goal of a Breed University is to provide ongoing home study programs in all areas of interest related to a particular breed. *Certificates of Completion* are sent to any person who completes the workbook exercises that accompany each course in that breed.

“We are absolutely thrilled with the way this program is rolling out and with the response we’re getting from our members,” Orlandi said. “We’re finding that this is a very feasible, fun way to provide ongoing education in a Parent Club,” especially at a time when mixed breeds are becoming more prominent. Year-round home study courses are a convenient way to educate new judges and dog owners, as well as preserve the integrity of a breed, and ensure its future.

Though Basset Hound University took four years to develop, Orlandi said other clubs could complete their specific Breed Universities in less than half the time thanks to CD course templates, which are now available to any club. By using a CD course template that was originally designed for the Basset Hound breed, for example, other clubs can simply download the course in PowerPoint and substitute in their own breed-specific information to create the course for themselves. Any club that has a breed standard, a judges’ education program, and educational material for newcomers has the basic elements to get started on their own courses. “Once people see hard copy examples of the kinds of courses that can be developed for one breed, they became excited, enthusiastic, and convinced about being able to develop these courses for their own breed.”

The Basset Hound program includes courses on owning, breeding, judging, and competing with Basset Hounds. Each course includes a textbook portion, a series of workbook exercises and in some cases, a deck of flashcards. Breed University courses are of two types: *core courses* or *breed-specific* courses. Core courses apply to all breeds of dogs and can be used immediately for club education, even if a Parent Club has not yet begun to build a Breed University. Material is presented in a consistent, reader-friendly

style and format, and courses and CD templates are available at relatively low cost. Two core courses that are currently available to any Parent Club:

1. *The ABCs of Dog Breeding*, which covers genetic principles, basic laws of science, and common breeding misconceptions, using a practical approach that is easily applied to any breeding program.
2. *Practical Canine Anatomy*, which was developed at the request of the Dog Judges Association of America, and then adapted to a home study program. This course discusses canine anatomy from the point of view of understanding structural balance in the dog and viewing the dog as one piece.

For more information, go to [www.abcsdogbreeding.com](http://www.abcsdogbreeding.com).

The remaining University courses are breed-specific to the Basset Hound, but have been turned into CD templates, which other Parent Clubs can download, and literally “copy” in order to substitute in their own breed-specific information. They include an owner’s guide to the Basset Hound; a course on the Basset breed standard and terminology, a judges’ education course; a survey of Basset Hound breed literature; an illustrated history of the Basset breed; a course on tracking with Basset Hounds; a home study program on William Syrotuck’s *Scent and the Scenting Dog*; and a Basset Hound coloring and activities book. Additional courses are planned for the future.

For the longer term, Orlandi suggested the possibility of an optional “Big R and little r” education program for judges, breeders, and anyone else who wants to learn about a particular breed. To receive the minimum designation of a “little r” in a particular course, for example, an individual would have to simply complete the workbook questions. To earn the “Big R,” they would complete a closed-book test on the course content. “We need to be able to stretch peoples’ minds and have things available that are optional for anyone who wants to go that extra mile and learn more,” she said. Experience shows that “education unites your club” by giving everyone an opportunity to learn.

Orlandi and colleagues introduced the current selection of Basset Hound University courses at BHCA’s National Specialty in October 2006. Marketing materials included a 10 x 10-foot promotional tent, foam core signs, and a free awareness bracelet. The visual aids were designed to build enthusiasm and deliver the message that “it’s not Harvard. It’s not graduate school. This is a fun thing that anyone can take advantage of and learn from. It shouldn’t be intimidating.” Marketing materials, including a website design, are also available as templates alongside the courses, and can be copied by other Parent Clubs.

Over time, Orlandi said, a Breed University lending library could be an effective mechanism for clubs to share information and breed university courses for the betterment of all breeds.

For more information on the Breed University Template Toolkit, please e-mail Claudia Orlandi at: [domorlan@gmavt.net](mailto:domorlan@gmavt.net)

***Erika Werne***

[Click here for presentation.](#)

The American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation (CHF) offers a variety of educational materials and hosts an ongoing series of conferences and symposia, Erika Werne said. All are designed to make up-to-date health information available to breeders and clubs.

Videotapes on canine bladder expression and degenerative myelopathy produced by Scout's House, an animal rehab center located in Menlo Park, CA, are available on the CHF website ([www.akcchf.org](http://www.akcchf.org)), along with white papers from past events. *Future Dog: Breeding for Genetic Soundness*—a breeders' guide to the predictive use of DNA markers—is out of print, but the Foundation is working toward an updated edition. The CHF newsletter appears quarterly.

Werne said the Foundation's next Parent Club Conference, October 19–21, 2007 in St. Louis, would give health committee representatives a wide-ranging scientific update on the latest canine health research. Within the research community, meanwhile, CHF's four canine cancer conferences have created an opportunity for both veterinary and human oncologists to discuss current projects, compare notes on emerging study topics, and set the stage for future collaboration. The Foundation hopes to hold similar conferences on cardiology and infectious disease.

Werne said she also works with Debra Bonnefond, the AKC's Director of Veterinary Research, and Ronald Rella, the AKC's Director of Project Administration, on a series of breeder symposia hosted by local veterinary schools. Standard topics include the genetics of breeding, reproduction, and vaccination protocols. Material on oncology, cardiology, or endocrinology is added selectively, reflecting the expertise at specific sites. The symposia also offer continuing education credits for veterinarians and veterinary technicians.

Werne encouraged participants to check the AKC and CHF websites for further updates on upcoming symposia.

## **Financial and Tax Aspects and Issues for Parent Clubs**

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### **Moderator:**

John Nielsen  
*English Setter*

### **Presenter:**

Edmund Sledzik  
Tax Attorney  
*Lhasa Apso*

[Click here for presentation.](#)

Edmund Sledzik emphasized the importance of the position of Treasurer. "The Treasurer is in financial control of the club. He or she keeps records, disperses checks, oversees all events, and reports the financial health of the organization to the club."

“I was a national Treasurer,” he said. “My Fridays were for the National club. It is a big responsibility.” The Treasurer is the only person with the financial information, and this information is not secret. “You must give it when asked—99s, balance sheets, IRS rulings.”

“Want to know how to get rid of a Treasurer? Let them go for three years and call for an audit,” he said. “Clubs that require an audit every year or every other year never lose a Treasurer.” He suggested clubs have “regular audits or an audit when the Treasurer leaves office.” Schedule an in-club audit. “Choose a month, usually the month after a show. Why? Because that’s when the money has come in.” He said a CPA performs the audit, and a lawyer reviews it. He recommended that two club members work with the auditor.

“Usually, the first I hear from a club is, ‘help, we’re being audited—they want to take away our exemption.’ When the IRS audits a club, the first thing they will ask for is the 1099s,” Sledzik said. “Every time you pay someone over \$600 in one year, you must file a 1099. If you don’t, it will cost your club \$50 for each 1099 you did not send, and 15.45% of the gross amount in penalties to the IRS.”

A participant asked, “Can you deduct expenses from the amount you pay judges?” “In 1982, the IRS ruled that expenses do not count as income paid to judges,” Sledzik said. He advised clubs to get receipts for expenses from judges. A fiscal year for the IRS is January 1–December 31. “Any time you hire a judge within the same year, all amounts paid to that judge count towards the total for the 1099 requirement,” Sledzik said.

The IRS will ask for airfare and hotel receipts. “There are no receipts for mileage. If you don’t have receipts, you can invoke the ‘Cohan Rule’—as in George M. Cohan. The IRS audited him and he said he had no receipts, but he could produce people who had seen him at hotels. There are other ways to prove someone stayed at a hotel. Though nowadays, hotels and airlines can print duplicate receipts. A letter from the judge may be acceptable.” Sledzik suggested clubs ask judges to give receipts for their expenses. “Put the receipt request in the Judge Agreement.”

A participant asked about possible variation in airfare, depending on when a judge buys his or her ticket. “Does that matter?” “No,” Sledzik said. “All you need is the receipt for the ticket.” Sledzik discussed multiple destination tickets. “If your show is only part of the cost of a multiple destination airline ticket, have the judge write on the back of the receipt what part of the receipt is for your show.”

During an audit, “the IRS is looking for the money. They are looking for padded expenses.” He advised clubs not to “volunteer” information to the IRS. “Let them ask the questions. And only begin to answer the questions once the IRS is done asking. If you answer each question as they ask it, they may come up with more questions. But once they have concluded, they normally do not ask new questions.”

One club invited the IRS agent to their club show, Sledzik said. “Don’t invite the IRS to your show! The guy spent the whole day taking notes. All the agent is looking for is how much money you took in from the public.” He advised the group, “Never lie to the IRS.” He said the most common mistakes caught by the IRS during an audit are “failure to file 1099s and failure to file taxes.”

A participant asked, “What makes a legitimate legal document?” “What you present that an agent accepts: for example, an itemized list or a receipt,” Sledzik said.

“You must file a 1099 for every person who is paid over \$600 from your club in one year. You may send a delayed or modified 1099 if there is an error.” Clubs that take in over \$25,000 per year must file a 990-tax form. “That includes income in all accounts owned by the club,” Sledzik said. “If a club is non-exempt, they must file a 1120 every year and pay 15% tax on all profits. They may give no more than 10% to charity each year. If they give more than 10%, it accumulates each year and they cannot deduct it.”

If a club has a show in a different state, taxes must be filed in both states unless one state does not have a state income tax. “You must pay taxes in all states in which you do business,” Sledzik said. “One partnership paid taxes in 27 states. In California, you must file a 190 form even if you are an exempt club. Even if the Feds exempt you, in California, you must still file the form so the state will exempt you from state taxes.”

Sledzik said clubs required to file a report with the IRS must do so “by the fifteenth day of the fifth month after the end of your year. The penalty is \$20 per day for every day you did not file,” he said. “File before they find you. If you get it in first, less penalties are assessed. If they contact you, more penalties apply.”

“Once you incorporate, your exemption goes backward.” He reminded clubs to file an annual report with the state. “Clubs have lost exempt status because they didn’t pay the incorporation fee one year.” A participant asked what to do if the incorporation fee was not paid. “Go back, pay the fee, and then you’ll get your exemption,” he said. “Not for profit does not mean you are exempt from federal tax. You must contact the IRS, and they will tell you if you are exempt.”

On November 30, 2006, the IRS decided that any group that has ever received an exemption must now file a new 990N form “to prove you were not cheating.” It is important to keep the ruling letter stating when the club was exempted. “You can send the IRS a copy of this letter. Even if you changed from a C7 to a C4, the new ruling still applies to you.”

There are four entities that get an exemption from the IRS. One is a corporation, which Sledzik recommended for Parent Clubs. The second is a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC), which he recommended for dog shows. “They limit the liability when filing joint returns.” The third is an Association. “I don’t recommend these.” The fourth is a Trust. “These are good for rescue,” he said. “It is a priority for rescue to get this ruling fast. Aside from the liability issues associated with rescue, you can lose money. Get the Trust to get the money in and let the local clubs help the rescue group. When you can, distance the money from the Parent Club.”

“Previously, AKC was considered a special group because all shown dogs are AKC members—there is no ‘public’ money. In 1998, one agent picked 17 clubs to challenge. She succeeded against at least seven clubs,” Sledzik said.

There are differences in 501(c) designations. If a club has a 501(c)(7) status, it must follow these rules:

- No more than 35% of the clubs annual income may come from the public.

- No more than 15% of the club's annual income may come from one special event.
- The club may not have unrelated business income.
- Any amount over \$1,000 in interest and dividends is taxable.

Sledzik said, "The unrelated business income is becoming bad news for clubs. The IRS is getting aggressive about this. This includes anything from for profit businesses. Any income from non-members—like advertisements from non-members in your magazine, catalog sales, or ways and means sales—don't go online to sell. When you sell to non-members, you are in competition with private companies."

"Agility may be taxable because you are in competition with non-members. Many [club] constitutions list this as a public service," he said.

Sledzik said that he does not recommend clubs choose a 501(c)(3) designation because "it is too easy to get caught on the foundation versus public charity issue. C 4 is a better choice because of the 'public good' purpose." Organizations with a 501(c)(3) exemption must follow schedule A, and the IRS will look for "disqualified persons." These groups must also follow schedule B for donors of \$5000 or more. "But the biggest distinction is the public charity versus private foundation rules," Sledzik said. "Private foundations must give away all income by the end of the year. Public charities can accumulate their income."

A participant asked, "How much money can my club accumulate before the IRS gets nervous?" "\$250,000," Sledzik said. "Greater than \$250,000 for a corporation has a 28% tax on it. The IRS will accept set asides for land purchases. I have had clubs say they were considering a land purchase, and the IRS left that money alone."

Sledzik recommended that clubs with less than \$10,000 a year in income get an exemption. "It costs \$300 and is well worth it. If you are not exempt, they will forgive you once you file," he said.

"There are benefits to becoming a Trust and not a C3. Your donors can claim the donation as a charity contribution. If you lose your C3 status you are bumped from a private charity to an 1120 corporation and you pay every year for your income and interest."

Sledzik said, "Rules that all clubs should consider are filing requirements—the fifth month and fifteenth day after the end of your year or it is \$20 per day you are late or a percentage of your income; your gross income—\$25,000 or more—and any unrelated business income. When you dissolve a club, your money must go to another exempt club. Never lose control of an entity or subsidiary of your club. There is only one way to stop a subsidiary—stop the money."

## **Wrap Up and Farewell**

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Peter Piusz thanked Paula Spector for her hard work managing the 2007 AKC Parent Club Conference. "We couldn't do this without Paula and her staff," he said. He also thanked the speakers and panelists. Piusz told the group that Parent Club members who

attended the conference would receive a summary of each session and the PowerPoint text on CD when they are ready in several months.

He thanked the Parent Clubs who brought materials to the Resource Room. “This is a great thing for purebred dogs, not just yours but all of ours,” he said, and noted that the conference “gave everyone a feel for why we all love Parent Clubs.”

Pat Laurans thanked Piusz and all the Parent Club committee members for their hard work, and the AKC, Eukanuba, and AKC/CAR for sponsoring the event. She asked the participants, “Did you enjoy it? Did you learn something? Do you want another one?” The group response to each question was a resounding “YES!!!”

She invited participants to write an article about the conference for their newsletters. “Share with your members and constituency what will be most helpful to your club. Share it with your Breed clubs.”

She said the 2007 Parent Club Conference CD will be made available on the AKC website to download for use by Parent Clubs and all interested parties.

“Help us paint a portrait of this conference,” Laurans said. “Please send the AKC a letter on your Parent Club stationery, with your thoughts about the conference—good or bad.” If there proves to be consensus for the need for another conference in the future, she said, “we will try to have one.”