



gazette

APRIL 2026



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Miniature Schnauzer

*100 Years
in AKC*

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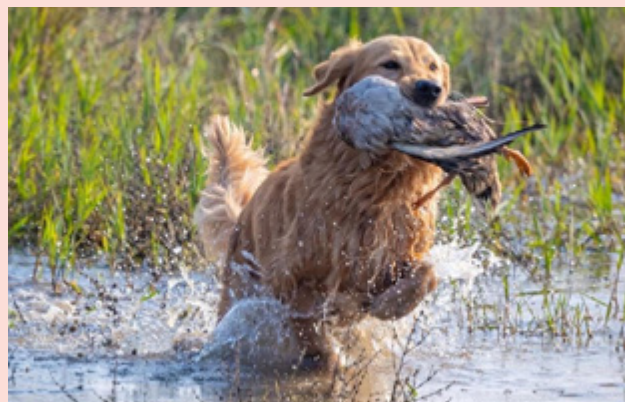


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Location
Expo Square - SageNet Center
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Information
Mid-Continent Kennel Club of Tulsa
www.mckctulsa.com

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Investing in Breeders

I want to share something I am truly excited about. I have established the AKC Breeder Focus Committee, a group formed with intention and deep respect for the people who sustain our organization: our breeders. This committee will serve as a consultative body, advising on litter and puppy registration, identifying emerging trends, and helping strengthen the value, accessibility, and future of AKC registration. Our early discussions have reinforced a fundamental truth: Without breeders, there is no AKC. They are not adjacent to our mission, they are at the center of it. And yet, too many do not feel fully supported or valued.

If we are serious about protecting and advancing purebred dogs, we must do the same for those who responsibly produce them. That means providing more

practical tools, expanding education, and creating clearer pathways for mentorship and engagement, especially for those new to breeding. It also requires us to be more confident in championing ethical breeding as a public good and more intentional in building a community that is welcoming, inclusive, and supportive.

Breeding is sustained through knowledge, relationships, and leadership, and it is our responsibility to help cultivate the next generation. When we invest in breeders, we strengthen our sport, our community, and the future of the AKC.

In the spirit of looking to the future of our sport, I would like to congratulate the eight recipients of the 2025 Junior Versatility Scholarships. This program recognizes Juniors who actively compete across



multiple AKC sports, earning points through participation, placements, and titles. The scholarships are awarded to the top competitors during the qualifying period from July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, and are made possible through the generosity of Carolyn and Gary Koch, the AKC FIT Dog Turkey Trot, and the North Carolina Triangle Judges Education Group. Their dedication, versatility, and commitment to excellence represent the very best of the next generation of our sport.

And finally, congratulations to our newly crowned 2026 National Agility Championship winners in both the Regular and Preferred classes, recently

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



*Without breeders,
there is no AKC.*

celebrated in Temecula, California. Each win was well deserved, reflecting the exceptional skill, speed, and teamwork that define the sport, among a field of more than 870 dogs representing 46 states and Canada. To see all of the winners, please visit akc.org.

As we look ahead, I am confident in the strength of our community and the momentum we are building. Thank you for your continued dedication to the sport, to our mission, and to one another. With a continued focus on supporting breeders, celebrating competitors,

and strengthening our programs, we will ensure a strong and vibrant future for the American Kennel Club.

Gina M. DiNardo
President and CEO
American Kennel Club



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FCM-recognized breeds or varieties only, which are not eligible to compete in the AKC-licensed show.



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Championships Titles that will be offered for both males and females, for puppies, juniors, adults and veterans, during the FCM Universal Championship Dog Shows and the FCM Special Attraction Shows.

FCM - Panamerican Championship Title

(Thursday November 12th, 2026)

FCM - Continental Championship Title

(Friday November 13th, 2026)

FCM - Intercontinental Championship Title

(Saturday November 14th, 2026)

FCM -Universal Championship Title

(Sunday November 15th, 2026)

FCM - Mexican Championship Title

(All four days)

AKC - Championship Points

(All four days) <Only for AKC recognized breeds and varieties>

AKC - Grand Championship

(All four days) <Only for AKC recognized breeds and varieties>

This event will be conducted under AKC international rules for all breeds recognized by the AKC, (AKC Breed standards, Points and Ranking, in 7 Groups and BIS)

Breeds not recognized by AKC will be judged at Special Attraction Groups according to the standards of their country of origin. To compete for FCM groups and BIS.



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*Bloodhound Keva,
San Bernardino
County Sherriff's
Department, a 2025
ACE winner*

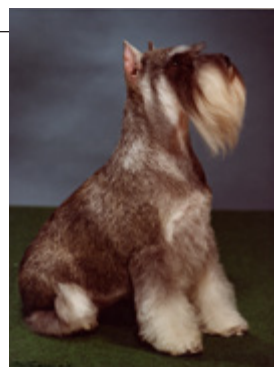
Nominations for the 2026 AKC Humane Fund Awards for Canine Excellence (ACE) are now open. Since the founding of the awards in 2000, ACEs have gone to several show and performance champions.

If you know of a dog in your club or in your breed that has performed some exemplary service outside the ring, please consider making an ACE nomination before the *July 1* closing date. The ACE program is a wonderful way to showcase the abilities of our fabulous purebreds on the national stage.

An award is given in the categories of Uniformed Service K-9, Exemplary Companion, Search

and Rescue, Therapy, Service Dog, and Teams. Recipients will be announced in late 2026 and promoted on TV, local press, and social media.

For more information about the ACEs or to nominate a dog, visit [AKC Humane Fund Awards for Canine Excellence \(ACE\)](#).



On Our Cover
Miniature Schnauzer
Alton Anderson (AKC Archives)

COURTESY SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT



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Delegates Elect Board Class of 2030

NEW YORK—At the annual meeting of the American Kennel Club on March 10, the Delegates elected members to the AKC Board of Directors.

Class of 2030

- Domenic Palleschi

Carota, Delegate, Pharaoh Hound Club of America

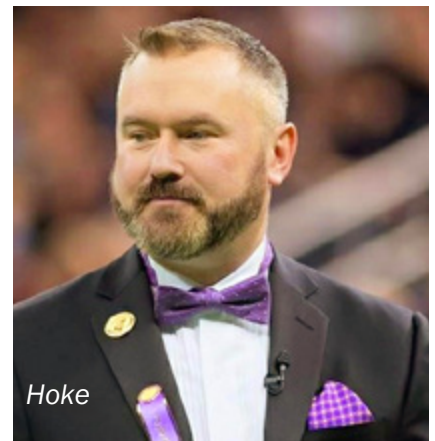
- Jason Hoke, Delegate, Chain O'Lakes Kennel Club

- Sue Goldberg, Delegate, Lewiston-Auburn Kennel Club, Inc.

In addition, Dr. Thomas M. Davies (Springfield



Carota



Hoke

Kennel Club, Inc.) was reelected Chairman of the Board and Dr. Michael Knight, Ph.D. (Texas Kennel Club) was reelected Vice Chairman at a meeting of the Board convened after the Delegate Meeting.



Goldberg

AKC's Lycan Retires

RALEIGH—Director of Event Operations Support Glenn Lycan, AKC staff since 2002, retired on March 27. Lycan led the Club Development department since its inception in 2017. “His leadership was instrumental in the department’s growth into what it is today,” Executive VP of Sports and Events Doug Ljungren says.

“His contributions have been significant and appreciated.”

Guy Fisher has been promoted to director of Club Development. He served as the department’s manager, working closely with Lycan, since 2018.



UPDATES

New Mini Bull Standard

The AKC Board of Directors, at its January meeting, approved revisions of the Miniature Bull Terrier breed standard. The changes brought forth by the parent club were effective April 1.

As a result, all judges assigned to judge the Miniature Bull Terrier, the Terrier Group, or Best in Show where the breed may be present at AKC conformation events held on or after April 1, are

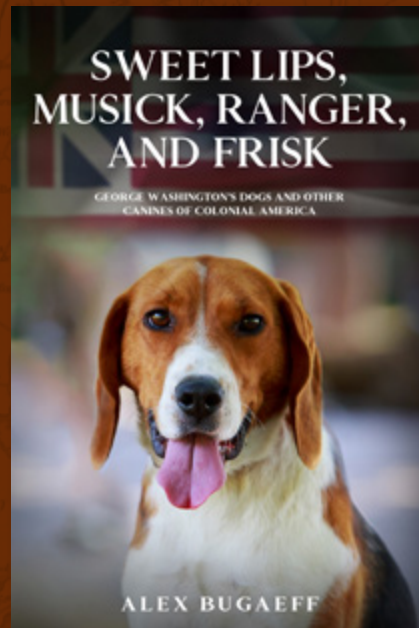
required to judge in accordance with the respective newly approved breed standard.

This revision was extensive, affecting most sections of the standard.

CAROL BEUCHAT FOR AKC



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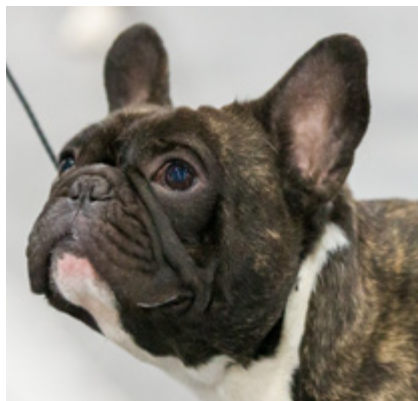
UPDATES

2025 Reg. Rankings

Frenchie holds firm; Dachxies drive to five

The AKC announced that the French Bulldog has topped individual-dog registration rankings for the fourth consecutive year. Rounding out the top five are the Labrador Retriever, Golden Retriever, German Shepherd Dog, and Dachshund.

The Dachshund, in the top five for the first time since 2003, nudged the Poodle into sixth place. The Poodle had been holding steady at number five from



2021 to 2024.

“While the French Bulldog is a wonderful companion for many, it is not a ‘one size fits all’ breed,” AKC President/CEO Gina M. DiNardo says. “As with



any breed, we can’t stress enough the importance of doing research to find the right breed for your lifestyle and to ensure that you’re getting a well-bred dog from a responsible breeder.”

New from **Government Relations**

AKC Government Relations has updated AKC economic and community impact figures for all 50 states. [The AKC Impact by State report](#) provides data on the positive impact that AKC affiliates, clubs, and events have in each state. This valuable information is helpful to share with lawmakers, local media, chambers of commerce, and other community entities.

Each state summary includes:

- Economic impact of AKC dog shows
- The number of AKC dog clubs and events by state
- AKC Reunite disaster-relief trailer and K-9 officer donations by state
- AKC Canine Health Foundation research grants and dollars by state

This report utilizes survey data of expenditures in local communities by exhibitors in 2025 at AKC conformation, companion, and performance events.



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Am./Can. Ch. Sorceress of Ledahof, c.1948, at 18 months. Bred by Leda Martin, Sorceress was the foundation dam of Marion Evashwick's Marwyck line.

Mini Photo Album

Flipping through the mighty Miniature Schnauzer's 100 years in AKC.

PHOTOS AKC GAZETTE COLLECTION EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

FEATURE

This month we acknowledge the Miniature Schnauzer's 100th anniversary in the AKC Stud Book.

The AKC registered its first Mini, Frank Spiekerman's Schnapp v Dornbusch of Hitofa, in 1926—but the breed had been taking shape in America before then.

The real beginning of the Miniature Schnauzer in America came in the summer of 1924 when Rudolph Krappatsch exported from Germany four Miniatures to Marie Slattery. They would become the foundation, not only for the Marienhof Kennel, but for the breed itself.

The breed's early development in this country coincided with a time of growth for our publication. The 1920s saw the GAZETTE's emergence as a true magazine, with feature stories, regular departments, and, especially, photography.

Here, we present some favorite Mini photos from our archives, along with the stories behind them.

The Granddaddy of Them All

The cover dog of Dan Kiedrowski's definitive breed book, *The New Miniature Schnauzer*, is Ch. Dorem Display (1945–1959). Bred by Dorothy Williams, Display is the cornerstone sire of the modern Mini. Kiedrowski wrote in 1986: “American

Miniature Schnauzers are 99 percent pure—pure Ch. Dorem Display. ... The breed's history since 1950, for all intents and purposes, can be traced exclusively through sons and daughters of Display. It is impossible to find an outcross to his completely dominant line.”

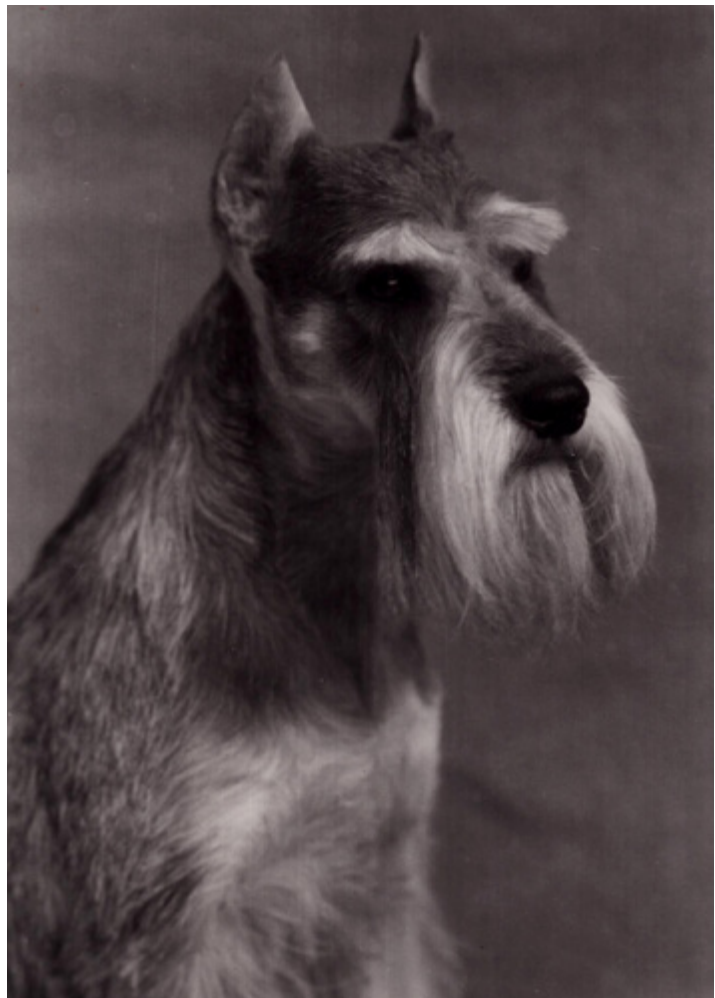
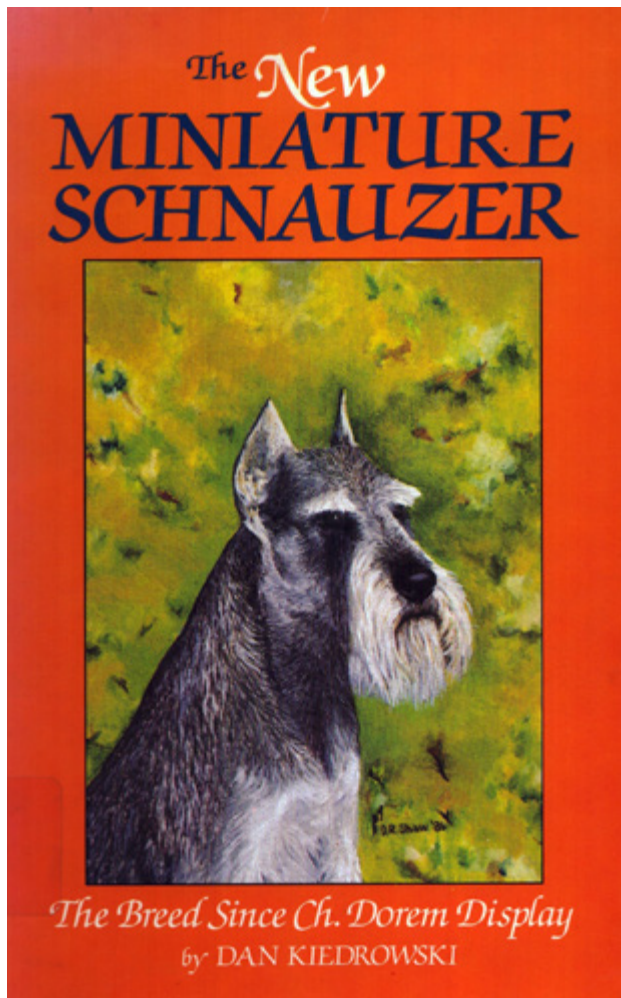
Denis Shaw's cover art for Kiedrowski's classic is

based on a Tauskey photo of Display (next page). On the back of the original print, from the AKC GAZETTE collection, Tauskey wrote: A GREAT MINIATURE SCHNAUZER HEAD.

Kiedrowski, a mainstay of the dog world since 1955, was an authority on the Mini but also an artist, publisher, editor, writer, and one of those special characters for whom the word *beloved* was coined. He was especially esteemed for his *Schnauzer Shorts*, among the sport's finest breed-specific magazines.

Upon Kiedrowski's death in 2017 Michael Dougherty wrote, “Danny started his magazine in 1960. To have begun a project in 1960 and continuously carried on with it at reliable intervals for 57 years is a monumental achievement. The world has lost one of its truest heroes; if only prizes were awarded more regularly for humility, commitment, and authenticity, his walls would be full of those ribbons as well.”

FEATURE



The cover of Kiedrowski's classic and the Display photo that inspired it. A "great Miniature Schnauzer head," wrote Tauskey.

The Squire of Phil-Mar

Ch. Dorem Tempo, a Display grandson and a son of Ch. Delegate of Ledahof, was the key sire of Marguerite Anspach Wolff's illustrious Phil-Mar prefix. In *The New Miniature Schnauzer*, Mrs. Wolfe made her admiration of Tempo clear:

"I bred [Ch. Phil-Mar] Watta Lady to Tempo, who for my money is one of the greatest sires of all time. He was owned by Muriel and Jack Ainley of Connecticut. He was a terrific-coated dog. Jack showed him continuously for three years, always in perfect show coat. According to Muriel, Tempo

was used at stud only nine times. He produced a champion in each litter that he sired for me, including my three Best in Show dogs."

Among the champions sired by Tempo was Phil-Mar Lucy Lady, top-winning Mini of 1954 and a Westminster Best of Breed.

FEATURE

Tempo, a “terrific-coated dog”



A Queen and Her Court

At Westminster 1954 (next page), Miniature Schnauzers Handful's Bantam, Handful's Quail, Handful's Pheasant, and Ch. Benrook Bona comprised judge Virgil Johnson's Best Team in Show, owned by

Miss Gene Simmonds of Harford County, Maryland. Two weeks after Westminster, the Handful team would repeat the win at Eastern Dog Club.

Bona, a Display daughter, was a producer of champions and queen of the Handful kennel.

Dog-Show Lifers

Ruth Cooper, all-around dog woman extraordinaire, handled her share of Minis during the professional handling career she shared with husband Dick Cooper. On page 18, she handles Ch. Trayham Tatters to a group win under the

FEATURE



Handful's famous all-star team

sainted terrier man Percy Roberts at Livonia KC, 1960.

Ruth was a mentor to Pat Trotter, who wrote, “Her comments always provoked serious thought, and such famous dog people as Anne

Rogers Clark and Luc Boileau were among the many who benefited from her guidance.”

The Coopers were so immersed in the sport that their wedding pictures were taken by Frasier Studio—the

dog-show photographers who took this win shot.

The Leftovers

Beverly Verna founded the Regency Miniature Schnauzer prefix in 1972 and bred 152 champions at

FEATURE

her state-of-the-art California kennel.

For Verna—exhibitor, judge, handler, and master breeder—show dogs were only part of the equation. In a story we published after she was named 2006 AKC Terrier Breeder of the Year, Verna wrote:

“A well-known judge once told me there are ‘producers’ and there are ‘breeders.’

“Breeders do not breed just because a bitch is in season or they need pup-



Ch. Trayham Tatters with Ruth Cooper and Percy Roberts

pies to sell.

“A breeder does not

promise or take deposits on their entire litter before they are even born.

“A breeder does not keep the best puppy in a litter to show if it is not truly show-quality. ...

“If you are lucky, you might produce just one of these dogs in a litter, the rest will be pets, ‘leftovers.’

“Well-established breeders have probably produced five times the number of pet puppies as they have show dogs.”

For more on the breed, visit [American Miniature Schnauzer Club](#)



Beverly Verna and Anne Rogers Clark at Santa Barbara KC, 1998

Minis Make Good Teammates



Since obedience became an official AKC sport in the 1930s, Miniature Schnauzers have enjoyed companion training.

A vivid proof is an e-mail we received a few years back from MaryAnn Williams, owner of PACH/RACH4 Angel Sylvie Williams, CDX, BN, RM12, RAE25, OA, OAJ, MXP5, MXPS, MJP7, MJPG, PAX, NF, XFP, THDD, RATN, CGCA, CGCU, TKP, the number-one Top AKC Rally Dog, All-Breeds, when the list was first published in July 2019.

Williams rattled off an array of titles and accomplishments achieved by Angel and concluded, “For never having a pet my entire life—Angel being my first—she has proven over and over again that she is definitely an *angel*—wonderful, smart, beautiful, and talented.

“Angel is a blessing and the best teammate ever.”

COURTESY OWNER



A Century of Majesty The Miniature Schnauzer isn't the only breed celebrating 100 years in the AKC Stud Book this year. The AKC registered its first Afghan Hound, named Tezin, in 1926.

The Afghan, of ancient descent, once commanded the kennels of Afghanistan's kings and chieftains in their mountain strongholds. Today's Afghan is best known as a splendid companion, an elegant blur on the coursing fields, and a showstopper in the ring. Compliments to the [Afghan Hound Club of America](#) (AKC 1940) for keeping this majestic breed happy and hearty.

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The Samoyed Club of America gave rosettes not only for titles but for Fastest Dog, Fastest Bitch, and Fastest Veteran Dog and Bitch.



RUN FOR THE ROSETTE

*The Fast CAT rosette:
It's just a ribbon,
right?*

By Sharyn Hutchens, Delegate,
Shenandoah Valley KC, Inc.

Many of us who started competing in the Dark Ages believe all that matters is the points and titles. Well, and the utter joy of doing stuff with our dogs.

Trophies and ribbons and such were way down the list of what mattered.

Until we realized that's not the case for everyone when we see a friend

PHOTOS COURTESY SHARYN HUTCHENS EXCEPT WHERE NOTED

FEATURE



“High-quality ribbons play a very valuable role in drawing a large entry at these events.”

reverently save every ribbon. Then along came the rosettes. Then bigger and more colorful rosettes. Then *huge* rosettes. Well, you get the picture.

The **Fast CAT** culture takes it to a whole new level. Many of these competitors actually choose the events they will enter on the basis of the rosettes offered for titles. But how do they know they will win one? Other dog sports may offer large rosettes or other prizes for exceptional wins, but in Fast CAT, dogs are not competing against

other dogs. They are accumulating points with every successful run. So, any dog can earn a title if the owner has enough patience and determination.

THE POINTS RACE

Because of the way Fast CAT is scored, owners usually know when their dogs will finish. Dogs accumulate points by qualifying at multiple trials. Once they earn 150 points, they're awarded the title of BCAT; once they earn 500 points, they're awarded the title of DCAT, and once they

earn 1,000 points, they're awarded the title of FCAT. Then, for every additional 500 points, they get a number added after FCAT, such as FCAT2 for earning 500 more points.

AKC is responsible for keeping up with and calculating points for each dog, but owners keep careful records of their own.

Many clubs publicize their rosettes through social media—there are many Fast CAT pages on Facebook and even a Fast CAT Rosettes page. If the color and size of a rosette is

FEATURE



Rosettes from the 2021 AKC Fast CAT Invitational

important to them, exhibitors can plan their entries accordingly. One person confessed to driving five hours to an event for a particular style and color rosette.

David Fischer, of the Potomac Valley Samoyed Club, received an impressive rosette in Orlando at the AKC Fast CAT

Invitational. “I thought it would be cool to receive a rosette directly from the AKC itself, and at a venue that is pretty unique,” he says. “I very deliberately abstained from multiple Fast CAT events earlier in the year to ensure that the points I needed would line up with that event.” Fischer also participated in Fast

CAT at the Samoyed Club of America national event, which presented rosettes not only for titles but for Fastest Dog, Fastest Bitch, and Fastest Veteran Dog and Bitch.

A GATEWAY SPORT

Fast CAT is intended to serve as a gateway to other dog sports. It is open to all dogs, requires no training, no club affiliation, and no commitment to continue. Owners can enter one event on a weekend or plan an entire week at a site with back-to-back events hosted by several clubs. Many or most of the competitors are new to dog sports and not involved in any others. As someone remarked in a recent discussion, “For most people this is their first sport dog and they’re proud of their accomplishments. Social media is huge, and people love to post pictures of their dogs with these amazing prizes they’ve won. Conformation and obedience people care more about

FEATURE

the title, Fast CAT-ers care about the rosettes.”

Of course, most Fast CAT participants do not enter on the basis of ribbons alone. Location and date of the event, friendliness of the club, and competence of the lure operator are all factors taken into consideration. As one experienced competitor says, “Fast CAT is supposed to be a fun, beginner-friendly, instinctive sport that most dogs can do. If a club has nice ribbons but its members are snarky and rude or the event is disorganized or unsafe, people won’t return to it. And word gets around!”

CLUB CONCERNS

So how does the obsession with ribbons affect the host club?

It’s obvious now that the best way to fill an event is to offer really attractive rosettes. Fast CAT can be a profitable event for the clubs. Entry fees are usually about \$20 to \$25 per run, and most dogs run twice in

one event. The club pays the AKC fees, site rental, the lure operator, an event secretary (if club members do not do it themselves), and the ribbons. The president of one small club commented that as the rosettes have gotten bigger and more expensive, the profitability has dropped considerably. Another result of the demand for rosettes has been that clubs compete with each other by offering ever larger and fancier ribbons.

Clubs who provide these rosettes for titles have figured their cost-benefit ratios and determined that large, unique rosettes draw enough competitors to be worth it. Don James, Delegate from the Leonberger Club of America, says, “As president of a club that sponsors Fast CAT trials in Washington State (Greater Clark County KC), I can tell you that high-quality ribbons for titles obtained during our events play a

very valuable role in drawing a large entry at these events. It’s more than worth the expense to make sure our entrants are properly rewarded for their dog’s accomplishments.”

Karen Luckey, Delegate from the Spinone Club of America, asked one enthusiastic young couple what excites and motivates them to participate in AKC events. “They specifically mentioned that those ribbons are a big attraction for them,” she says. “If they see these goodies out there online, they are more motivated. Anyway, if people are signing up because of that and the club makes money as a result, I guess it could be a good thing in the long run.”

BOTTOM LINE: A FUNNY-LOOKING BUNNY

Essentially, the appeal of Fast CAT comes down to this comment from an owner who wishes to remain anonymous: “My dog is not the fastest, but

Fast CAT Info

- [Club Licensing](#)
- [Club Resources](#)
- [Regulations Resources](#)
- [Top 20 Fastest Dog by Breed](#)
- [Contact](#)



he has shown me that this is ‘his’ sport. He will give other sports his best effort, but when he is barking at me before his run, I can tell. He doesn’t care about the

beauty and complexity of the ribbons. What he cares about is, ‘I’m going to get that funny-looking bunny!’, and that is how I want to remember him and our

relationship. My heart dog, who loves to run!”—**S.H.**

This story comes courtesy Perspectives, the AKC Delegate publication.

GAIL WERNICK PHOTO COURTESY BOBBIE KELLEY



"I admire handling that enhances the exhibition of a dog."

It Is, After All, a *Dog Show*

In the September 1997 GAZETTE, our resident judge Dorothy Macdonald considered the balance between exhibiting breeding stock and

putting on a good show.

Judging is about finding the qualities in a dog that best represent, and will best serve, its breed. Ideally, it would

be good if you could just evaluate the genes of an animal and put up the dog who could best reproduce quality.

As this is not possible, and

DAVID WOO © AKC

TIMES PAST

would hardly make for an entertaining sport if it were, we judge dogs for their individual quality and hope they can reproduce the same or better.

With this philosophy, presentation shouldn't be at all important—and it wouldn't be if you saw the dogs being themselves at home. But in the ring, with two to three minutes to appraise each dog, a judge's breed knowledge, experience, and ability to evaluate—not only well, but quickly—are critical. Equally significant in this equation is the presentation and handling.

Presentation can be used to both enhance and hide. I have no quarrel with this, as I consider it my job to evaluate beyond these subterfuges. I do, however, have a problem with trimming beyond what the standard calls for. Sculpting, in some breeds, is a serious fault.

Because grooming is not genetic, I won't put up an inferior animal no matter how generically pretty it



"I enjoy seeing a well-presented exhibit in which the handler and dog are a team."

looks; at times, however, the sculptured or overcoated animal wins in spite of, not because of, the excess.

I admire handling that enhances the exhibition of a dog, but I try to see through clever handling. I get very unhappy with handlers who show all dogs in the same generic manner. When the Chow Chow keeps up with the Standard Poodle in the group ring, something is wrong. In general, speed is misused in the ring, as is the habit of stringing a dog up by its lead, throwing it out of kilter.

I like to see the whole class

freestanding to minimize each handler's ability, or inability, to present their dog properly. Still, handling is part of the game. Exhibitors should try to show their dogs to best advantage.

Poor handling can put faults into a dog where none otherwise exist; as a judge it would be unwise to assume a virtue that is not demonstrated.

I enjoy seeing a well-presented exhibit in which the handler and dog are a team. The honest quality of the dog is thereby allowed to shine forth in harmony with the character and style appropriate to its standard.—D.M.

COURTESY LYNDIA BEAM



Crufts Best in Show

There's a generous selection of well-made 2026 videos on the [Crufts YouTube page](#).

25:32



Crufts Gamekeepers Competition

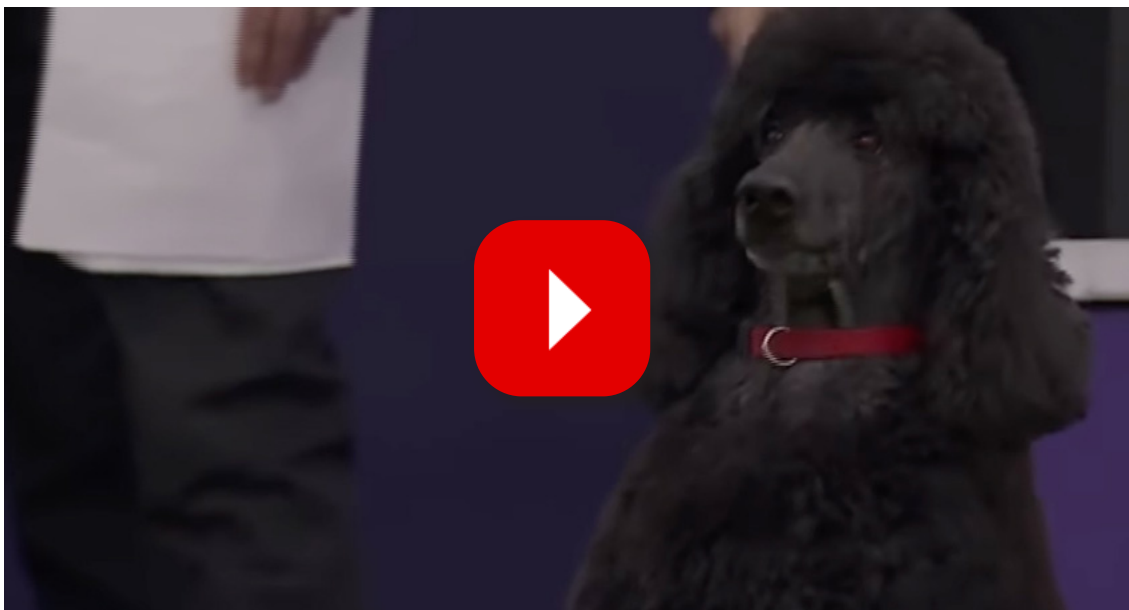
Working gundogs are judged in the show ring during the final of this distinctly British event. 9:59

VIDEOS



“Specials are Made, Not Bred”

The guys at the Tack Box Podcast catch up with Jane Martenson, of Touche Japanese Chin. 1:04:49



Masters Agility Break-Out Star

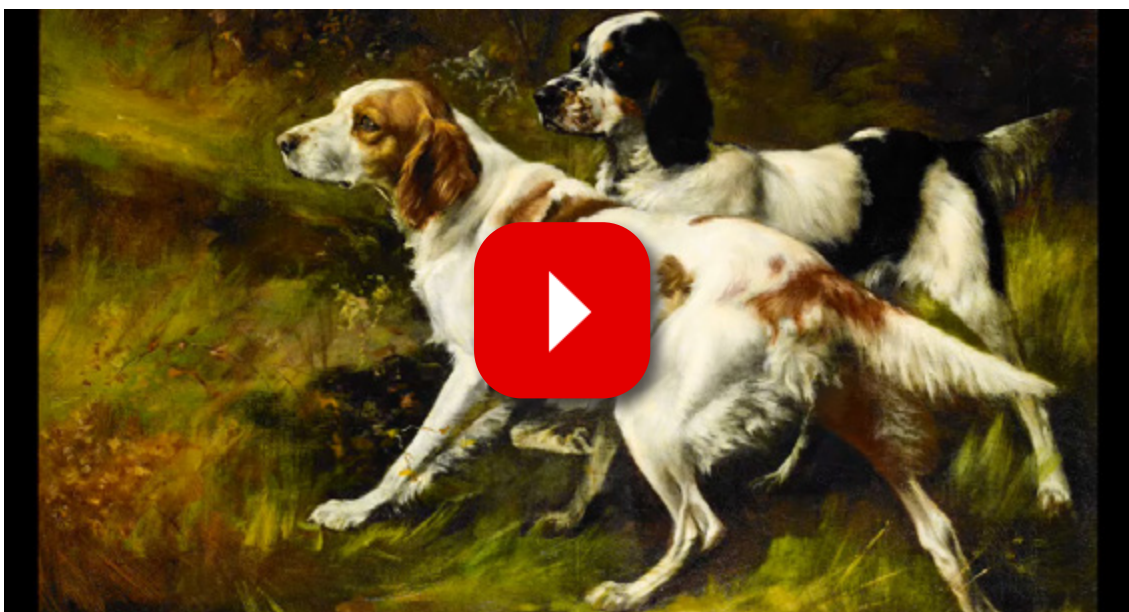
A local news team visits Gerard the Standard Poodle and breeder-owner-handler John Pittman (Gladystar). 3:27

VIDEOS



Whippeteers

From Better Breeder Chronicles, Justin and Cheslie Smithey discuss the Pinnacle Whippets' climb to the top. 44:50



Field Master

A GAZETTE slideshow gallery: The sporting dog paintings of Gustav Muss-Arnolt. 1:04

Elaine Lessig

Elaine Lessig's Roi L Cavaliers have produced champions in all four colors and both sexes. Her involvement in Cavs as a breeder, exhibitor, and judge has provided her with decades of adventures around the world, with stops at such far-flung places as China and Thailand.

She says, "Who would have thought that when I acquired my first Cavalier in 1987, my whole life would change?"

Lessig judged the Sporting Group at last month's Evansville KC show.

Watch full coverage of group and Best in Show at akc.tv.



BREED COLUMNS

Edited by **Arliss Paddock**

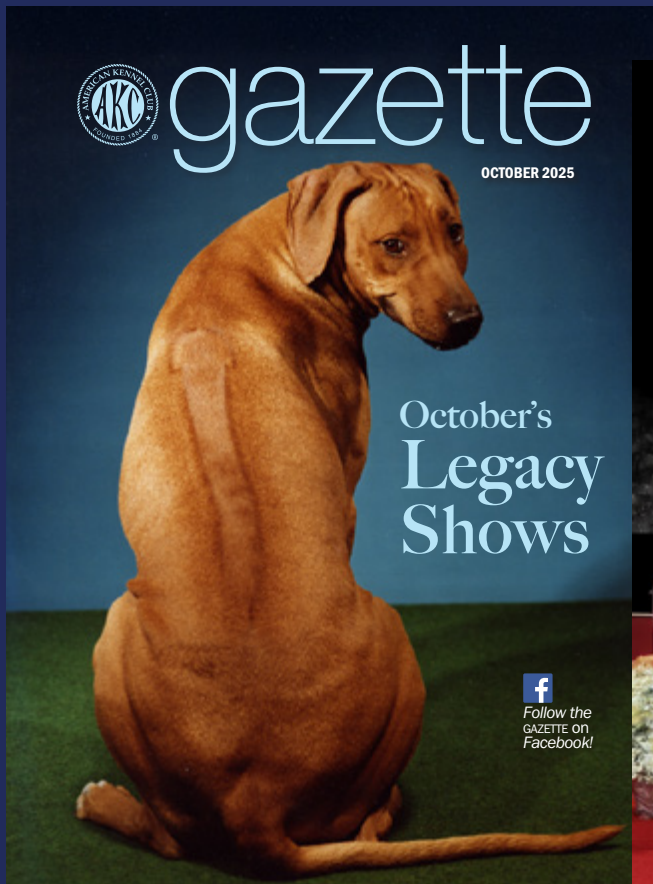


“Would you like an in-flight doggie treat?” In this month’s Newfoundland Club of America column, Katie Dolan writes about the growing market of dog-friendly airlines where dogs of all sizes can fly together in the cabin with their humans.

COURTESY KATIE DOLAN

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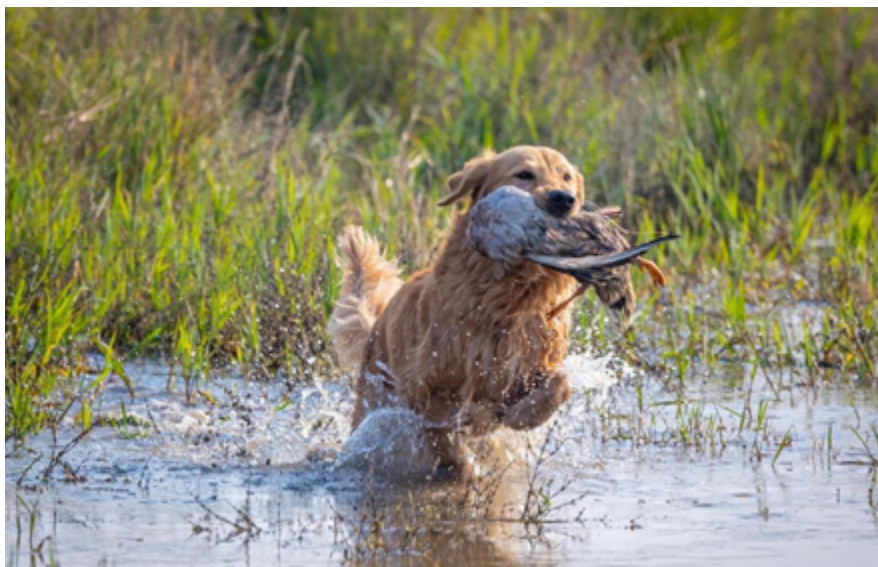
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BREED COLUMNS

ABOUT THE BREED COLUMNS

The breed columns are a time-honored feature of the AKC GAZETTE. Each columnist is appointed by the breed's national parent club, which preserves the breed's standard and helps to educate breeders, judges, and the public about the breed's traits, history, care, and training. A national parent club is made up of dedicated breeders and fanciers and represents many years of collective experience in the breed. Columnists are asked to write about topics of interest to serious dog fanciers in general as well as those of specific interest to judges and devotees of the breed. The breed columns rotate quarterly by group so that each breed's column can appear four times a year. Information and opinions expressed in the breed columns represent the views of their authors, not necessarily those of the breed's parent club or the AKC. For questions about the breed columns, e-mail Arliss.Paddock@akc.org



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Brittany

NOSE PRINTS

“How can you possibly see out of these windows?” enquired my better half. She had just slid into the front seat of the vehicle that my three Brittanys regard as their exclusive domain.

The reader needs to know that before my wife entered the car, I had quickly brushed all the loose, feathery, white dog hair from the seat with my orange ball-cap. I just knew Emma would not want it clinging to her coat and dress slacks.

I hoped she wouldn't notice the muddy paw prints on the seat, and as I brushed away the hair, I found myself wishing that I had a wet rag. No matter—she didn't mention them. But with her next statement I regretted that I hadn't used Windex to get rid of the smudges on the glass.

“I can't believe it!” she exclaimed. “This car has gone to the dogs, and I mean it literally. What filthy windows!”



With a bit of dry humor, I responded, “But dear, you know these are nose prints. See? This one in the top right-hand corner is Dewey's. And the one over there on the bottom, next to the side window, is Bear's. Oh, here's one of Herb's in the middle of the windshield.”

My wife was unimpressed. “What the devil are you talking about? Those are nothing but dirty smudges from your dogs. You can't tell me you know which of those marks were made by which dog.”

“Now wait a minute,” I persisted. “A dog's nose—and especially a Brittany's nose—is just like a person's fingerprint. Each is different and has its own distinguishing characteristics. My Brittanys all have different nose prints.”

“Rubbish!” said Emma. “You even have a smirk at the corner of your mouth. These are just filthy windows, and you're just making excuses for your dogs. You should have cleaned the glass before this.”

Then we both laughed.

COURTESY KATHLEEN RILEY

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But that was the first and last time my wife rode in the “dog car.” It was a good thing, because several weeks later, while I was discussing some business affairs in a local restaurant with my son, my Brittany Herb chewed the leather covering from part of the steering wheel. There was no sense in scolding him; the damage was already done. I had simply spent too much time talking to Dan, and Herb had become bored. Black electrician’s tape did a repair job that was just fine for the dog car.

This past year, in November, we donated this marvelous automobile to the National Kidney Foundation. The transmission was making funny noises, as were the brakes. As the tow truck rumbled down our driveway. I am absolutely sure I saw Dewey’s nose print illuminated by the sunlight on the front windshield. I allowed myself a moment of regret that the new Brittany pup, Addy, wouldn’t have the

chance to put her signature on the windows of the dog car. (D.A.W., 2017)

—David A. Webb,

davidawebb@aol.com

The American Brittany Club

German Shorthaired Pointers

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

“Undoubtedly selection and careful training has a lot to do with the shorthair’s performance. But the innate qualities of the breed play an important part, too. I for one, after considerable observation of the German shorthair pointer, am convinced the dogs are made for hunting. And made well, too.” —C. Blackburn Miller, from *German Shorthaired Pointer Activities*, editor George J. Ruediger—1953 National Breed Committee, German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America, Inc.

The AKC parent club for the German Shorthair was established in 1938, and according to director

Edward J. Loring, many months were spent on the breed standard—not for changes, but to clarify its reading for a more uniform interpretation by those judging the breed. It was the hope that this would provide consistency of type when judges selected their winners.

In his writings, Mr. Loring lamented that the judges either don’t know the breed or have not read the standard, and he questioned if there are other considerations that influenced a judge’s decision.

So what does all this have to do with “form follows function”? The Shorthair standard’s descriptions are predicated on the function required of a versatile hunting dog. The versatile or “utility” dog sought by the developers of the breed was one that could do multiple jobs, thus not requiring a pack of specialty dogs to be maintained.

Initially there were two dissenting groups:

There were the “form” breeders, aligned with Herrs

BREED COLUMNS

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Brandt and Samezki, who wanted nothing that didn't have the traditional German look and disdained any stock, in their opinion, with a "British look" (that is, with pronounced stop, small ears, and round eyes).

Then there was the "function" group, aligned with Prince Albrecht zu Solms-Braunfels and Baron von Zedlitz, whose adage was "Don't worry so much about looks but breed for the desired functions—and once those are set, through selective breeding the desired form/type would follow."

The "form" group was adamantly against any Pointer cross because of that breed's aversion to water retrieving and shyness in the face of predators, but the "function" group was not against the cross, because of the breed's good "nose." Once they came together, there was agreement not only on the dog's form but also in how best to test for its desired functions prior being used for breeding.

Before AKC recognition



German Shorthaired Pointer, August 2024

of the breed's parent club in 1938, there was a 1935 standard used by AKC judges for the Shorthair classes. It was modeled after the 1902 German standard and subsequently used by the parent club for the 1946 standard revision mentioned above.

In 1963 the parent club was reorganized, with a 1976 standard revision done adding four disqualifications. In 1992 the revision added one sentence to the "Proportion" section. With each revision the committees understood the importance of maintaining relevance to the original

concept of the Shorthair as a versatile hunting breed.

A breed standard is more than a jigsaw puzzle where pieces are put together to produce a finished picture. Like a lovely profile on the stack, both lack the element of movement. To function as a versatile hunting dog, the Shorthair must have efficient, effortless movement to do his job; otherwise, like the jigsaw puzzle, the pieces will come apart with movement.

Thus the Shorthair standard is a balance of descriptive terms and understanding of the desired functions for the breed to be a versatile hunting dog.

—Patte Titus,

chexsix@mac.com

[German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America](#)

Chesapeake Bay Retrievers

**NATIONAL SPECIALTY SHOW
2025—OCALA, FLORIDA**

We only have one national specialty show a year. Our "native American breed" is

BREED COLUMNS

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extremely versatile, and the events held with our national show the diversified abilities of the Chesapeake Bay Retriever.

Our 2025 specialty, held in October, began with parent club field tests: Working Dog, Working Dog Excellent, and Working Dog Qualifying. The event was chaired by Kathy Luthy, and the results were as follows:

WD—22 dogs ran, 18 qualified

WDX—15 dogs ran, 5 qualified

WDQ—6 dogs ran, 3 qualified

Kathy reports, “It was an atmosphere of great camaraderie, where so many entrants just jumped in and helped without even being asked. I think even those who did not qualify had a great time.”

Agility followed the next day, on the Ocala Kennel Club showgrounds. There was an entry of 339 all-breed runs, including 11 Chesapeakes. The Highest Scoring Chesapeake in Trial went to GCh. MACH

Nuka Bay’s Deshka River Mexicana, BN, RE, MXC, MJG, XF, T2B, DJ, DN, TKI, CGC, bred and owned by Lynda Barber-Wiltse. Lynda reports: “[The trial] was well supported by the local agility community! Florida judge Gill Chapman provided well nested and flowing courses ... *plus* encouraged her students to enter the trial.”

Obedience and rally followed the next day in the outdoor rings. Warm weather (86 degrees, which meant mid-90s in the sun) did not help the qualifying rate, especially in obedience. There were 41 entries in titling classes, with only 10 qualifiers, and five absent, judged by Nancy Watson. Seven of the 10 qualifiers were in the Beginner Novice B Class. The High in Trial and High Combined awards went to Ch. Longmeadow Ms Sadie Says How You Be’s, UDX, PCD, OM1, BN, RM, SH, NAP, RATN, DN, CGCA, TKI, bred and owned by Laura Chambers, and owned and trained by

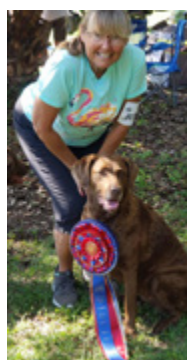
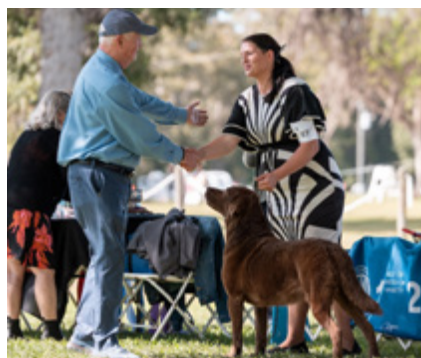
Beverly Matthias. Her scores of UB–192½ and OB–194½ totaled 387 points. Sadie repeated her win from 2024.

Rally entries totaled 45, with six absent and 32 qualifiers. High Triple was awarded to Ch. Laurelwood Living the Dream, CDX, BN, RM, RAE4, JH, FDC, BCAT, DS, HDN, TKI, bred by Laurea Griggs and owned/trained by Melinda Phillips. High Combined was awarded to GCh.G RACH2 Red Waters’ Iron Compass, CDX, BN, RM6, RAE4, RC, FDC, DCAT, DP, DEA, CGCA, CGCU, TKP, ATT, VHMA, bred by Bryan Boretsky and owned/trained by Sonia Cunningham.

One of the highlights of rally was the seven rally teams competing. First place went to the team that traveled the furthest—from Nuka Bay, Alaska. The team consisted of four Chesapeakes and two handlers who flew down to Florida for the specialty show. Rally was judged by Marlene Becker.

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Chesapeake Bay Retriever 2025 National Specialty—Best of Breed: Cota, owned by Melissa Schumann and handled by Devon Levy, shaking hands with judge Dr. Steve Keating; (2) Cota's Best of Breed win shot; (3) Best in Veteran Sweepstakes—Keagan, Doreen Palmer; (4) Best in Puppy Sweepstakes—Sandbar V NextGen Beckon Call, Devon Levy; (5) WD Sedgeblac's I'm Listening, CD, RN, NA, Melissa Moreno, handled by Joy Middleton; (6) WB and Best in Hunting/Field Sweepstakes—Lily, Dana Bleifer (with Devon Levy); (7) Highest Scoring Chesapeake in agility—Deshka, Lynda Barber-Wiltse; (8) Rally High Combined—Fisher, Sonia Cunningham; (9) Rally Highest Scoring Triple—Living the Dream, Melinda Phillips; (10) the winning state basket, from Virginia, sold for the highest amount ever!

COURTESY OWNERS / AMERICAN CHESAPEAKE CLUB

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The next day began with Puppy Sweepstakes, with 26 entered and 25 showing. The winner was Sandbar V NextGen Beckon Call, bred by Diane Baker/Adam Levy and owned by Adam Levy, Zachary Dinkel, and Devon Levy, and handled by Devon.

Veteran Sweepstakes followed with an entry of 11, with 10 exhibiting. The winner was GCh.B Eastern Waters' Wind on the Weskeag, VCD2, BN, RA, JH, XF, TKI, bred by Betsy Horn Humer and Rupe Humer, owned by Doreen and Gary Palmer, and handled by Doreen.

Doreen reports:

"Hard to believe our boy is 8 years old already. How exciting that he not only won his sweeps class but was chosen Best in Veteran Sweeps over a lovely group of veterans. Thank you to the show committee for putting on a wonderful NSS."

Hunting/Field Trial Sweeps had 26 entries, with 24 showing. The winner was Next Generations

Echo of Mercy, JH, bred by Jana Stadheim and Adam Levy and owned by Dana Bleifer and Adam Levy and handled by Dana. The sweepstakes competitions were judged by Mrs. Kathleen Luthy (Rippling Waters).

Class dog competition followed in the afternoon, judged by Dr. Steve Keating. There were 15 present. Winners Dog went to Sedgeblac's I'm Listening, CD, RN, NA, bred by Stephen Kasprzyk and Kimberly Hitt, DVM, owned by Melissa Moreno, and handled by Joy Middleton. She reports:

"Frasier earned his Rally Advanced title and also ran in agility and showed in Open A. He is my second Chessie, and he is a very easygoing guy who is up for anything."

Frasier went on to go Best of Winners the next day.

The next day began with judge Ms. Peggy Beisel-McIlwaine and an entry of 31 class bitches. Winners Bitch was awarded to

Next Generations Echo of Mercy, JH, who also won the Hunting/Field Trial Sweepstakes. She was handled by Devon Levy. Lily went onto go Best of Opposite Sex the next day over 27 bitch specials.

Junior Showmanship followed, with seven juniors competing in five different classes. Best Junior was awarded to Isabelle Muir from the Open Senior class, handling GCh. Whispering Oak No Place Like Home, JH, FTN.

Best of Breed judging began at 1 P.M., with Dr. Steve Keating officiating. There were 46 champions entered, and 40 competed. In addition there were eight winners from the Veterans classes, Hunting Retriever classes, and the Field Trial class.

Rising to the top award of Best of Breed for the second year in a row was GCh.P Next Generation's Accelerate, owned by Melissa Schumann; Dana Bleifer, DVM; Adam Levy; Dr. Katherine Scribner; and

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Dr. Trevor Gerardi-Miller; and handled by Devon Levy.

Melissa reports the following: “He has truly taken us on a ride of a lifetime, shattering and setting breed records and being an ambassador for the breed, sharing his Chessie hugs with one and all. What we love best, though, is his willingness and joy to do whatever the people he loves ask of him, as long as they join him on his journeys! Huge thank you to all 2025 NSS Committee members for putting on a friendly, fun, and completely enjoyable event! ... 2026 brings many exciting opportunities for Cota and the Team—He’ll get some time at home and in the field, and just maybe in the show ring a time or two, here and there.”

In addition to all the results above, we held a Top Twenty recognizing dogs who had achieved in both breed rankings and owner-handled rankings. The dogs were not judged but were honored with huge

rosettes and their story as each one gaited around the ring. It was an opportunity to see dogs from other parts of the country in a non-competitive, relaxed atmosphere.

Two seminars took place: “Breeding With a Vision,” and the Judges’ Education Seminar/Workshop. Six prospective judges attended the Seminar/Workshop, which was given by JEC Angie Cox and Betsy Horn Humer.

There were silent auctions each day to help finance the costs of putting on a national specialty. The dinner that follows the night after Best of Breed judging always has a live auction and additional silent auction. State baskets are the highlight, and this year there was also framed artwork of Chesapeakes that had been donated. The state basket going for the highest bid was an amazing collection of goodies from the state of Virginia. I was told this was a record bid for any state basket since we have started

this tradition.

Many thanks to the ACC chairpersons Lea Plaut, Karen Brown, and Steve Williams, and to those who chaired each event and everyone who worked behind the scenes.

The 2026 National Specialty will be held October 5–10 in Bennet, Colorado.

—Betsy Horn Humer,
tiderunnr2@verizon.net
American Chesapeake Club

Curly-Coated Retrievers

A VALUABLE RESOURCE

All lovers of Curly-Coated Retrievers are always looking for resources to research our breed. We are curious about ancestry, health, and titles, among other things. Wouldn’t it be great if this information were all in one place? Fortunately for the Curly world, there is a resource that houses a good amount of this data.

The Breed Archive for Curly-Coated Retrievers

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(<https://curlycoatedretriever.breedarchive.com/home/index>) has been just such a repository. Based in Austria since 2006, the Breed Archive is the caretaker of a wealth of information of Curlies. The information is loaded from a variety of sources, but the majority of the data is input by dogs' actual owners. It is truly an international storehouse with information about Curlies from almost all the countries where Curlies reside.

It is a great place to keep track of your dog's accomplishments. You can easily add any of the hundreds of titles our dogs earn as they earn them. Did your dog earn a title you don't see on the list? No problem! A title from any of the many venues we participate in can be added easily. In addition, if your dog attained an extra special honor (e.g., national specialty winner), you can include that here also. The Archive is a wonderful place to showcase your dog for others in our Curly family.

Are you thinking about



Curly-Coated
Retriever

breeding your Curly? The Archive is one of the best and easiest places to look for a stud dog. It maps out the potential dog's achievements and health clearances. It also can tell you the health clearances of ancestors, siblings, and other offspring—important considerations when picking a possible mate. The Archive is a great

place to start your breeding journey.

Perhaps it is time to add another member to your family. There are usually several litters to choose from at any given time. The Archive can help you make an informed decision as to which puppy might be the best fit for your program and your home.

COURTESY LYNDA BEAM

BREED COLUMNS

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Of course, any database is only as good as its input. Therefore, it is important that everyone in the Curly world supports the Breed Archive by putting their dogs and all the information pertaining to their dogs in this vital resource. The continuing strength of our breed depends on having the most data points for each dog to point us in the right direction to have the soundest, mentally and physically, dogs we can produce.

I urge everyone to browse the Breed Archive. In fact, here is the link to one of my dogs, to give you an example of what the Archive looks like: <https://curlycoatedretriever.breed-archive.com/animal/view/jollycurl-brio-brisbane-royal-9358b342-188e-4794-8fc7-53be9b846273>.

It is great fun to search special dogs in your own Curly's pedigree and see a detailed background. It is also interesting to track down famous dogs from the past and see what they did and how they came to be.

Enjoy!

—Ellen Manes,

jollycurl54@gmail.com

Curly-Coated Retriever
Club of America

Golden Retrievers

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

What precedes the writing of an AKC standard, the document that puts into words the essence and details that make a breed distinct from others?

There are two primary considerations when a standard is devised:

- the purpose of the breed, and
- the geographic and cultural context underlying that purpose.

Purpose can be defined simply as the job that the original creators or developers of the breed wanted the dog to do. This would include specifics of the stock that it was to herd or guard, the game that it was to find or retrieve, or the culture and lifestyle of the humans it was to amuse.

Context includes the ter-

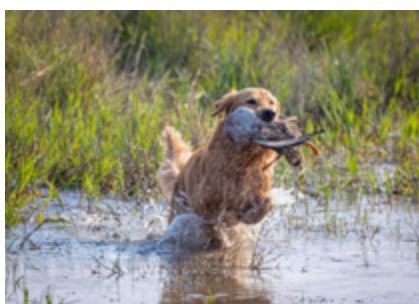
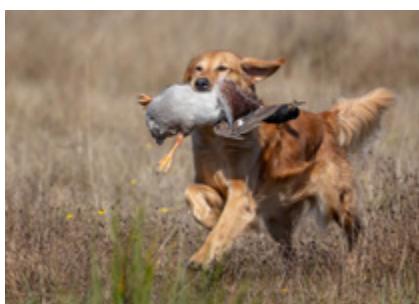
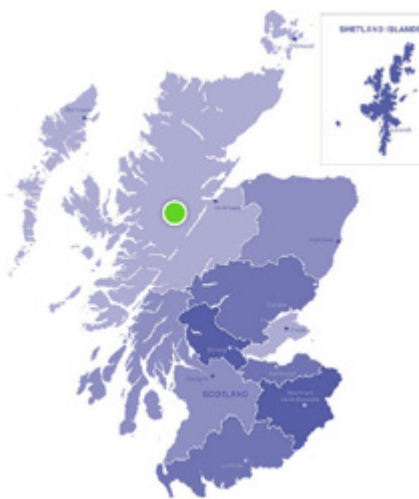
rain, climate, vegetation, and whether it was a breed that would live in the city or country, in a palace or on a farm, to name a few of the items that build a breed's context.

In the first paragraph of the Golden Retriever standard (the paragraph that gives the general appearance and overall "picture" of each breed), there is a crucial sentence that begins: "Primarily a hunting dog ..." This is the purpose of the Golden. While the breed is an excellent companion, show dog, and star competitor in many events, the breed's purpose has not changed since its development. Its intended purpose was to pick up game that was shot by wealthy sportsmen and women during hunting parties, and to eventually be the favored family hunting dog of local residents in the rural villages that put meat on the table.

The context of the Golden Retriever begins with one man, Dudley Marjoribanks (Lord Tweedmouth), in

BREED COLUMNS

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Henry Edward, Fifth Earl of Ilchester, with Ada, from the first Golden Retriever litter, born in 1868; map of Scotland showing location of Guisachan, where the breed originated; the house on the Guisachan estate; Golden retrieving a duck on land; retrieving in water; holding the bird.

the Highlands of northern Scotland, beginning in 1868. Lord Tweedmouth had a vision of a hunting retriever for an extreme climate (very close to the North Sea) with harsh vegetation and rocky hills, requiring specific coat texture, leg length, head, balance of angulation, power and agility. These traits were sought after and

perpetuated within the context of a huge estate called Guisachan to create what we know as the Golden today.

There are other breeds from northern Scotland that also have specific details in their standards that match their purpose. Within the same context of their rugged Highland birthplace, crucial differences arise based on

the specific job each breed was meant to do. Consider these breeds and see if you can visualize the similarities of context (coat to match Scotland's climate, and sturdiness to match the terrain) as well as the differences related to purpose (such as size, proportion, and head type):

- Gordon Setter—finding

COURTESY NANCY TALBOTT

BREED COLUMNS

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game birds

- Scottish Deerhound—hunting deer
- Scottish Terrier—exterminating vermin
- Cairn Terrier—exterminating vermin
- Skye Terrier—exterminating vermin
- West Highland White Terrier—exterminating vermin
- Collie—herding sheep
- Bearded Collie—herding sheep
- Shetland Sheepdog—herding sheep

(Note: there were apparently a *lot* of vermin and sheep on the farms of 19th-century northern Scotland!)

Finally, a comparison of the six AKC recognized retrievers shows how context and purpose defined the essence of breed type described in their standards:

- Chesapeake Bay Retriever—developed to retrieve waterfowl from the cold Chesapeake Bay for market hunters in all seasons, and to act as a guardian of the hunter and

his family;

- Curly Coated Retriever—the first officially recognized retriever breed, developed in the southern half of England as a premier upland and waterfowl dog;

- Flat Coated Retriever—used by gamekeepers on large estates throughout England to retrieve upland birds and waterfowl;

- Golden Retriever—developed on a large estate in the Highlands of northern Scotland as retrievers of primarily upland birds, but also waterfowl;

- Labrador Retriever—descended from the St. John's Water Dog of eastern Canada, but developed in the United Kingdom as primarily a water retriever (birds and fishing nets) while also a competent upland game dog; and

- Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever—a retriever of a very different purpose (the “tolling” or luring of ducks toward a net or gun through antics mimicking a fox’s behavior along the shoreline), developed in Nova

Scotia, Canada.

Golden Retrievers, primarily hunting dogs, are “eager, alert, and self-confident,” with the physical characteristics and athleticism of a valuable companion afield. To downplay the history of a breed for whim or personal preference does it a tragic disservice.

Celebrate and cherish the context and purpose that define our wonderful breed!

—Nancy Talbott,

belgoldnt@gmail.com

[Golden Retriever Club of America](#)

Labrador Retrievers

LABS AND KIDS: IT'S GREAT TO BE EIGHT

Children are generally recognized to be capable of a more mature relationship once they reach the age of about 8 years. Eight-year-olds are allowed to participate with their dogs in 4-H events. At 9 years, children are eligible for the AKC's Junior Showmanship program. Generally kids from

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the age of 9 and up are good candidates for attending obedience classes with their dog, as well as potentially being ready for competition in different venues.

This age milestone is generally the result of emotional and physical growth that make children in this age group more effective as trainers and more reliable as caretakers than younger children. Children around 8

years old are more capable of understanding thoughts and feelings from the dog's perspective. This age group also behaves in a more predictable way that is not as likely to make dogs uneasy. They are also generally large enough to have an "adult like" presence, if not the physical strength to control a large animal.

While many training organizations are reluctant

to include children in their classes, it has been my experience that children at this age are often better students than adults. They are used to learning in school and aren't as likely as adults to have to "unlearn" old habits. When young people are motivated, they are capable of applying themselves and improving their training techniques. Adults who can't focus on their dogs long enough to be effective trainers rarely improve.

Family dogs who might have been accustomed to tolerating the child as a peer may need to undergo a reset of their perspective as the child asserts leadership through training. In our household it has been interesting to watch the "old salts" tutor my daughter (age 9) in her role as handler in classic obedience, agility, and fieldwork. They clearly find her much more interesting now that she has a more active place in their lives. The young dogs, which have never known her as

DAVID WOO ©AKC

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anything but a leader, are even more receptive and are keenly interested in what she wants to teach them. These observations have reinforced for me the motivation so many families have to start with a puppy, especially once the children in the family reach the magical age of 8.

The recognized benefits of raising children with pets continue to grow. Pet ownership is attributed to enhancing everything from allergen tolerance to making kids smarter. In my opinion, the largest benefit comes from the opportunity to practice nurturing skills. Social individuals naturally want to reciprocate when they are nurtured. A child might not be able to take care of the adults in their lives much, but the family Labrador will always soak up any kindness it is offered.

With their high desire to please, low aggression, and tolerant attitude, Labrador Retrievers continue to be popular dogs for families with children. A survey conducted by Petplace.

com asked 450 owners of Labrador Retrievers if they felt the Labrador was a good breed for families with children. Ninety-nine percent of the respondents agreed—the highest percentage of endorsement of any of the other breeds surveyed.

While Labrador Retrievers might be good for kids, it is important to remember that children are good for Labradors, too. Clubs should make support for junior participation a priority. The most progressive clubs will seek to recruit the next generation of fanciers from beyond those affiliated through their parents. Fresh hobbyists could be nurtured through support of 4-H or scout programs, local trainers, or obedience clubs. Outreach and making experts available for demonstrations, consultation, or judging are ways to encourage new members and build long-term support for the breed we love. —Lee Foote, 2012

[The Labrador Retriever Club](#)

Gordon Setters

GORDONS IN THE FIELD—SOME HISTORY

Before there was ever a dog show, there were Gordon Setters working in the field—or more precisely, on the moors in Scotland. And when there are two or more people with dogs, what is sure to follow is best described by the refrain from the old Ken-L Ration dog-food TV jingle from years ago: “My dog’s better than your dog ...” Welcome to field trials.

The first recorded field trial was held at Southill, England, north of London near Cambridge in April 1863 and was limited to setters only. First prize was awarded to Dandy, a setter from Gordon Castle breeding owned by Mr. J.N. Fleming. Second prize was awarded to another Gordon Setter, Old Moll, owned by J.A. Handy, and third prize went to Rowland, owned by Major Elwond—still another Gordon.

Thanks to the Civil War and its aftermath, it took the

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idea of field trials a bit of time to work its way across the Atlantic. The first record of trials in the U.S. comes from the National American Kennel Club stud book Vol.1, published in St. Louis in 1879. It covers the period from 1870 through 1879. This group is not to be confused with the current AKC. This group was folded into the Chicago Field, which eventually became The American Field and is now a part of the UKC.

The following description is from the 1939 GSCA yearbook citing the report:

“Among the trials reported in this volume was that of the first field trial in America, held in Memphis, Tennessee, by the Tennessee Sportsman’s Association on October 8, 1874. The dogs were run on a point system for merit and demerit. A black setter, Knight, owned by Mr. H.C. Pritchitt (or Prichard), was the winner with 88 points.”

The first dog listed as a Gordon Setter to win a field trial came in December



Dual champion Gordon Setter on point

1879 at the inaugural trial hosted by the Eastern Field Trial Club at Robins Island, New York. It was a brace of Gordons, Ned and Glen, owned by Dr. H.F. Aten, who were first of five braces entered. The following year, at the same trial Glen is listed as tying for a divided third in an all-age stake with a Pointer named Sensation—the same Pointer who today serves as the logo of the Westminster Kennel Club.

The forerunner of the GSCA, The American Gordon Setter Club, ran

two trials, one in 1893 and another in 1894. Per *The Complete Gordon Setter*, by Jean Look, and a follow-up letter from Ms. Look after its publication, low entries and poor performance meant that they were the only two trials held by that club. Personal notes from the late George Pugh confirmed the quality of the performances.

Also from George Pugh, the first-ever stake limited to Gordon Setters was in December 1890, hosted by the Central Field Trial Club of Lexington, North

COURTESY JAMES THACKER

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Carolina. The four placements went to Bendigo, Beaumont, Gordo, and Mont. There was not a second one, and Gordons faded into the background in trials.

With any of these dogs mentioned, an argument can be made that they were not true Gordon Setters by today's definitions. Most had "native" setters close up in their pedigrees. And to be fair, at that point in time it was performance and not pedigree that mattered. That said, they are listed in the "official" records as Gordons.

In 1921 Dr. A.P. Evans began his kennel of Gordons, Svane Gordon Setters, mostly with imports from Norway and Denmark. In 1922 Svane June was whelped, and five years later she began a remarkable career in trials.

The first trial held by the GSCA was in 1928, and Svane June finished third in the all-age stake, but she came back at the second GSCA trial in 1929 to claim

first in the all-age stake. (Those trials were not AKC trials.) Over the next several years she ran in numerous shooting club trials and completed her career in 1929 and 1930, with three wins in all-age stakes of over 20 entries each.

Her daughter, Svane June's Baby, picked up where her mother left off and won a number of trials before her career was ended by the start of World War II.

If one is looking for the first Gordon Setter as we know them today to win a field trial, then Svane June probably holds that distinction from her win in 1929.

When the GSCA was formed in 1924, most trials were at local shooting clubs along the East Coast, and Gordons were active in those trials. AKC field trials began in 1924, with the first one hosted by the English Setter Association of America. It took seven years for the second AKC trial, and the GSCA and the Irish Setter Club of America co-hosted it in New Jersey in 1931.

After the War

Following World War II, Gordon field trials began again in 1949. Anyone with any experience was out of the picture after a 10-year gap, so there was a learning curve. The first one, now run under AKC rules, was in New Jersey in the spring and open only to Gordons.

From Jean Look's book: "Goodness knows there was nothing professional about the first trial. No one was quite sure what to do or where to go. The young dogs chased each other madly; the birds they found just as madly. Several dignified, well trained gun dogs with their dignified and kindly owners proceeded to show us how it should be done."

Things improved quickly, and within three years there were 12 trials, all in the New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania area. The Gordons only limit was replaced by setters only in 1952, and by 1955 the trials were open to all pointing breeds. One dog, Page's Shuriridge Liz, owned by

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Jack Page of Connecticut, dominated the scene in the 1950s, with over 100 placements, more than 75 of them in American Field competition.

By the end of the 1950s trialing eased a bit, but in 1966 a major change occurred when AKC rules were altered to allow for horseback handling. All trials to that point in time had been foot handled only. With that change, professional trainers and handlers became much more common, and performances improved. Within two years of allowing horseback handling, the number of AKC pointing-breed trials more than doubled, to 450.

Gordon Setter trials began in 1968 in California and grew quickly in numbers and quality, thanks in large part to Alec Laurence and Norm Sorby with his Springset Gordon Setters. In the 1970s the quality and number of Gordons running in California was unequaled elsewhere.

With that success, the

offspring from those dogs worked their way East, and when bred to the Eastern lines of Gordons, things improved from coast to coast. Even if not breeding to the California dogs, their performances encouraged others to put more emphasis into their own breeding programs and into training. It was a win for everyone.

Trials resumed in the Midwest in 1976 under the Mid America Gordon Setter Field Trial Club—first in Illinois, then Winimac, Indiana, and then to Killdeer Plains in Ohio. That club ran American Field Trials, then AKC trials under the GSCA banner, and finally merged into the Miami Valley Gordon Setter Club of Ohio.

The Mid America group hosted the first-ever classic stake for Gordon Setters under American Field rules in Winimac in the spring of 1980, a precursor to a championship stake. It was won by DC and AFC Shadowmere Scylla Savoy, owned by Barbara Burgess,

Bruce Elliott, and Jim Thacker of Ohio, and handled by Jim Basham. The winner was a clear example of the bicoastal breeding mentioned above. Her sire was a top show dog from old Eastern gundogs lines, Ch. MacNeal of Ellicott. Her mother was a top-winning field trial dog from California, Fld and AFC Springset Ladybug, CD.

Norm Sorby and a crew from California made the trip east for that trial, bringing dogs with them.

This group also hosted the first-ever Championship Stake for Gordons under American Field Rules at Killdeer Plains in 1981, with no title awarded. The following year at Killdeer Plains, Field Ch./AFC Belmor's Pretty Belle, owned by Dr. Joel and Barbara Morris of Maryland, put on a masterful performance to become the first Gordon to win an American Field championship stake—one of many wins for Belle in this period.

Later the Miami Valley group hosted the

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first GSCA National Championship and Amateur Championship at Killdeer Plains in Ohio in April 1993. Field Ch. Belmor's Knight Train, owned by the Morrises and handled by Jim Basham, won the championship stake, while Field Ch./AFC Shadowfax Blade Runner, owned by Cliff Schnepf of Florida and Jim D'Amico of New Jersey, won the amateur championship, handled by Jim D'Amico.

After two years of running under the GSCA banner, the first-ever AKC National Championship and Amateur Championship for Gordons was held in Wye Island, Maryland, in 1995. Shadowfax Blade Runner won the championship stake, while Field Ch./AFC Pal Joey, owned by Marianne Goodwin of Pennsylvania and Jim D'Amico of New Jersey, won the amateur championship.

The championship stakes traveled around a bit, stopping in Michigan, Ohio, Connecticut, California, and

Washington before settling down to its current home of more than a few years at the Bechtel Ranch in Kansas.

As is often the case, old things have a way of coming back into style, and that holds true for foot-handled field trials as well. They have seen a resurgence in the last 15 years as the expenses of horse-handled trials have risen. The first Walking National Shooting Dog championship for Gordons was held in 2018 in Viola, Delaware, at the Norman G. Wilder Wildlife Area. FC Prairie Star Outwit Outlast Outplay won the inaugural championship. The Gordon was owned by Marianne Gasaway of Iowa. In recent years the championship has been held at the Ionia Wildlife Area in western Michigan. There are now several walking trials hosted by the GSCA on an annual basis.

—James Thacker,
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Gordon Setter Club of
America

Irish Setters

A JOURNEY IN IRISH SETTERS

Recently I became acquainted with a young family showing their Irish Setters. Being aware of dog show entries being on the decline, I approached the family to find out what had sparked their interest in the sport. Hopefully, I could learn what had enticed them to enter shows. Charity was happy to share. Following are questions presented to her.

How did you become interested in Irish Setters?

Charity is a vet tech. She had seen a number of Irish Setters over the years and decided it was an ideal breed for her family. She is aware of health testing and set out to obtain an Irish from a reputable breeder. The Irish pup was named Merida.

How did you become interested in Irish Setter sports?

It was suggested to Charity that Merida was not conformation quality. Charity didn't give up. She studied

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Charity and daughter Hannah with Irish Setters; Hannah with Irish Setter pup

the breed to see what Irish Setters were bred to do. She set out to become involved in other dog events. Merida excelled. Charity always wanted to show in conformation. Sadly, Charity was discouraged on social media from showing Merida

in conformation—some positive, and some not so. Fortunately for all of us, rather than be discouraged, Charity set her sights on finding an additional puppy. This time she was better equipped for researching breeders.

How did you move into conformation competition?

In searching for a breeder of conformation Irish Setters, Charity found a breeder who had kept a male pup for herself. They discussed Charity's desire but inexperience with a conformation dog. The breeder took a gamble and sold Charity the pup.

Charity jumped in with both feet. She started learning to groom and attending handling classes. Wonderfully, Charity has finished her first champion with that male dog (much to her thrill, the thrill of the breeder, and the excitement of her family).

How did your young daughter become interested in showing?

Charity's daughter, Hannah, loves animals and was observing her mom at handler class. Hannah asked if she could show in conformation too. The handler instructor overheard the conversation and jumped right in. The instructor

COURTESY CHARITY GLASER, MELIA PHOTOGRAPHY, AND SHAWINA DRISKILL

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encouraged Hannah and discussed junior activities in conformation. This was something Charity and Hannah could do together. A fun note, Hannah recently put the final points on a friend's dog to achieve that dog's Grand Championship.

Attending your first national specialty in 2026, what drew your interest?

Charity recognizes she does not see many Irish in her area. She traveled a bit this year and was able to see a specialty with a larger entry. The thrill of seeing so many Irish in one place was amazing. The national specialty will allow her to learn more about the breed from a larger number of people in one place. She is also looking forward to meeting more people that own her beloved breed.

Charity is the perfect Irish Setter owner—a true example of not becoming discouraged by a dog's limitations. She aspires to do therapy dog work. She has attended field trials, hunt

tests, scent work, Fast CAT, and CGC titles as well as conformation. One main goal is learning to better the breed.

Takeaways: We all need to take every effort to encourage and not discourage. We don't know how interested a newbie in our sport may be. Each new member makes us all stronger as a fancy.

There are so many things we can do with Irish Setters. Being a versatile breed, there is almost nothing they cannot do. Not only are they an ideal family dog, but they are also a very intelligent breed. They excel in obedience and agility trials, they love the field and hunt tests, they are a wonderful therapy dog, and not to be left out, they excel in the conformation ring. Kudos to Charity and her family for being able to focus on all the rounded aspects of the Irish Setter.

Speaking for myself and some well-known breeders of old who are personal friends, none of us started with a stellar conformation

candidate. Together we are stronger.

—Dawn Secord,
Westminster, Texas;
DawnSecordArtist@gmail.com

[Irish Setter Club of America](#)

Irish Red and White Setters

ALL THE IRISH RED AND WHITE SETTERS ARE 15/10!

Have you seen those T-shirts or stickers that say “tell your dog I said hi”? The results are videos of owners returning home to tell them, “Someone said to say hi to you!” The dogs' happy, excited reactions are posted across social media. Such a sweet sentiment to share with your beloved pet.

Matt Nelson, the founder of popular social media account [We Rate Dogs \(https://weratedogs.com\)](https://weratedogs.com), started out with a post “All the dogs were good this week.” He posts photos of dogs where he usually gives each a rating over 10—as reflected in the name of the

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Irish Red and White Setters at the big shows: Morris & Essex—in the outdoor ring (photo: Keith Eldred); Chris and Tami Orcutt with Thorn and Quill (Keith Eldred); Corlie Eldred and Bree (Keith Eldred). At the National Dog Show in Philadelphia—Tippy greeting visitors in the benching area (Tammy Ciesla); sweepstakes judge Jerome Elliot looks over entries in the ring (Maura Waters Brady).

account's related charity, the 15/10 Foundation, which sponsors shelter dogs that have behavioral or medical issues. The account is a fun way to help dogs in need, and bragging rights alone are priceless.

So, with that: All the Irish Red and White Setters were

good in 2025. They were busy, especially at home with chores, morale, training, and entertainment. Some are competing in all types of local, area, and national events.

We asked for information from the big shows. This is what we received.

Westminster—February 8, 2025. Six entries. Best of Breed, Brannigan, age 6. Owner Mary Wagner says he has an excellent temperament and is people friendly. Going from show to field to couch, his favorite place is outdoors. In 2026 he will work on field titles and go

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to the national specialty as a veteran.

Morris & Essex, October 1, 2025—Twenty-nine entries. A special event held every five years and known for elegance, glamour, box lunches, and the world's finest show dogs. Period dress is encouraged for participants. An IRWSAA supported specialty. Best in Specialty winner, Fallon, age 12, owned by Rachel/Lindsay/Wendy Bockman. Fallon won BISS at the previous M&E show—both times from the Veterans class. A multiple group-winning and three-time national-specialty Best of Breed winner, named 2025 number 1 show dog and number 9 in breed standing. She loves hunting as much as show rings. Fallon is a big personality wherever she goes.

Philadelphia Dog Shows, November 14, 15, & 16, 2025—Friday: National specialty, 22 entries. Best of Breed, Cole, owned by Mary O'Leary. He is a sweet 3-year-old registered ther-

apy dog. In 2026 he plans to work on other titles. His training club offers Fast CAT, agility, obedience and rally trials. He finished 2025 number 1 in all-breed standing, number 3 in breed standing.

Saturday: The National Dog Show, 18 entries. Best of Breed, Porter, owned by Deb Peterson and Gail Harrison. He ended 2025 as the number 1 IRWS in breed standing with limited showing. His 2026 schedule is specialties and starting scent work. Porter, at 2.5 years, is a true people lover. He absolutely loves to be out in the snow!

Sunday, with eight entries, was Abbott's turn for Best of Breed.

Orlando AKC National Championship, December 14, 2025—Eight entries. Best of Breed, Abbott, age 3, owned by Pam and Eric Sommers and Deb Peterson. He is 2025 number 2 IRWS in breed standing. Pam says, "When I look at the standard and the word 'athletic,' I think of a compact, stocky,

muscular dog who is agile, can play or work all day long without tiring. That is Abbott." He loves show life, showing often in 2023, 2024, and 2025. In 2026 he will turn his attention to scent work. A natural, he caught on quickly.

Our lovely breed is unique in their grace, beauty, sweet disposition, friendliness, and athleticism. We are blessed to have dedicated breeders working to keep and build strong pedigrees. Irish Red and White Setters are a rare breed, almost lost at one time.

While it is wonderful to highlight top performers, remember that all the IRWSs were good this year. We rate them all 15/10.

—Cynthia Lancaster,
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Irish Red and White Setter
Association of America

Clumber Spaniels

VALUE ADDED?

People often ask me, "What's the difference between a show dog and

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just a pet? Aren't they from the same litter?" Yes, of course they are. So what is the breeder looking for? Something to keep? Likely. Something to campaign? Possibly. Definitely something that gets as close as possible to the standard.

This begins an entire conversation about what a "standard" is, and why it matters. Statistics are not available to quantify the dif-

ference in puppies produced and their eventual placement. Using round numbers of dogs shown (approximately five percent of puppies registered) versus assumed companion dogs, it would seem that statistically .04% of each litter is destined to become a show dog. Those numbers make no sense except to say that very few are bound for the show ring.

So how, then, are breeders marketing their puppies? And to whom?

Big, publicized show wins bring big demand for Clumber Spaniel puppies. They are positively adorable, of course, and good breeders do their darndest to inquire about potential new owner experience. Are you aware that they slobber, snore, eat inedibles, and have health concerns that can add up over a lifetime?

Once they are satisfied that this person might, indeed, have a suitable home for a Clumber, they might extoll the virtues of Grand Champion Platinum Bob and Champion Suzy, having amassed scores of specialty-show wins and others.

Bragging rights aside, what does this mean to the average companion home? Absolutely nothing, because they have no understanding of the context. Perhaps we would do well to think ahead to the vast majority of each litter that is destined for something else: a loving companion to have a lifetime

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of fun with and enjoy.

Enter performance and companion events—the bridge between the conformation world and companion communities.

Many breeds have a split between “show type” and “working type.” Thankfully Clumbers in the U.S. do not and hopefully never will. Yes, Clumbers can “do it all”—but can yours? Where is the proof for prospective purchasers? They might be impressed to know that GCh. Bob also has a CGC and a Fast CAT title, or perhaps something related to field work. These are areas that companion dog owners would be interested in pursuing at some point if they are encouraged by the breeder—and so much better if the parents of their future puppy have already proven themselves in such activities. Surely every Clumber is capable of earning at least a CGC or Novice Tricks title, because those activities are simply polite behavior. These are wonderful ways to build a

working relationship with new puppy owners and brag on your own smart crew as well. None of these events is difficult, expensive, or in some cases, even time-consuming, since some are offered in conjunction with shows, and you’re already there!

Other venues such as obedience and scent work take time and training, but perhaps you can help your puppy folks get their feet wet here, since it’s hard for them to get involved in a sport they know little about. They will lean on your advice and expertise—again solidifying the relationship between the two of you. And isn’t that the mark of a “good” breeder?

Accomplishments in these areas add value to your already fabulous puppies, as well as identifying you as a breeder who cares about the welfare and happiness of *all* puppies placed from your kennel. It brings new folks into the wonderful world of canine events as well, and that can only be of benefit to

the fancy at large.

Ready, set, go!

—Norma Simpson,

Clumber1@hughes.net

Clumber Spaniel Club of America

Cocker Spaniels

**THE COCKER SPANIEL HEAD:
THE “STOP” IS A CRUCIAL
MEASURING POINT—FULL
STOP**

We check our foundation, the breed’s AKC standard. From the section on the Head, in part:

“To attain a well-portioned head, which must be in balance with the rest of the dog, it embodies the following: [...] Skull—Rounded but not exaggerated with no tendency towards flatness; the eyebrows are clearly defined with a pronounced stop. The bony structure beneath the eyes is well chiseled with no prominence in the cheeks. The muzzle is broad and deep, with square even jaws. To be in correct balance, the distance from the stop to the tip of the nose is one half the distance from the stop up

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Cocker Spaniel, May 1932
(Tauskey photo)

over the crown to the base of the skull.”

Note that a dictionary definition of the word *pronounced* says it means “very noticeable,” “distinct or marked,” “conspicuous,” and “unmistakable.”

Contrast the Cocker Spaniel standard to the English Cocker Spaniel standard, which provides in the Head section: “Skull—Arched and slightly flattened when seen both from the side and from the front. [...] Stop definite, but moderate, and slightly grooved.”

Going further into the descriptive components of

the Cocker Spaniel’s stop, we note that *stop* refers to the indentation or angle change between the skull and the muzzle, located between the eyes. It serves as a key indicator of breed type and head structure.

The Illustrated *Blue Book*, *The Study of the Cocker Spaniel* of the American Spaniel Club states in part:

“The head of the Cocker Spaniel is a thing of beauty and a trademark of the breed ...” A well-chiseled head is an important element of Cocker type. The muzzle is broad and deep, with square, even jaws. To be in correct balance, the distance from the stop to the tip of the nose is one-half the distance from the stop up over the crown to the base of the skull. The muzzle must be in balance with the head. A muzzle too short or too long is not correct. The muzzle should not drop off at the end, creating a “Roman nose,” nor should it have a scooped-out appearance, with the nose appearing high (dish-faced).

In addition to the above explanation and amplification, the American Spaniel Club, Inc.’s “A Study of the Cocker Spaniel,” copyright 2023, has illustrations (drawings) of the Cocker Spaniel’s head as described in the AKC standard and a diagram showing the measurement of muzzle and the line up over the crown using the stop as the key measuring point.

We can conclude that the stop on the Cocker Spaniel head is the key measuring point to determine the head proportions; the length of muzzle in relation to the distance up over the crown of the skull to the base of the skull at the back of the head.

—Kristi L. Tukuia,
columnist

[American Spaniel Club](#)

English Cocker Spaniels

2026 ENGLISH COCKER

SPANIEL NATIONAL SPECIALTY:

“MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS”

This month we have a guest columnist, Joyce Winkels, to let everyone

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know about the breed's national specialty coming up next month.

The English Cocker Spaniel Club of America will be holding our 85th national specialty show at Purina Farms, in Gray Summit, Missouri, May 1–8. It will be not only the 80th anniversary of the recognition by the AKC of the English Cocker Spaniel as a breed separate from the American Cocker Spaniel, but also the 90th anniversary of the founding of the English Cocker Spaniel Club of America. Our talented show committee, headed by Cindy Anderson, has worked hard to put together this very special and memorable celebration of our breed.

We start off with the Working Dog Test on Friday, May 1, at Rustic Farms, in Tibbetts, Missouri, followed by two days of hunt tests. Our tracklayers will be busy at work on Sunday, laying tracks for the tracking test on Monday. Monday is move-in day and



The 2026 ECSCA National Specialty is in St. Louis May 1–8.

our traditional evening welcome reception.

Tuesday's regional specialty will see the expertise of judge Doug Johnson presiding over our entry.

On Wednesday, the Puppy and Veteran Sweepstakes classes will be judged by longtime breeder-exhibitor Sally Rosenthal.

On Thursday, the start of our regular classes will be judged by another longtime breeder-exhibitor, Sue Dwelly.

Throughout the week we will have agility, rally, obedience, and scent work trials. A Barn Hunt trial will be included, too. Participation

in these events will determine our National Performance Challenge winner. The National Performance Challenge celebrates and showcases our breed's instinct, versatility, athleticism, and intelligence.

Our juniors and PeeWee judge is yet another English Cocker breeder-exhibitor/judge, and former top junior, Marissa Shepherd.

Additionally, we have health clinics planned that will offer cardiac, orthopedic, and laboratory screening exams. We will also be collecting DNA samples via cheek-swabs for participation in the OFA Data Bank. All breeds are welcome to participate!

Dr. Steven Friedenberg, of the University of Minnesota, is our featured speaker for our health seminar, who will discuss his research on immune-mediated hemolytic anemia (IMHA) as well as work on the spaniel genome study. (Dr. Friedenberg is looking for

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ECS 9 years and older who have not been diagnosed with IMHA to participate in his research on this condition, so please consider bringing your veterans along to participate in this important research!)

Our Eddy Award-winning Breed Education Committee will be on hand to conduct our judges' education seminar. An educational presentation for our membership is planned as well.

Whether it is watching our field events and seeing the dogs do what they were bred to do, or seeing them display their many talents in performance events, or admiring the beauty of the conformation dogs, there is something at the national for everyone!

So please, won't you, "Meet Me in St. Louis"?

—Joyce Winkels, ECSCA
2026 National Specialty
Co-chair

Thank you, Joyce!

—Beth Hendrick,

bhendrick@verizon.net

English Cocker Spaniel
Club of America

English Springer Spaniels

"THEY WALK ON THEIR HEADS": LOOK THROUGH THE EYES OF TWO RENOWNED JUDGES

Have you visited the HESSFTA website lately? Along with lovely images of our beautiful athletic breed, you will find hours of reading about why we have a "standard" of conformation. You can study how each definition of the best movement, shape, proportion, and overall picture is correct for a functional reason.

In their article "Ten Things You Need To Know About Judging English Springer Spaniels," breeder-judges Laurin Howard (Keswicke ESS) and Kathy Lorenzen (Ocoee ESS) dive into saying how and why correct form creates beautiful and functional excellence in our breed. If you have ever wished you could ask a Springer judge what they see that makes them pick a particular dog in the conformation ring, here's your

chance. Many thanks to judges Kathy Lorentzen and Laurin Howard for this amazing primer bringing our standard to life. Their insights follow.

"Size does matter. The ESS breed standard uses words and phrases such as 'sturdy,' 'muscular,' 'strong,' 'power,' and 'every inch a sporting dog.' The standard sets specific height-to-weight parameters: 'a 20-inch-tall dog, in good condition, will weigh approximately 50 pounds.' These parameters should be carefully considered when judging the breed. A 20-inch-tall dog that weighs 50 pounds will 'pick up heavy'—think of picking up a 50-pound bag of dog food. In many instances today, the breed is losing its sturdiness. Strong, but not excessively heavy; bone, properly shaped; oval ribs that carry well down to the elbow; broad, deep, muscular loins and wide, strong, well-muscled upper and lower thighs have given way to over refinement, lack of rib,

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and excessively narrow loins and thighs, creating dogs that completely lack the correct weight requirement for their height. While the breed should never be coarse or cumbersome, it certainly is critical that it retain the characteristics that make it a strong, athletic, active and vigorous hunting dog that is able to ‘go, and keep going, under difficult hunting conditions.’

“Renowned AKC judge and breeder Elliott Weiss coined the phrase ‘They do walk on their heads.’ What does that phrase mean? It means that while our breed may not be a ‘head breed,’ such as the Collie or the Bulldog, every requirement in the head section of the standard is there for a reason, and that reason is to help the dog fulfill its original purpose: finding, flushing and retrieving game. They do ‘walk on their heads’ when they hunt, because they use their eyes, ears, nose, jaws, and so on to do their job, and the more correct the head construc-

tion, the better the dog will sight, scent, and retrieve. Please read the extensive head section of our breed standard and make every effort to reward correct heads. Look for things such as deep set, forward placed eyes; well-developed eyebrows that are the highest point of the skull (the standard says flat on top, remember?); long, deep, broad forefaces with strong under-jaws, and parallel planes of the skull and foreface, with a nasal bone that is straight. (Enjoy more tips from Elliott Weiss

at <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/news/meet-the-best-in-show-judge-for-the-2018-akc-national-championship/>.)

“A correct front assembly is everything. (OK, almost everything!) The ESS standard calls for a well angulated front assembly: long, sloping shoulder blades that come fairly close together at the tips, coupled with a long upper arm that sets the elbows well back under the dog. Ideally, the elbow should be under the tip of the shoulder blades, and the neck and head



FIGURE 1 Correct Silhouette (ESSFTA.org)



FIGURE 2 Silhouette with many failings (ESSFTA.org website)

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should be out in front of that point. Far too many dogs of this breed today stand with their elbows under their ears, totally lacking the length and angle of the bones of the front assembly that, when correct, give this breed its easy, free ‘swing from the shoulder blade’ gait. Think the word ‘long’ when judging this breed: long head, long neck, long sloping shoulder blades and upper arms.

“The English Springer Spaniel should be upstanding with a good amount of leg length. Long legs. The breed should never be short legged or squatty. Long ribcage and short loin are the correct combination of body properties for this breed, giving it the correct upstanding, short-backed profile called for in the standard.

“Color matters, markings don’t. The standard is very brief on this subject. Black and white, white and black, liver and white, white and liver, with or without ticking and/or roaning, with or without tan markings.

That’s it, folks. There are no preferred or required marking patterns in this breed. Simply paint them all black (or white!) in your head and judge the dogs, not the external trappings. You can love the way a particular dog is marked, but you cannot award the dog on the basis of its markings. ...

“Coat condition matters. Coat quantity really doesn’t. Over the years, as in many other sporting breeds, the ESS has been bred to grow more and more coat. It is not the amount of coat that is important, but the condition of the coat. Some undercoat should be apparent, regardless of season or climate. Outer coat on the body should be firm and resilient, with a live, healthy, glossy appearance. The outer coat should lie flat to the ribcage, and it may be either straight or wavy. While the ESS should be ‘nicely furnished’ with feathering, an excessive amount is definitely not required. The standard is specific on this point: coat quality and

condition are to take precedence over quantity.

“Above all, the final appearance should be natural. The dog should look like its coat grew that way, not like it was barbered into existence. In many other breeds, grooming and trimming has advanced to quite an art form. Yet our standard states some specific requirements about trimming that should not be ignored by judges. It is certainly legitimate to trim the breed in a manner that enhances a ‘smart, functional appearance.’ Above all, the final appearance should be natural. The dog should look like its coat grew that way, not like it was barbered into existence.

“Topcoats should have length to protect the dog from the elements when working; they should not be scissored off to an inch in length! Outlines should be trimmed to give the dog an attractive, but natural silhouette, not trimmed with straight scissors like a paper cut out. Quote from the

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standard: ‘Over trimming, especially the body coat, or any chopped, barbered or artificial effect is to be penalized in the show ring, as is excessive feathering that destroys the clean outline desirable in a sporting dog.

“Croups, tail sets, and tail carriage. The only flushing spaniel that should carry its tail directly off the back with no slope to the croup is the Cocker Spaniel. The ESS croup should slope gently to the set on of the tail, and the tail should ideally be carried at 2–3 o’clock. Every other ESS breed standard in the world, except the North American ones, still calls for the tail to be ‘set on low.’ Tails in North America have gradually migrated upward in both set and carriage for many years, with the result that the pelvic slope has been drastically reduced. Opening the angle of the pelvis and femur creates structure that places the rear feet of the dog far out behind a line dropped from the point of the buttocks,

instead of placing the rear toes just behind that line. Changes caused by this pelvic slope are not simply aesthetic; instead, the results are rear legs that are not placed under the body at the correct point to support the dog’s center of gravity. This causes a change in proper movement from long steps on the ground to short steps on the ground with a lot of ‘kick’ in the air behind the dog.

“The ESS is an efficient trotting dog, capable of utilizing its legs at a trot for long periods of time on often difficult terrain when hunting. An efficient trotting dog keeps its legs on the ground for long periods of each stride. Feet only work when they are on the ground, propelling the body forward with power and ease. There is far too much lift and kick seen in the breed today. While it might *look* fancy and long strided, that sort of motion is totally incorrect because it expends far more energy than a stride that is long on

the ground. The ESS should swing its front legs forward from the shoulder blade, not pop them forward from the elbow. The only way this can be achieved is for the dog to have the correct length and angle of the bones of the front assembly. The hind-quarter provides the forward propulsion, and the longer that the rear foot stays on the ground, accompanied by the forceful opening of the hip, stifle and hock joints, the easier and more efficient the gait will be. Correctly built and muscled English Springer Spaniels should move freely and easily in a gait that seems effortless. Fast, choppy, short-stepping motion, or the high lifting and kicking motion also all too often seen, are both incorrect.

“All of the points discussed in this article come together in the overall silhouette and proportion. These two things are critical in the English Springer Spaniel. A well-proportioned dog, correctly built, properly angulated, free

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from exaggeration, with the right amount of bone and substance and the correct shape and length of head and neck, will present a clean, smooth, upstanding silhouette, combining the essential elements of both beauty and utility. Correct silhouette and proportion express the proper breed type of the individual dog. Always look for the outline that is represented in Figure #1 [see accompanying illustration]. Beware of the myriad failings of the outline in Figure # 2, though the dog might at first strike you as eye catching or fancy. The breed should carry its correct, upstanding outline and proportion when it moves. The head will (and should be allowed to, by the handler) go somewhat forward to assist in balance, but the dog should never sink to the ground or appear low in action.”

Study the many points of our breed standard at <https://englishspringerspaniels.org/akc-breed-standard/>. To understand the names of

bones and structures that the judge is examining in the ring, Stephanie Hedgepath’s “Form Follows Function” articles in *Show-sight* magazine are very educational and interesting (<https://show-sightmagazine.com/author/stephanie-hedgepath/>).

—Sarah Ferrell, Locust Grove, Va., author, *Devoted to Dogs: How to be Your Dog’s Best Owner*, <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063681811726>

English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association

Sussex Spaniels

SOCIALIZATION

One of the most important things in raising a Sussex puppy is socialization. This starts even before their eyes open, with holding, cuddling, and talking to them.

When they can see and hear, then it is important to have only trusted family members and close friends visit. People who you know aren’t carrying germs. They can do the same with cud-

dling and talking, and the different voices and smells are essential to helping a puppy experience new things.

It is important to have people sit on the floor so no puppy gets dropped, as Sussex puppies, while mostly content to snuggle, will sometimes take advantage of a momentary lack of attention to wiggle or squirm unexpectedly and be out of your arms in a second!

It is very important to keep puppies safe from exposure to other dogs and their people who may be carrying diseases such as distemper or parvo. Also, it matters where people walk, as they may bring in giardia, coccidia, or worm eggs on their shoes. It is my policy when puppies are young and not fully protected to have people remove their shoes before coming in the house, as I do myself.

When taking the puppies to the vet, I use a soft-sided wagon, and those puppy feet do not touch the floor there. I also bring a heavy towel or

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bathmat for the exam table, as I feel you can never be too careful.

After that very first important parvo shot, they can be loose on a mat or rug on the porch or in your own yard for learning about flying things like birds and butterflies and outside noises and sights. Of course, you must watch them every minute they are outside. Hawks, eagles, and owls may be watching too.

This is a great time to move the puppy gym outside and add tunnels and other interactive activities. Invite safe people to visit and play—and let the puppies be puppies, not “training” as such. Just let them enjoy themselves. Letting them drag a show lead around and then letting them lead you works best before trying to get them to walk where you want to go.

If you are lucky enough

to have a kennel club that offers puppy or conformation classes, or a show that has the 4–6 months puppy classes, these are super places to not only teach but to socialize a Sussex puppy. It is amazing how fast they will pick up new ideas and enjoy car rides and new places.

If possible, try outside shows first, as inside ones are noisier and more crowded. Think overhead doors and fans and air-handling units, plus people talking and the general noise of a dog show.

A great thing today is that you can find a dog show on TV or video and turn up the volume and get a puppy used to that noise at home! Years ago we would take a tape recorder to a show and get that all on tape and go home and play it for the puppies. Much easier today!

Breeders of Sussex are very good about encouraging socialization. We hope that the new owners follow through.

Enjoy a Sussex puppy

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while he or she is a puppy—time flies.

—Marcia Deugan,
ZiyadahReg@aol.com
Sussex Spaniel Club of
America

Welsh Springer Spaniels

WHAT IS YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN?

Recent bouts of severe weather across the country have prompted me to revisit a topic I wrote about early in my tenure as the Welsh Springer Spaniel breed columnist for the AKC GAZETTE: the importance of having an emergency plan.

Two years ago, I activated my emergency plan for the first time. Caught at work for a late-breaking meeting with a major nor'easter bearing down on Maryland, I left my office quite late and raced for the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. My regular dog show traveling companions and I were scheduled to leave the next day for the American Spaniel Club show in Tennessee.

The weather was too



Welsh Springer
Spaniel

warm for snow, thankfully, but straight-line winds were threatening and sustained high winds will close the Bay Bridge to all vehicle traffic.

I was less than 10 miles from the bridge when the bad news was announced: The bridge was closed. I was about 40 miles from my dogs, and I wasn't going to get home that night.

My fellow Welsh Springer owner and travel companion, Susan, was my first call. Susan has a key to my house and is probably more popular with my dogs than I am. She and her husband, Bob, piled in their van and headed to my house through the storm.

My two older girls, who were not with their handlers,

COURTESY LYNDA BEAM

BREED COLUMNS

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happily went home with Susan and Bob. Along with their Welsh Springers, my girls spent the evening tracking mud into the house and dirtying every towel Susan and Bob own.

Dogs taken care of, I hunkered down at the house of some friends in Annapolis for the night as the wind howled and the rain lashed at the windows. Susan and Bob lost power and had to stand outside with flashlights when the Welshies went out for exercise. Yeah, I got the better part of that deal.

The next morning, I got on the road early to fetch my dogs and finish packing for the trip to Knoxville and the American Spaniel Club show. Collecting my dogs, I found that Susan still had no power and a *lot* of dirty towels. My house had power, so I did four loads of laundry. Susan showered at my house, and we packed the vehicle for the drive to Tennessee. Crisis not averted, but at least efficiently handled.

This winter brought ice

storms, snow measured in feet, high winds, and high waters to various parts of the country. Catastrophic fires threatened entire towns in the West. It is imperative that we each have a plan and take steps to prepare for either being isolated at home with our dogs or having to leave home with our dogs for an extended period.

Having a “go bag”—in my case, a rubber tote containing bowls, buckets, leads, poop-bags, and vaccination records—is a great first step. Mine is on a shelf in the garage.

Other lessons learned:

- Someone who knows your dogs well should have easy access to your house.
- A list of food and meds for each dog should be stored near the dog food.
- Have a lead for each dog near their crate (but not close enough they can pull it in the crate to chew on).
- Make sure your vet knows who can make decisions about treatment for your dogs.
- Have an agreement with

a nearby kennel to take your dogs in an emergency, as well as the name of the person who may be bringing the dogs to them.

Have a plan.

—Wendy Jordan,
wendy.jordan@capstrategiesgroup.com

Welsh Springer Spaniel
Club of America

Spinoni Italiani

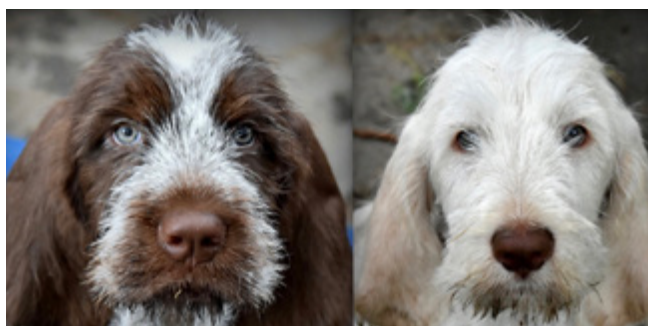
CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF OF YOU ... OH, THOSE SPINONE EYES!

There is currently some discussion in the Spinone world about eye color. There are complaints about “light eyes” on a young Spinone and blaming it on the sire. Classic excuse, when breeders should have done their homework.

I've been in Spinoni Italiani going on 25 years now. I've seen a lot of Spinone eyes, puppies into adults. Spinone puppies and young adults have light eyes, whether they are white or brown Spinone, and their eyes darken as they mature.

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Spinone Italiano sister and brother littermates, one brown roan and one white and orange—at 3 weeks old, with blue eyes; the same two puppies at 3 months old, with green eyes; the same two puppies at 10 months old—eyes have changed from green to golden brown, but quite light; (right) the same two puppies as young adults, 2 years—eyes soft golden brown, but still a bit light; (bottom left) the same two Spinoni at 3 years, with final eye color soft golden brown, known as ochre.

From the Spinone Italiano breed standard:

“Eyes—Ochre (a soft golden brown) in color, darker eyes with darker col-

ored dogs, lighter eyes with lighter colored dogs.”

Spinone puppies, as with most all puppies of any breed, open up their eyes

and, *voilà*, their eyes are blue! See the accompanying photo of littermate sister and brother, one brown roan and one white and orange, at 3

COURTESY DAINA B. HODGES

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weeks old with blue eyes.

Eventually Spinone puppies eyes turn green, which I find to be quite pretty. Note the photo of the same two puppies at 3 months old, with green eyes.

The next photo shows the same two puppies now at 10 months old. As you can see, the eyes have changed from green to a golden-brown color but are quite light, so the eyes do seem quite stark.

This is the age, give or take a few months, that seems to be causing controversy right now with young Spinoni in the show ring. Judges and exhibitors need to be mindful of the age of the Spinone they are examining—or, in the case of unsportsmanlike competitors, criticizing.

Also keep in mind that it is not just the Spinone's eye color that may seem odd, as there are many things going on with a young Spinone while they are in the process of growing up. This is why a Spinone that is "specialized" should be a truly mature Spinone, like age 3 to 5 years or even older. Seven-year-old

veterans are the best example of the breed standard in every possible way.

The additional photos shown are the same two Spinone—now young adults at age 2 years. Their eyes are a soft, golden brown, but still a bit lightish.

Finally, notice the very same two Spinone at age 3 years, with their final eye color of a soft golden brown, which is known as ochre.

In conclusion, as I always do when commenting about my breed, I will quote the Spinone Italiano breed standard, again:

"Eyes—Ochre (a soft golden brown) in color, darker eyes with darker colored dogs, lighter eyes with lighter colored dogs."

If you see a truly mature Spinone over the age of 3 years old with still very obviously distinct light eyes, then yes, that is a problem and not in accordance with the Spinone breed standard.

—Daina B. Hodges,
Standfast Spinone,
Missoula, Montana
[Spinone Club of America](#)

Vizslas

THE HEART OF THE VERSATILE VIZSLA: VCA IRON DOG PROGRAM

In the world of purebred dogs, the word "versatility" is often used—but in the Vizsla community, we live it. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the Vizsla Club of America (VCA) Iron Dog program, a cornerstone of the national specialty and companion events. Originally designed to showcase the breed's multi-faceted talents, the program has evolved into a vital engine for the club, driving a significant increase in entries—particularly in obedience and rally—and ensuring these essential venues remain sustainable for years to come.

A test of physical and mental prowess

The Iron Dog competition is a grueling but rewarding challenge that requires a team to compete across five distinct venues: agility, obedience, rally, scent work, and conformation.

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While the physical strength and endurance required to navigate these disciplines are immense, the program is equally a test of a dog's

trainability and a handler's strategic mind.

The scoring system is a masterpiece of encouragement and calculated

Vizslas demonstrating the breed's versatility: Sloan jumps in agility; Sisu does scent work; Turk in obedience; Tokaji in Open B obedience.

risk. Points are accumulated across the venues, but the VCA recognizes the unpredictable nature of competition. Rally and scent work act as “flex venues,” allowing teams to swap in their best scores, while a massive 30-point bonus is awarded to those

COURTESY OWNERS AND ANABEL DFLUX, VICKI CHANEY, SUSAN GOLDMAN, DAVID SOMBACH

BREED COLUMNS

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who owner-handle in the conformation ring. This bonus underscores the program's commitment to the bond between owner and dog, encouraging participants to step into the ring themselves rather than relying on professional handlers.

The “keep working” philosophy

One of the unique and beloved aspects of Iron Dog is the “keep working” theme in the Obedience ring. In many venues, a “Non-Qualifying” (NQ) score can be a demoralizing end to the day. However, the Iron Dog committee encourages teams to finish their patterns, recording the points they did earn on their scorecards. While this adds a bit more work for the calculating committee, it is worth every second for the competitor. It fosters a spirit of tenacity, reminding everyone that every moment of connection and effort in the ring has value, regardless of the final qualifying status.

The scoreboard: A moment of camaraderie

As the sun sets on a day of trials, a familiar sight emerges: a group of competitors hovering around the scoreboard. This is where the true camaraderie of the VCA shines. Between the math of “spiff points”—where teams balance the risk of leveling up for higher points against the potential of a lower score—there are the “coulda, shoulda, woulda” stories of the day.

It is a time for veterans to mentor newcomers and for puppy owners to celebrate their first successes. Speaking of age, Iron Dog is inclusive of every stage of life. Puppies and veterans are given two shots at improving their conformation scores by showing in both Sweeps and regular classes, ensuring the next generation and our beloved retirees are part of the achievement.

The ultimate achievement

While those well-versed in the precision of obedience

and rally have historically reigned supreme on the leaderboards, Iron Dog remains a theater for the unexpected. Last year, the community watched in awe as an Iron Dog team won Best of Breed Owner-Handled—a stunning performance that catapulted them directly into a medal spot. It was a powerful reminder that a truly versatile Vizsla can be the most beautiful dog in the ring and the most capable worker in the other venues as well.

The Iron Dog program does more than just fill entry spots; it preserves the soul of the breed. By rewarding those who push their boundaries and level up each year, the VCA ensures that the Vizsla remains a dog of balanced talent, boundless spirit, and unwavering loyalty.

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.” —Winston Churchill

—Jamie Walton,
jamie@professionaldesign.org

[org](http://www.vizslaclubofamerica.com)

[Vizsla Club of America](http://www.vizslaclubofamerica.com)

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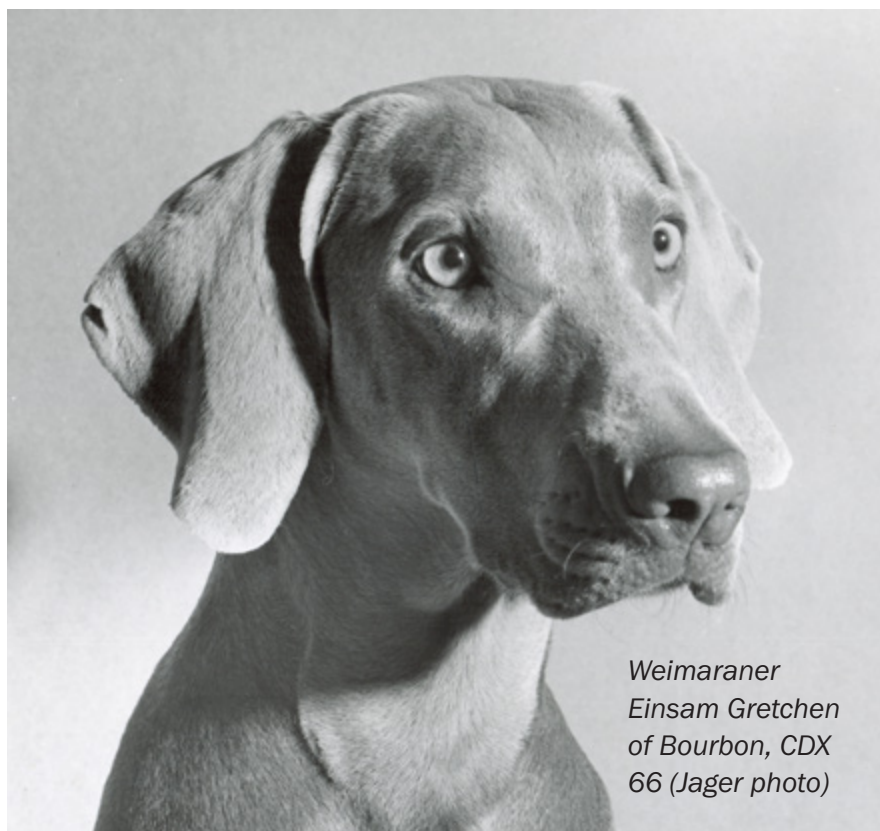
Weimaraners

THE VALUE OF A MENTOR

In my 50-plus years of involvement with Weimaraners, I have had the privilege of knowing and learning from some of the most important people in our breed. These relationships have been invaluable to me as a new exhibitor and breeder, and they are something that seems to be lacking in the current culture.

Mentorship is not meant to indoctrinate an individual to another's thinking, but to open new avenues of exploration and looking at something familiar from a different angle or with new eyes. So often, individuals new to the breed tend to become super focused on their own dogs and dismiss other's dogs as not worth the time.

It is time for those of us who have been in the breed for years to make ourselves available to those who might be looking for some guidance. This is a two-way street, with the best place to begin being the national



*Weimaraner
Einsam Gretchen
of Bourbon, CDX
66 (Jager photo)*

specialty. It is up to the “newbie” to ask, and the “old pro” to be amenable to sharing. This requires courage on the part of the “asker,” and patience and willingness to share on the part of the experienced individual.

The breed's national specialties are not the only avenues for mentorship. Sitting at the group ring at an all-breed dog show is another opportunity to be

informed. This is a great place to ask other exhibitors about their breed, especially those in the same group. Most exhibitors are more than willing to share. This form of mentorship is casual and can be highly enjoyable.

In the Weimaraner breed, one of the areas that needs education is breed type and shoulder layback. The amount of leg and bone, depth of chest, and especially rear angulation

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balance with the shoulder are areas, where discussion can be especially important. Our breed was originally developed to be a hunter, and we need to keep that in focus. We can have a dog pleasant to look at and functional, and this is where a mentor can come into play. He or she can help focus on the particular points where our individual dogs seem to be lacking or overdone.

A mentor can help a person who is new to showing navigate the entry forms and classes offered at a show. This does not have to be confined to our own breed. There are opportunities to help those of other breeds. Many of us go to conformation training classes, which draw both experienced and inexperienced individuals and dogs. This is where a small word of advice or offer to help can make a big difference and make the often confusing, early navigation of dog shows smoother. When one makes their first entry and goes to their first dog show feeling confident

about what is to happen, it is more likely they will become “hooked” on showing.

Mentoring should not be relegated to the show ring only. Those who are involved in obedience, rally, agility, scent work, and field events need to be welcoming to those who are just starting. So often, we form our own cliques in our performance events, and the new person is left to figure it out on their own. This adds stress and sometimes leads to mistakes that can be prevented.

One can become a mentor through the WCA or through the AKC. My suggestion is to start with our breed. The AKC requires at least six years of experience in dogs, among other components which can be accessed through the AKC site. Contacting the WCA office of Secretary is the best way to start with Weims.

It needs to be remembered that we are a community of purebred dog aficionados who need to be supportive of one another. In this

culture of PETA, “doodles,” and “designer” dogs, we need to band together, be generous, and help secure our future. Mentorship is a way to accomplish this.

—Barb Didjurgis,
barb2357@yahoo.com
Weimaraner Club of America

Wirehaired Pointing Griffons

Ann Allen wrote the following insightful article in 2017.

THE HUNTED GRIFFON'S COAT

In the AWPGA judges' education presentation we spend a lot of time on coat, for it seems to be one of the most difficult breed aspects for judges to evaluate. Above all, we want judges to understand that the dog in the ring before them must be able to perform his job in the field.

The Griffon has a harsh, protective coat for a reason: He is typically hunted in the harshest of conditions. A Griffon is a rugged dog!

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The Wirehaired Pointing Griffon has a harsh, protective coat.

A correct Griffon coat is supposed to protect a dog in the field and water. It is a coat that naturally gets worn while working. This is the context within which judges should frame their evaluation of each dog they examine: *active hunting dog*.

Judges will see many Griffons in the ring that are working dogs. Don't penalize or outright eliminate a dog whose coat may show some wear and tear. Facial furnishings, an extension

of the undercoat, may end up somewhat diminished during hunting. Carefully examine the body coat for the required downy undercoat. This is an important element of the dual coat and does not typically disappear during hunting even under harsh conditions. A short, harsh coat that lacks undercoat with nonexistent facial furnishings

that create a breed type more reminiscent of a German Wirehaired Pointer is not a correct Griffon coat. This coat would not protect a dog in cold-water retrieves. By all means celebrate a hunted Griffon, but that does not mean rewarding a poor-quality coat that lacks proper undercoat. Conversely, if you see a soft, profuse, or wooly coat, this is not a correct coat and makes for a miserable hunting experience for

hunter and dog alike.

Most important of all is the structure that supports a top performance in the field. Can you envision the dog stacked before you searching for and retrieving game for a full day? Does he have the substance and musculature to support such a performance? Does he have the proper, well-laid-back shoulder and rear angulation in balance with the front that results in an energy-efficient movement with excellent reach and drive? These structural elements are far more valuable to a Griffon's performance and should be prioritized over a coat that may be worn from fieldwork. Unfortunately, there will always be those judges who only look for the showiest, poofiest, and most meticulously coiffed and scissored Griffon in the ring. This type of Griffon could not be more incorrect! And, sadly, there will always be owners and handlers who restrict or even prohibit their Griffons from being

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in the field in the months before upcoming shows. What a sad commentary on what judges are rewarding in the ring if we actually need to keep our dogs from doing what they were bred to do in order to win!

I think the Vizsla breed standard says it best: *“It is strongly emphasized that field conditioned coats, as well as brawny or sinewy muscular condition and honorable scars indicating a working and hunting dog, are never to be penalized in this dog. The requisite instincts and abilities to maintain a ‘dual dog’ are always to be fostered and appreciated, never deprecated.”* A coat worn off by his work should be a badge of honor.

Do celebrate the hunted Griffon, but be certain that his coat has both a harsh outer coat *and* a downy undercoat to provide proper protection for hunting under the harshest of conditions. —Ann Allen, 2017

[American Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Association](#)

WORKING GROUP

Alaskan Malamutes

I am delighted to introduce AMCA member Patrice Herzfeld as my guest columnist this month. Patrice shares the truly outstanding achievements of Mira, her first show Alaskan Malamute, and the partnership that has created one of the top performers in the history of our breed. Please enjoy their story!

SHE IS CALLED MIGHTY MIRA

Meet Mira, also known as: BISS MOHBIS IntlBIS UBIS NOHS-P GCh.G Intl/U CH Winterstarz Stella Mira, WWP, WWPDA, WWPDX, WWPDS, WPD, WPDX, WTD, WTDA, WTDX*, WLD, AAAM, BAM, VAM, CD, BN, RE, AXP, AJP, OFP, FDC, BCAT, TKA, CGCA, CGCU, ATT.

She is called “Mighty Mira”—not for her size, but for the depth of her heart.

Many dogs offer us glimpses of what they enjoy, understand, and have an aptitude for. As owners, we help them play, improve,

and excel. Yet it is rare for an individual dog to excel at the highest levels across multiple venues. Blessed is the person who discovers they are in the company of such an extraordinary Malamute, and I happen to be that very lucky human.

While I have always had dogs, they were family companions rather than partners in “the game of life.” That changed when AMCA members Dr. Katherina Dewetter Burger and Timothy O’Brien (Winterstarz) offered me a small, seal-and-white Alaskan Malamute puppy with an off-the-cuff comment: “She might be show quality ... would you think about trying that?”

And so the game began. We were two individuals with zero experience in almost every dog sport, but Mira brought her intelligence, devotion, willingness to please, and the ancient working instincts of her breed to our new partnership, thanks to the gifts of her sire and dam

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Mira and buddy Calvin, GCh.S Catanya's Ice On Fire, on an endurance run; Mira (circled) running wheel on the Basswood Trail, Boundary Waters, Minnesota, driven by LynnAnne Vespers (left) and Patrice Herzfeld; Mira and Patrice; Mira backpacking on the Sioux Hustler Trail, Minnesota

(Ch. Northpaw's Power Plays, RA, CGCA x Ch. Winterstarz Scorching Tania Borealis, RN, CGC).

Into the ring

We started small, learning

the game of conformation. Mira is my first show dog—owner-handled almost exclusively—and the breed ring is one of her favorite places to play. Her accolades grew over

the years. Easily finishing her championship, and then her Grand Champion Gold, Mira went on to make AMCA history at our national specialty shows by earning Best in Working

COURTESY PATRICE HERZFELD, ALL BREED PHOTOS, JAMIE LYNN RYAN PHOTOGRAPHY, LYNNANNE VESPER, GEORGE LEVEILLE

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Dog Showcase four times. Special thrills were her BOS at Westminster 2025 and a specialty win, plus multiple Best in Shows in AKC's National Owner-Handled Series. What a ride for a first-timer!

We branched out into obedience and rally. If Mira had a least favorite sport, this was it. Retrieving? She seemed to ask, “*Really, Mom?*” Yet her desire to do what I asked was always there. Agility is another of her favorite events. She is now working on her Master-level titles and the ultimate goal: PACH.

Mira finds her Malamute power: The weight pull

Soon, Mira embarked on her performance titles: weight pull, backpacking, and sledding. Here, she has exceeded all expectations: She has earned nearly every AMCA working title. Weight pull is a game of “higher and higher,” and Mira is a powerhouse. Weight is increased in increments and pulled over a distance of 16 feet. She has con-

sistently earned “Highest Times Body Weight Pulled” at both AMCA regional and national specialties. At 8.5 years of age, she pulled 58.36 times her own body weight—a personal best.

Into the wilderness: Mira's endurance quest

With an eager Mira and a group of mentors, we headed into the wilderness. Beyond the bond of traditional sports lies the indescribable partnership of wilderness travel. Self-sustained backpacking and dogsledding deep into rugged terrain forge a bond so deep it is hard to imagine unless you have lived it. You depend on each other for survival, plain and simple.

Mira and I have logged hundreds of miles along the Minnesota-Canadian border:

Backpacking—We have covered over 285 miles of wilderness backpacking. On these self-sustained trips—usually at least 60 miles long—Mira carries 30 percent of her body weight in her pack. We face rug-

ged terrain, bears, wolves, and the reality that rescue is often hours away.

Sledding—When the temperatures drop and the lake ice thickens, we look North again. We have explored the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) and the Superior National Forest, logging over 550 miles in deep cold while expedition mushing. In the BWCAW there are no groomed trails—only game trails and the tracks of those who went before. Her achievements have made Mira one of the most experienced expedition wilderness Alaskan Malamutes in recent times.

A once-in-a-lifetime bond

Mira's titles and letters are numerous, but they barely scratch the surface of our true story: one defined by mutual respect, keen intelligence, and a rare, unwavering devotion. When a judge points to her or she earns a new accolade, I swell with pride—not for myself, but for her. I want

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the world to recognize her for the extraordinary animal she is. Truly, she stands as one of the most versatile Alaskan Malamutes in our breed. Our challenges are not struggles: they are a shared journey. Training and working together toward our next goal have always been the best part of the trip; the ribbons and titles are merely the icing on the cake.

Mira has changed my life profoundly. Through her, I've gained friends across the globe and found wonderful mentors in our breed. We've worked with trainers and instructors who shared their knowledge, as well as mentors who took us under their tutelage, teaching us how to navigate the wilderness together. We have achieved innumerable firsts in almost everything we've pursued. That is the power of a dog like Mira. If you are very lucky, a companion this special comes along once in a lifetime, and I am deeply blessed to have Mira as my partner in life and adventure! —P.H.

List of Mira's AMCA titles:

WWPD: Working Weight Pull Dog (Basic, Advanced, Excellent, Superior)

WPD: Working Pack Dog (Backpacking—Basic, Advanced, Excellent)

WTD: Working Team Dog (Dogsledding—Basic, Advanced, Excellent)

WLD: Working Lead Dog (Dogsledding with one dog leading a team of dogs)

AAAM: All-Around Alaskan Malamute. Titles are required in Conformation, Obedience, and all three Working disciplines: Weight Pulling, Backpacking, and Dogsledding. Community Service is also a requirement.

BAM: Buddy Alaskan Malamute. Any combination of 10 titles or certificates.

VAM: Versatile Alaskan Malamute. A minimum of titles in four of the above-listed disciplines, with advanced titles in at least two of those disciplines.

(* = pending submission and approval)

Thank you, Patrice, for sharing your incredible partnership with Mira!

—Phyllis I. Hamilton,
Benchmark1946@gmail.com

com

[Alaskan Malamute Club of America](#)

Anatolian Shepherd Dogs

The column for this quarter is written by Katie Emanuel.

ARE NATIONAL SPECIALTIES WORTH THE TRIP?

Having just come back from attending and chairing the Anatolian Shepherd Dog Club of America (ASDCA) national specialty, it's a good time to reflect on the experiences of the last year and evaluate the worth to the sport of conformation dog showing.

Are national specialties worth the trip? To answer the question, I must ask another: Why attend a national specialty? Is that answer the same for an experienced breeder, new owner, or a first-time attendee?

As a longtime breeder-

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owner-handler, attending a national is a time I can see the quality of dogs that are out there for prospective breeding stock. I know what is showing in my area, but a national gives you the chance to physically see the top dogs outside of your area—not just in photographs. This allows you to evaluate temperaments, conformation, and movement better than photos or statistics can ever do.

This is also a chance to speak with other breeders and meet new breeders. For me, attending the 2025 ASDCA national specialty on October 10, 2025, in West Friendship, Maryland, allowed me to see several dogs who came out of my lines, which allowed me to see what is being produced when bred to different lines. It also allowed me to see dogs from other lines who have been actively showing, and their progeny, which can give a breeder an idea of what would happen if you introduced that line to your own.



Anatolian Shepherd Dog

As a new owner, this is an opportunity to get to know club members and hopefully make new friends, network, and possibly become a club member. New owners can gain valuable guidance in raising and showing their new addition if that is an interest to them. The national specialty should also be an educational event for all as well.

As a new attendee, a national can be extremely overwhelming and possibly

intimidating—so much as to push that new attendee away, back to the farm. As a low-entry breed and a working breed, we often get to see the “farm dog” come out of the field and into the ring with owner-handlers who are completely new to the show ring. This is a chance for the club to reach out and welcome them. The national a chance to see what is out there—but not just the campaigned dogs, the working dogs too. Our

COURTESY JO LYVINE YORK

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national specialty offers a working class. Along with the veterans and puppy classes, I feel this is equally important to see. The fun part with our breed is that most veterans are also working. Our working dogs need encouragement to even show up—this is where the national can shine and be supportive.

One of the best parts of attending the national was that people could meet me and my dogs in person. When you have been in this sport for a long time, there are a lot of rumors about you, and sometimes people are intimidated by the kennel name. It gave others a chance to see that I am a real person, who physically works with my own dogs, and allowed them to see the quality of my dogs in person. While you can see dogs in magazines, seeing them in person gives you a chance to observe strengths and weaknesses before making breeding decisions.

For a low-entry breed, it was so nice to have an entry

near 50, with large entries of both puppies and veterans. As a breeder, these are the classes I like to participate in and watch. It gives you the chance to see the future of the breed and look at the health of the breed. When the veteran entry remains competitive with the dogs in their prime, it is a good indication that those lines are retaining health and soundness combined with longevity.

This year our specialty was judged by Ms. Denise Dean. It is always rewarding to see a judge work with less-experienced owner-handlers or less-experienced dogs. This year was no exception. Ms. Dean came prepared to both have fun with our exhibitors and also show patience with some of the more standoffish personalities of our breed.

Another aspect of a national specialty that you don't have at every show is judges' education. Judges' education seminars and mentoring are so important

to securing the future of any breed. While it is easy to understand why a judge would rather attend a judge's institute that covers several breeds at one time, education at a national can't be matched. While specialties can be expensive to attend, if a judge can get their hands on more dogs, it eventually is more beneficial to the breed, because they have a chance to get their hands on dogs of varying quality. If we want great judges, we have to help them learn the nuances of our breed. We want them to appreciate the dog that isn't animated and looks unenthusiastically at them.

Club members who want to learn more about their breed should consider attending a judges' education seminar at a national specialty. There is always something to learn or share.

National specialties are always worth the drive. Whether you are new to the breed, an experienced handler, or just supporting your loved one, a national

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specialty has something for everyone. —Catherine Emanuel, 2025 ASDCA Show Chair

Major results—ASDCA national specialty, October 10, 2025

Best of Breed: GCh. Chevaliers Du Roland's Rikki-Tikki-Tavi, owned by Micheal Bitz.

BW/WD/BB OH: Birinci's Gonna Pump You Up, owned by Catherine Emanuel, Ed Collins, and Emily Collins.

BOS: Ch. Chevaliers Du Roland's Just So Stories, owned by Janis Rosenthal, Esq., and Mary McDaniels, DVM.

Select Dog: Ch. Skyview's Bridger, owned by Catherine O'Brien.

Select Bitch: Ch. Alex Danvers Kicks..., owned by Catherine Emanuel, Ed Collins, and Emily Collins.

Thank you, Katie, for this column.

—Jo Lynne York,
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Anatolian Shepherd Dog Club of America

Bernese Mountain Dogs

"THE BERNERS ARE CALLING"

Here in Washington, April is laden with the newness of spring. Leaves are starting to unfurl, and blossoms are peeking out. It is a time of promise and expectation. This year spring is also the time of final preparations for the breed's national specialty being held in Albany, Oregon, next month, on May 10–16.

Our national specialty rotates location each year. This year it is in the West (Zone 3); next year (2027), it will be in the Central (Zone 2, Central and Rockies), at Purina Farms in Missouri. Then in 2028 it will be on the East Coast (Zone 1, East and South).

Regional clubs are the "troops on the ground" doing the local work for the national specialty committee. The working member clubs for 2026 are the Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Greater Seattle, Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Oregon, and Inland NW Bernese

Mountain Dog Club.

One of the best reasons to attend the national specialty is seeing hundreds of Bernese Mountain dogs all in one place, doing the things they love. Each day overflows with events and education. There will be draft, obedience, rally, agility, herding, and of course conformation. Different events are on each day.

One of my favorite events is an educational opportunity called Berner University, held on Monday and Tuesday. Classes are offered in two-hour blocks, giving opportunities to come and go as needed by busy schedules. The Berner University website says, "Berner U seminars and workshops are taught by leading veterinary researchers, animal behaviorists, and BMDCA members with specific expertise. Well-behaved dogs are welcome in most classes." It is a joy to look around a conference room seeing owners raptly listening, with dogs resting peacefully at their feet.

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Bernese Mountain Dog

The evenings are full of events too—starting with a welcome reception, Top Twenty Gala, the Health Auction that raises money for research, and on Friday the annual meeting for all Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America members.

At the meeting we will celebrate the oldest male and female dog at the specialty, also Grand Master Draft Dogs and the Tri-Athlete winners. There are awards for humans also; the AKC Outstanding Sportsman

and BMDCA Outstanding Service Award are given out.

For more information on these wonderful awards, please see the BMDCA website.

Pat Long, a longtime national-specialty attendee and photographer of the fundraiser Longshots, summed it up:

“It’s a place to go to meet friends that you’ve never met, to put faces to names. To rekindle friendships with friends you see all too rarely. To perform with your dog,

to watch others perform with theirs. To see some of the most beautiful dogs in the breed. To shop for some truly awesome Berner stuff. For me, personally, the specialty is a place to raise money for the breed, to meet friends, and to try to fit as much as I can into a too short week.”

Since 1998, Longshots has raised thousands of dollars for Berner charities.

At the 40th anniversary in 2017, Susan Henderson said:

“I believe what makes BMDCA national specialties special is us. It’s all of us! For it takes a particular type of individual to own this breed, one who has the capacity to open their heart time and again to a breed that not only loves big but also hurts big. It’s through our shared experiences of pure joy and shattered hearts where we have forged lifelong, enduring friendships which have made our national one big, huge family reunion. One we dare not miss.”

COURTESY LYNDA BEAM

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So once again, the Berners are calling. Join the travelers along the Oregon Trail to reach a magical place filled with Berners and Berner-themed everything. Each year it becomes a special time to remember. I hope to see you in Albany.

—Marjorie Geiger,
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Bernese Mountain Dog
Club of America

Boerboels

WHAT IS THE BIG DEAL ABOUT BREED STANDARDS?

Recently, while reading posts on FB and other forums about Boerboels, or discussing them with owners and breeders, I noticed that I am encountering disturbing comments about what the Boerboel *should* be/look like with increasing frequency.

For example: (Owner:) “I just bought a Boerboel puppy, and I am *really* excited because the breeder assured me he would be *huge!*” (Owner:) “I have an (English) Mastiff and a

Boerboel, and my Boerboel is much bigger, which is great because he really goes after strangers!”

Continuing the theme, one breeder emphatically said: “I am changing my breeding program! I have a vision for a Boerboel that would be the size of an (English) Mastiff—(which is what I believe they were trying to breed in South Africa); you know, with a huge, wrinkly, and deeply jowled head-piece, and very powerful, well-muscled hindquarters. The way Boerboels like to guard, it will be quite intimidating, and really scary looking!”

In a similar vein, another breeder told me he is only producing “real working Boerboels, no show dogs.” When I asked in what ways he perceived “show dogs” as different and inferior, he said show dogs are meant to be small and light-boned and can’t do anything other than “prance around the show ring.”

When I reminded them, and others I have spo-

ken with, that what they were describing was quite divergent from our AKC Boerboel breed standard, the typical responses included: “So what?” “The standard is really old and outdated!” “It’s just a guide,” or—one of my favorites—“I don’t care; I need to breed dogs I can sell for some good money!”

In point of fact, the vital purpose of a breed standard is to be the “template” or “blueprint” for a pure breed such as the Boerboel which, if followed by breeders, (1) differentiates it from all other breeds; and (2) protects and preserves the heritage, identity, and reproducible conformation and temperament of a breed from being reshaped or significantly modified by current (and often passing) fads and preferences.

The standard describes—in detail—how the “type,” unique conformation, and temperament are vital to performing its purpose.

As the disturbing comments I have mentioned

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“The Boerboel is a large dog that is strong, confident and muscular in appearance with powerful, free-flowing movement ... standing or moving, it should show strength, suppleness, nimbleness and agility.”



primarily pertain to the potentially growing popularity of Mastiff-sized Boerboels, I want to cite a few excerpts from the breed standards of the (English) Mastiff and the Boerboel to illustrate some of the potential dangers regarding the heritage and identity of our breed. I have found this topic timely but concerning, as, in addition to our Boerboel, my family has owned and loved (English) Mastiffs for years.

Let's begin with excerpts

from the breed standard introduction for our Boerboel (<https://images.akc.org/pdf/breeds/standards/Boerboel.pdf>).

From the Boerboel standard:

“General Appearance: Historically the Boerboel developed as a general farm dog for the pioneers who settled in South Africa since the seventeenth century. These dogs were often the first line of defense against predators and were valuable in tracking and holding down wounded game. Old farmers told many a tale

of the strength, agility and courage of the Boerboel. The dangers and harsh conditions of southern Africa allowed only the fittest to survive. The protective character of the Boerboel is today still evident and is much sought after, as is the calm, stable and confident composure of the breed. The origin and purpose of the Boerboel should be understood in order to preserve the unique identity and qualities of the breed as a South African developed mastiff. Type, conformation, functional efficiency and mentality are equally

COURTESY KAREN L. CORNELIUS

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important in the evaluation of the Boerboel as a whole. “The Boerboel is a large dog that is strong, confident and muscular in appearance with powerful, free-flowing movement. When observing a Boerboel at play or work, standing or moving, it should show strength, suppleness, nimbleness and agility.” (I would note that the Boerboel is one of the most nimble and athletic of breeds.) “The preferred height for Dogs—24 to 27 inches. Bitches—22 to 25 inches. Balance, proportion and sound movement are of utmost importance—more so than size.”

We know that the Boerboel is a “South African developed mastiff.” The small “m” is significant, as it denotes a mastiff-type breed, rather than the Mastiff (capital “M”) breed from England, of which many “mastiff” and Boerboel breeders and aficionados do not seem to be aware. Now, let us consider the contrast with the Mastiff standard.

From the Mastiff standard:

The Mastiff (a breed originally from England) “is a large, massive, symmetrical dog with a well-knit frame. The impression is one of grandeur and dignity ... A good evaluation considers positive qualities of type and soundness with equal weight.”

Size, Proportion, Substance: Size—Dogs, minimum, 30 inches at the shoulder. Bitches, minimum, 27½ inches at the shoulder. Fault—Dogs or bitches below the minimum standard. The farther below standard, the greater the fault ... Substance—Massive, heavy boned, with a powerful muscle structure. Great depth and breadth desirable.

(The AKC Mastiff standard can be found at: <https://images.akc.org/pdf/breeds/standards/Mastiff.pdf>)

Both are considered “head breeds”—that is, the headpiece is considered an important part of the breed’s identity, but the descriptors differ significantly.

In conclusion, what I would hope readers might take away from this article are two things: Breed standards are vital for preserving the unique history, purpose, conformation, abilities and deep bond with their families offered by the Boerboel. The complete Boerboel breed standard can be found on both the [American Boerboel Club](#) and [AKC](#) websites. The Mastiff standard is at: <https://images.akc.org/pdf/breeds/standards/Mastiff.pdf>

—Karen L. Cornelius,
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[American Boerboel Club](#)

Boxers

REACH OUT TO THE NEWBIES AT RINGSIDE

Are you one of the millions of people who are active in the dog world? A participant—such as owner, breeder, handler, judge? Any kind, any genre—obedience, hunting trial, conformation, match show ... or any other of the many dog sports?

By any chance did you

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Potomac Boxer Club specialty, 1970s: Judge Miss Anna Katherine Nicholas awards first in Brood Bitch to Ch. Sean's Tara of Carleen, with Virginia Shames; with Tara are her offspring Ch. Talismans TaRiffic and Ch. Talismans TaMendous, shown by Bob and Jane Forsyth.

notice the family with two youngsters ... or the older lady sitting ringside ... or the gentleman standing to the side a bit ... or the three teens ringside, studying, discussing? What do all these people have in common?

One simple answer: Dogs.

In the over 55 years that I've been involved in canine activities, I admit I have not always been aware of or acknowledged the ringside spectators. I've studied

my competition, socialized with other exhibitors, made sure my exhibit was ready, watched what the judge was doing, and so on. But, like many others at the show, I have *neglected* the possible "future" of this sport, the prospective dog owner—the one person who has a love of canines. This person has stars in their eyes and is bewitched in discovering a whole new world.

Many of today's breeders and exhibitors are second-

or third-generation ... but somewhere in the background of their involvement, a breeder, exhibitor, handler, or professional took the time to reach out, answer a question for a curious dog lover attending their first dog event.

Times and conditions change, and while ability to communicate has multiplied, with instant email of results, it somehow lessens the value of a telephone call, and recounting of the show, which has often led to lots of good conversation.

So ... it's up to the person with the dog to become the advocate of the sport.

Think back to your beginning.

I remember the first dog show I went to. My beloved pet had died while I was in college. When I came home for a holiday, my mother had read in the paper about a dog show in D.C. "Let's go ..."

We walked around ("No, now we *are not* getting a dog ... you're the last of three to graduate..."), and then I was

COURTESY VIRGINIA SHAMES

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handed a cute Vizsla to hold. Some lady gave her to me and said she would be back in a second. She appeared minutes later, went in the ring, and won a ribbon.

As she left the ring, she said, “Thanks, kid!”

That afternoon she came back and gave me a name and address for puppy prospects. I thanked her, and she said, “I’ll see you again.”

By the end of the Thanksgiving vacation, we had a brand-new Vizsla puppy. Greta became my first champion—and I learned a *lot*.

And that nice lady who helped me find a dog in the fall saw me at my first show that I entered with Greta in the spring and coached my ring debut (to a Reserve win). I was totally hooked!

The few minutes spent to helping a “newbie” opened the door for a lifetime.

Over 55 years later, over 100 champions, and a few top winners, and many wonderful pets and life-long friends, still with an active role in both local and

national Boxer breed clubs (served as President of the national club) ... all because this very busy lady noticed me sitting ringside at my very first dog show. She saw the stars in my eyes.

Thank you, Jane!

(Also, she is the reason I ended up in Boxers.)

2026 National Specialty

Boxers from throughout the U.S., Canada, and other countries will be gathering for eight days of conformation, performance events, education seminars, dinners, auctions, and *fun* at the American Boxer Club national specialty, to take place at the Indianapolis Marriott East Hotel, in Indianapolis, May 2–8. See you there!

—Virginia Shames,

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[American Boxer Club](#)

Bullmastiffs

We have been looking back over our 30 years in the breed, which might not seem like that

long to many in the sport of purebred dogs, but is almost half of my life and more than half of Vince’s. We have had the most celebratory, educational, interesting, terrifying, and even miraculous experiences. I am sure you all have your own tales of triumph and tragedy, too. Care to share with your fellow fanciers? Let me know, because we are all in this together as we learn and teach. I’ll share one of ours, one that still ranks as one of the most memorable times of our lives in dogs. —Lindy Whyte and Vince Grlovich, Tryumphe Bullmastiffs

OUR PUPPYPALOOZA

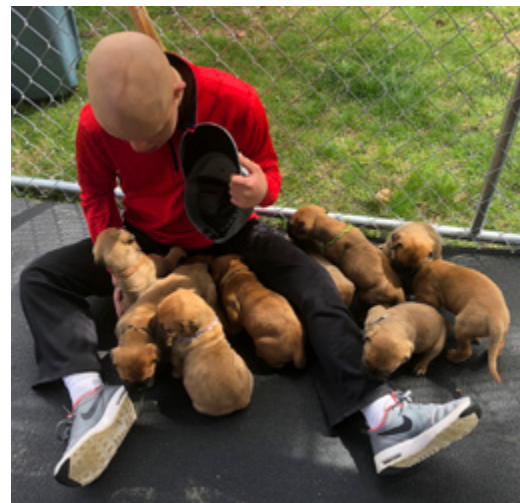
We had 22 Bullmastiff puppies, two litters, six days apart, in March of 2018. It was an experience somewhere between a celebration and an explosion. It could happen to you! If and/or when it does, don’t say we didn’t warn you.

“Breed both bitches,” they advised. “If you are lucky, one will take.”

We all know who “they” are—the members of our

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Bullmastiff dam Crystal and her litter of “Leprechauns,” born 3-17-2018 (two photos); the litter of “Hooligans,” born 3-23-2018; dam Shandy and the Hooligans; Vince and a lapful of puppies; pups socializing with nephew Buddy

dog community. All of us have been “them.” Everyone has opinions, and we offer them whenever we congregate with our dogs.

We have all heard tales of triumph and tragedy when it comes to breeding two girls. Our story is still being written as the puppies approach

their eighth birthdays. Some are no longer living, several are battling health issues, and all of them changed us forever.

Life got in the way of our dog hobby. For several years, we barely made it to shows and had no time to plan our next generation. Every heat

cycle, we made the agonizing decision to wait for personal and professional changes and situations to resolve and give us time.

Finally, we found ourselves with a very short window. Our girls, inseparable littermates, were 5 years old, both finished champions, had

LINDY WHYTE AND VINCE GRLOVICH

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passed all health clearances, and possessed an abundance of the mental and physical traits we wanted in our future dogs. We agreed that the time was now or never and that we would breed both, in order to ensure our best chance of producing the next generation. We were excited.

We consulted our own experienced vet, visited a noted specialist, and finalized our ambitious plans.

Both girls had pre-breeding bloodwork and ultrasounds. The news was not heartening, as both had ovaries showing age and the related issues. We had the stud dog's semen checked. Our specialist advised that we do artificial inseminations and surgical implants the next day, using fresh semen for both procedures. We also had a backup plan in place, given the variables of semen quality and winter weather.

The girls, always in sync, came into season in early January, six days apart. We began the testing that would

ensure the most accurate insemination, doing progesterone testing and LH testing under the supervision of the specialist. We were hopeful.

We are so thankful to the stud dog's breeder and owners. They are family and as invested as we are in these puppies that we could all envision. We made the trips across the state, and the stud dog owner came from the north with his boy for both breedings of both girls, six days apart.

Everything went well during all of the procedures, and we went home to wait until we could ascertain whether our team's efforts had been successful.

Finally, we took the girls for their ultrasounds. I don't think we will ever forget that day. We had some indications that both girls were in whelp, but the ultrasounds confirmed two litters. We were overjoyed.

Our girls began to show signs of impending motherhood. By early March they were gigantic. We pictured

our puppies, gathered supplies, assembled whelping boxes, and skipped the winter shows to protect our moms and their puppies-to-be.

The living room, with both boxes, heat lamps, bedding, and all the supplies, became Puppy Central. So many friends warned us about two litters, two moms, in such close proximity, but we knew our girls and our strength as a team.

We watched our girls expand with raised eyebrows and some trepidations. When Crystal went for her C-section on March 17, she answered our questions about her size by giving us 11 beautiful puppies—six boys and five girls, which litter we called our Leprechauns.

Six days later, on March 23, not to be outdone, her sister Shandy produced another 11 lovely puppies—nine girls and two boys, our Hooligans.

Did we say our girls are in sync? We were amazed.

The work of the first few

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weeks is interminable and unimaginable, unless you have been in the boxes with two moms and their 22 puppies. It was a continuous cycle of feed, supplement, clean, sleep, repeat. We kept a daily log of times, feedings, and weights, because the days ran together and we wanted to have records of development and weight gain. If not for our preparation and Amazon Prime, we all would have starved.

Crystal and Shandy were both wonderful mothers with plenty of milk and great maternal instincts, so the Leprechauns and Hooligans thrived. We were exhausted.

As the puppies developed, we never lost sight of the miracle we were privileged to take part in, didn't forget to be grateful, even as the refrigerator died, the dishwasher and washing machine worked overtime, and we went through food and supplies at an incredible rate.

As puppies got on their feet, opened their ears and

eyes, started eating solid food, and began to show us who they were, we shared what has to be one of the most exciting aspects of our lives in dogs. We evaluated conformation and temperaments and got to know our puppies. We saw their parents and grandparents, even a few aunts and uncles, in their mental and physical traits, as we watched them grow.

Every day we learned more, with comparisons and evaluations helping us to decide which puppies would thrive in what homes. We have wonderful owners for so many of our puppies, and several have stayed here with us.

Thank you to our veterinarians, mentors, friends, and family. It takes a community! Puppies, we always say, are hope on four paws. The last eight years have been an incredible experience as they have fulfilled so many hopes and dreams and, most importantly, lived lives full of love.

Happy 8th birthdays to our Puppypalooza! We are

grateful.

—Lindy Whyte,
Tryumphe@comcast.net
American Bullmastiff
Association

German Pinschers

EVERY DOG HAS ITS WAY

I've owned German Pinschers for nearly 17 years. I currently live with two of them. And I learn new things about them every day. My older German Pinscher, Gracie, is a Champion Tracker and has earned titles in other sports, including Barn Hunt. The only sport she does these days is Senior Barn Hunt, which gives her three and a half minutes to find four rats, tunnel, and climb. I don't care how many rats she finds (she already has her Senior title), as long as she continues to enjoy finding rats.

My other German Pinscher, Nix, is 4½ and currently competes in Barn Hunt and tracking. We take classes in agility and rally, have just started nose work

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German Pinscher

and she visits students at the local university every semester the week before finals. She loves people, gets along well with other dogs, enjoys going to trials and is a good, smart problem solver.

And yet, in many ways we're still figuring each other out.

German Pinschers were originally farm dogs. Their job was to hunt vermin and raise the alert when necessary. They're smart

independent dogs. They're not naturally team players, and yet they're happy to live with us. Their instinctive tasks in the modern world include patrolling every inch of the yard and announcing passers-by, package deliveries, and squirrels.

Doing sports with dogs is not only about teaching your dog skills but also becoming a team that can communicate and work together. Some dogs were bred to

work as part of a team to herd cattle or hunt game. German Pinschers were bred to hunt vermin on their own and to stay alert to the environment, but not necessarily to work as part of a human-dog team.

For me those instinctive traits are one of the charms and frustrations of living with German Pinschers. In my experience, they genuinely love to do things. But doing things according to someone else's direction is not always an easy task for them.

German Pinschers have challenged my ideas about training and communication. They're quick and engaged, yet always questioning the task: Is this important enough? Rewarding enough? Fun enough? What makes it worth persisting is both the satisfaction of figuring out the training puzzle, and that moment when they really, honestly "get it."

German Pinschers are the breed that has made me doubt every skill I've ever developed for training

JOHN RICARD@AKC

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dogs. They've also made me a better trainer, and I hope a better communicator. They're frustrating and endearing in equal measure—and fun to live with every single day.

—Deb Coates,
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German Pinscher Club of America

Giant Schnauzers

DO OUR WORKING DOGS WORK?

Giant Schnauzers and other Working Group dogs were developed for a wide diversity of tasks. Our Giants served as farm guardians and livestock drovers. They were also known to pull carts. And no doubt there was a vermin-dispatching aspect to farm work!

Structure of working breeds reflected their job requirements and the environment in which they originated. This explains the huge differences in appearance among breeds in the group. But the founders

of each breed also endeavored to instill characteristic temperament and inherited behaviors—the “software,” if you will—that contributed enormously to their dogs' purpose. How can we ensure that breeding programs maintain the “software” that accompanies the structural “hardware” that is much easier to assess?

A conformation judge must swiftly make award decisions based on physical structure and locomotion. There is limited ability to decipher the aspects of temperament and behavior that made a breed so useful to its developers.

Dog sports and working trials are the venues where a dog's temperament, physical ability, tenacity, and focus can truly be evaluated. Participation in AKC's companion and performance events, and other dog sports and tests, can help demonstrate whether a dog has the appropriate inborn characteristics for its breed, in order to preserve instinctive working traits just as we



Giant Schnauzer, November 2008 (Gay Glazbrook photo)

strive to preserve structural breed type.

I admire fanciers whose goal is to put titles on both ends of a dog's name. Titling in some activities like Fast CAT and Fit Dog requires virtually no training. In contrast, it can take years to achieve the highest titles in other sports, such as agility, obedience, herding, and scent work. Most titles fall somewhere in between.

Only a few sports (e.g., herding, tracking, drafting/carting, and Barn Hunt) relate directly to the historic jobs of Giant Schnauzers.

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But all sports demonstrate some aspect of a dog's temperament, natural athleticism, and/or desire to work with and for his or her owner.

Out of curiosity, I decided to examine how Giant Schnauzers compared to other Working Group breeds in the proportion of conformation champions that also achieved suffix titles. I accessed the 2025 conformation statistics from *Canine Chronicle* and looked at the Top 25 dogs of each Working Group breed. (The top conformation dogs often contribute greatly to the gene pool, and future, of a breed.) For each Top 25 dog, I tallied the number of suffix titles that dog had earned (if any). Every kind of title counted—from Virtual Home Manners and S.T.A.R. Puppy to MACH. I did, however, note whether a dog held any higher-than-basic-level sport or work title that required off-leash work or complex training. Examples of higher-level titles would

be Novice Agility or higher, Companion Dog or higher, Rally Advanced or higher, Herding Started or higher, and Scent Work Excellent or higher.

In my analysis, two Working Group breeds tied for highest number of conformation champions having suffix titles: the Danish-Swedish Farmdog (DSF) and the Greater Swiss Mountain Dog. Each had 21 of their Top 25 conformation dogs also with suffix titles. The DSF was a bit of a surprise, having achieved full AKC recognition only last year! Among its suffix titleholders, the DSF also had the highest number of dogs (8 of the 21) holding higher-level titles. The Swissies had four such dogs.

Ranking third and fourth highest in number of suffix-titled conformation champions were Leonbergers (16 dogs) and Mastiffs (15 dogs). However, each of these breeds had only one dog with higher-level titles.

Following these breeds, Giant Schnauzers finally appeared in my rankings with 14 of the Top 25 conformation dogs having suffix titles (none of those had higher-level titles).

Four other breeds tied with Giants at 14 suffix-titled champions: Black Russian Terriers, German Pinschers, Portuguese Water Dogs, and Rottweilers.

Alaskan Malamutes came in right behind these breeds, with 13.

Of the remaining 22 Working Group breeds, between one and 11 of their Top 25 conformation dogs held suffix titles.

Although my little project was not an elegant or definitive study, I believe it indicates actual differences among Working Group breeds. Some differences probably relate to temperament. For example, large, independent guarding breeds may have fewer suffix titles because they have not been bred to be easily trained or highly cooperative. However, the

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differences also reflect how much (or little) emphasis exhibitors of the various breeds put on testing the versatility, trainability, and working potential of breeding stock.

Truthfully, I was disappointed that Giant Schnauzers did not come in higher in the rankings. I am certain our breed has talent equal to that of DSFs and Swissies. It would be a wonderful testament to our breed to see more top Giants with titles at both ends!

—Bonnie Postovit,
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[Giant Schnauzer Club of America](#)

Great Danes

IS A GREAT DANE A GOOD CHOICE FOR OUR FAMILY?

Most people have an innate love for dogs. When it comes to finding the right dog for themselves, there are often a lot of questions.

The AKC currently registers over 200 dog breeds.



Great Dane (art: Constance Coleman, 1986)

Selecting the best breed for a family can be a daunting task. Most any breed will be a welcomed and loved member of the family, but some breeds are simply a better fit.

I personally question a growing family with small children opting for a toy breed. The toy breeds are made to be loving companions, and they do their jobs well. However, a small child could unintentionally inflict a serious injury to a small dog. A medium-sized or

large breed might be a better fit for such a family.

I would have no problem suggesting that such a family consider the Great Dane. These gentle giants are incredible with kids. They are one of the best babysitters that parents will ever find.

When our son was a toddler, I sometimes thought that our Dane was a third parent. He slept with our son when he took his afternoon naps. He was inseparable when our son

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went out to play in the yard. If a stranger or strange dog were to approach our fence, the Dane would go to the fence and quietly intimidate the “intruder” to leave.

There have also been situations where a Dane has come to the rescue of a family member when they were in a bad situation. My mentor in Danes used to say that Danes utilized common sense when it came to their temperament.

If any reader is interested in finding a Great Dane, I would refer them to the Great Dane Club of America website, <https://gdca.org>. Therein you will find a listing of breeders. Also, there is a listing of the various affiliate Great Dane clubs across the nation. One may be close to you. Each of these clubs usually has a rescue organization where they are fostering Great Danes who have gotten into a bad situation in their former homes. Rescue is a viable option for individuals who wish to save a Dane from a

less than desired future and whose past has been bad enough already.

—Bill Stebbins,
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Great Dane Club of
America

Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs

This column is the second in a three-part series appearing in the October 2025 issue, this issue, and the July 2026 issue. Across every stage of a dog’s life, outcomes hinge on a simple truth: When the human triangle surrounding a dog holds, the dog thrives—and when it fractures, the consequences ripple outward.

WHEN INTELLIGENCE LOOKS LIKE STUBBORNESS: THE DOG-OWNER-TRAINER TRIANGLE

“Your dog is stubborn.” I’ve heard this assessment countless times over 27 years with Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs. I’ve heard owners say it about their own Swissys. I’ve heard it

from well-meaning friends, experienced trainers, professional handlers, and fellow exhibitors.

And every time, I think the same thing: *You’re mistaking discernment for defiance.*

The heritage of independent judgment

On Swiss Alpine farms, a Swissy’s job required constant decision-making. Which route down the mountain was safest for a loaded cart? When to stop before injury? How to move livestock without causing damage?

The farmer couldn’t micromanage every choice. The dog had to assess, decide, and act—often without direct instruction. This wasn’t a flaw in the working relationship. It was the entire point.

Fast-forward to modern training, and that same carefully preserved trait—the pause to assess, the moment of consideration before acting—gets labeled as resistance.

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When the triangle works

Picture the triangle: dog, owner, trainer. When it works, all three understand what and who their Swissy is and why.

My Emmie did not enjoy heeling in obedience. “You go ahead,” she seemed to say. “I know you’re coming back, so I’ll wait right here.” My Lehigh, by contrast, was all in—earning the Carolyn White Memorial Trophy with his enthusiastic precision. Same breed, different expressions of the same intelligence.

A skilled trainer recognizes that hesitation before a recall isn’t defiance. The dog is processing context, reading the handler, checking for clarity. Swissys notice inconsistencies because they were bred to.

The owner learns to communicate more clearly—not because their dog is slow, but because their dog is smart enough to detect contradictions. The dog relaxes when expectations are fair, consistent, and respectful of their thoughtfulness.



When the triangle fractures

Trouble starts when a Swissy is handed to a trainer whose methods worked beautifully on their last 10 dogs—Border Collies, Goldens, German Shepherds. Or when owners compare themselves to others.

Techniques designed for rapid-fire obedience meet a dog bred for independent judgment. Processing time is interpreted as stubbornness. Pressure increases. The dog doesn’t become more compliant; they become confused, then wary, then

they shut down. Or they comply mechanically, and the spark that makes a Swissy such a remarkable partner quietly dims.

And the owner is stuck—wanting to trust professional expertise, while knowing in their gut that something isn’t right.

The uncomfortable economics

Professional training is expensive, and rightly so. But many programs rely on efficiency: predictable timelines, broadly effective methods.

COURTESY LYNDIA BEAM

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A Swissy challenges that model. They mature slowly. They need relationship before repetition. Breed-appropriate training often means more time, more nuance, and higher cost. And, right timing.

Owners are left with a choice: Invest in specialized understanding, or risk damaging their dog's confidence with methods never designed for this temperament.

The question that matters

Before writing the check or loading your Swissy into someone else's truck, ask this: *Does this trainer understand what my dog was bred to do?* Not just "giant breeds." Not just "working dogs." But this breed—its history, its intelligence, its need to think before acting.

If the trainer seems annoyed by the question, you already have your answer. If not, you may have found a partner for you and your dog.

Advocating without apology

Trust your instincts.

Asking for understanding and adjustments doesn't make you a difficult client; it makes you who your Swissy needs. The same independence that looks like stubbornness in the wrong hands becomes brilliance in the right ones. Swissys are reading us constantly, offering their intelligence in partnership if we're wise enough to meet them halfway.

Your job isn't to force your dog into someone else's mold. It's to find the trainer who understands that sometimes the mold itself needs adjusting.

—Tracey Brant

[Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of America](#)

Komondorok

HOW PEOPLE LEARN OUR BREED DIFFERENTLY

When teaching prospective judges about Komondors, we must think about what we need to teach and how to get the message across. The message must highlight the key points

about our unique breed while also catering to the people in the audience. In a room of students, there will be people who have divergent learning needs. Some are good listeners, some learn by observation, and some won't get it until they can use their hands.

Many people learn differently. Sometimes prospective judges from short-coated breeds have learned how to evaluate their own dogs just by looking (visual learners), and they bring that skill to all the breeds they hope to judge.

It only works part of the way for Komondors. What can they see? They can see how tall the dog is and how long its coat is. So, this is the minimum (and inadequate) evaluation we sometimes get, since being bigger isn't the same as being better. (Our standard says: "While large size is important, type, character, symmetry, movement and ruggedness are of the greatest importance and are on no account to be sacrificed for size alone.") Also,

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You must feel the dogs to “see” through the coat



A slide from Komondor Club of America judges' education

our standard says: “It must be remembered that the length of the Komondor’s coat is a function of age, and a younger dog must never be penalized for having a shorter coat.” So, a failure on both features.

On the good side, Komondor movement “Light, leisurely and balanced” and “The

Komondor takes long strides, is very agile and light on his feet” can be evaluated by the visual learner. Balance can be judged by watching the footfall, front and rear. A dog who “takes long strides” reaches out almost to their nose and drives through in the rear, with the pads becoming visible going away. Except for

a Komondor who is in the most difficult coat stage (like a porcupine), the solid and steady topline can also be observed.

Prospective judges from heavily coated breeds learn to “see” with their hands. Imagine finding the important skeletal and muscle features of a Doberman with your eyes closed. The

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breadth and length of the head, the smooth transition from neck through the withers to the topline, the angle of the shoulders and position of them relative to the prosternum can all be “seen” with a well-directed examination. Similarly, the depth of chest, length of the ribcage, and the slightly sloping rump can be felt. Those are good things to evaluate, but only in combination with the “symmetry, movement and ruggedness” which a judge must see through the coat on the move.

In seminars we find that some people like picture examples (visual), some are good at listening to the presenter (who shouldn’t be just reading the standard), and some learn by reading the slide. So, the best slides have an instructive illustration or picture, a short, written clarification, and the presenter should have a story or some key emphasis points that add to the focus of the education.

For the slide shown, the

presenter could be saying: “Dog ‘A’ does not have enough depth of chest and has a straight front. Rear angles look OK. Bitch ‘B’ has a good front and topline, but her rear may be weak, since her hocks are not parallel as shown in this picture. Both examples have good proportions (slightly longer than tall) and good head and neck.” That would cover the needs of the visual learner, the person who learns by reading, and a good listener.

—Eric Liebes,
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Komondor Club of America

Kuvaszok

A LESSON ON CORRECT KUVASZ COAT COLOR

In 1998, I served as chairman of the Kuvasz Breed Standard Revision Committee, working alongside esteemed committee members the late Dr. Henry Nichols, Marla Conkey, Agi Hejji, and Sue Riipa. The question before us was singular: whether to remove

a disqualification from the Kuvasz breed standard, specifically, the phrase “Any color other than white.”

“White” seems straightforward until you try to define it. We perceive white when light stimulates all three types of color-sensitive cone cells in the human eye equally. True white lacks hue and grayness, yet in practical terms, white exists in countless variations. Slight differences in pigment, coat texture, age, and environment can all create perfectly normal off-white nuances.

Before 1999, the AKC standard for the Kuvasz included a disqualification for “Any color other than white.” Presumably, the intent was to preserve the Kuvasz as a self-colored dog, meaning the entire body is one consistent shade without markings (unlike other livestock-guarding breeds such as the Great Pyrenees, which allows for markings of tan, badger, gray, or reddish brown).

Yet during the 1980s and 1990s, a strange and

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troubling trend emerged in the conformation ring. An increasing number of high-quality Kuvasz were being disqualified by judges for not being “white.” It happened often enough to become a real problem. There was even a judge who would hold his starched white shirt-sleeve against a dog’s coat and disqualify any dog that fell short of

that comparison.

The result was predictable and unfortunate: Judges began rewarding the brightest white dogs while overlooking far more important breed characteristics.

Despite the Kuvasz Club of America Judges Education Committee’s tireless efforts to educate judges about natural variation in white coats, the issue

On left, the coat of a 6-month-old male puppy, freshly bathed; right, the coat of a 2-year-old female who has not been bathed in approximately two months. Natural variation in tone affected by age, coat condition, grooming interval, and environmental exposure should not be mistaken for a fault. A correct Kuvasz coat is white in its natural variations, and it should never be a reason to overlook the breed’s essential type, soundness, and working character.

persisted. Our educational efforts even included making a “white board” using paint cards and swatches to represent a full range of white variations and provide a clear visual lesson.

Still, the problem continued. The unintended consequence was that many exhibitors felt compelled to bleach their Kuvasz simply to avoid disqualification.

Excessive whitening treatments not only damage coat texture and overall coat health, but they also place an inappropriate emphasis on show-ring glamour for a breed meant to be a naturally functional livestock

COURTESY MARIA ARECHAEDERRA

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guardian. Reasonable preparation such as whitening shampoos, blow-drying, and minimal chalking of stains can be part of proper presentation. But altering coat color to meet an unrealistic expectation is not only illegal but shifts focus away from the essence of the breed.

The goal of the standard revision was to keep the Kuvasz a working dog first: judged on overall structure, movement, temperament, and that beautifully unique headpiece, not solely on coat brightness.

Which brings us to the unretouched photo accompanying this column, which I was inspired to take one morning. On the left is the coat of a 6-month-old male puppy, freshly bathed. On the right is the coat of a 2-year-old female who has not been bathed in approximately two months. Of course, she would never be shown in an unbathed condition. But the comparison serves an important purpose: to illustrate that even

without recent bathing, her coat is still white. Natural variation in tone affected by age, coat condition, grooming interval, and environmental exposure should not be mistaken for a fault.

Judges should not reward coats that are obviously bleached or excessively groomed, because doing so ultimately harms the breed. The Kuvasz is a natural working dog, and its coat should be evaluated accordingly. Overemphasizing an artificial, “paper-white” look not only skews proper breed assessment but also encourages grooming practices that compromise coat texture and health.

Twenty-seven years later, we continue to hear concerns from judges that we need to further define “white” in our standard to avoid confusion. A standard revision is not a task undertaken lightly. Like any breed standard, there can always be improvement, and there are sections that could certainly be made more clear. But that is a decision for the

parent club and its members to make, and not the subject of this column.

In the meantime, by recognizing the range of acceptable whites within the Kuvasz breed standard, judges and exhibitors can help ensure this magnificent working breed is evaluated on its true merits—headpiece, structure, movement, and function—rather than an unrealistic expectation of coat brightness. A correct Kuvasz coat is white in its natural variations, and it should never be a reason to overlook the breed’s essential type, soundness, and working character.

—Maria Arechaederra,
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Leonbergers

A JOURNEY OF LOVE

For every winning moment in the ring at the Westminster Kennel Club dog show, there are years, even decades of

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Success resulting from years in the breed: Kerry Rushby's history with Leonbergers goes back to her childhood. Neville (Ch. Corleone Navigator at Kalizmar), BB at Westminster this year (far right) handled by Vickie Venzen, was also BB at Crufts. He is co-owned by Kerry Rushby and Lee Studholme.

experience that went into that moment. For the owners of the Leonberger that took breed at this year's Westminster, this certainly rings true. Handled beautifully by Vickie Venzen,



Neville (Ch. Corleone Navigator at Kalizmar) is co-owned by Kerry Rushby and Lee Studholme. His success was the result of just such experience and years in the breed.

Kerry Rushby's history with Leonbergers goes back to her childhood, and her parents already had many years of experience with several dog breeds



before that happened. But there was something special about Leonbergers that spoke to Rushby and her parents right from the start. Leonbergers were just starting to be shown in the U.K. at the time, but they were already making a good impression.

COURTESY OWNERS

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Her family's first Leonberger was born in 1992. Fudge (Manorguard Away We Go to Jocolda) went on to take breed at Crufts in 1995. In 1997 Fudge was bred to Velvet Viking of Vannroy, and they ended up keeping the solo puppy, Gucci, who went on to produce the U.K.'s first male champion Leonberger, Jocolda Jasper Conran. Rushby was 13 at that time.

There was one female pup not spoken for in that same litter, and Rushby asked her parents if she could keep her. Thus Georgia (aka Jocolda Georgio) became Kerry's first show dog. Georgia had a somewhat slow start in the show ring, but took breed under judge Frank Kane, who loved her but thought she just needed to mature. Her first litter produced five pups, and when Georgia returned to Crufts in 2003, she took Best Female and Best of Opposite Sex to Petra Junehall's lovely dog Grizzly. In 2004, she again took Best Female and also Best of

Breed at Crufts.

Rushby said, "Her father, Manorguard Son of Adam, was Reserve Best Male the same day—quite the family affair. Back in those days, the breed only had seven shows a year where championship awards were on offer. Georgia gained her U.K. championship title at the last show of 2004, taking Best of Breed. But the icing on the cake that day was Georgia's son Kode taking his first CC win and being Best Male, and Best Opposite Sex to his mother. So proving my involvement was serious, and campaigning Georgia to her Champion title, I decided it was time to learn about judging."

Rushby started judging in 2005, working hard and learning everything she could, and in 2013 was approved by the Kennel Club to award CCs to Leonbergers. (The dog show rules are a bit different in the UK, but basically a CC is a Challenge Certificate, and is only given out best-of-sex

winners at championship shows. A dog must earn three CCs from different judges to become a champion, or two CCs and five reserve CCs since 2023.)

Rushby is the youngest person in the Kennel Club to award CCs in Leonbergers. She had her first overseas judging appointment in Norway in 2015. Since then she has had the honor of judging the breed in Sweden, Finland, Germany, France (at Cluny), Russia, Netherlands, Belgium, and the U.S.

Rushby has bred eight litters since 2006, producing six U.K. champions and two New Zealand champions. She has owned or co-owned five U.K. champions, including the U.K. breed record holder, Neville (Ch. Corleone Navigator at Kalizmar), whom she co-owns with Lee Studholme. She has owned or co-owned two Crufts Best of Breed winners (Georgia and Neville) and bred one Crufts Best of

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Breed winner (Leosrus One Moment in Time), who won breed in 2016.

At the age of just barely 40, that is quite an accomplishment from the age of 13, when she first actively started showing.

—Shannon White,

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Leonberger Club of America



Mastiffs

WELL-KNIT

The AKC breed standard for the Mastiff begins with “General Appearance: The Mastiff is a large, massive, symmetrical dog with a well-knit frame.”

The question is, what does “well-knit” actually mean? This is a question often heard during judges’ education training.

We think of “well-knit” as referring to a dog with a compact structure such as a Doberman or Cane Corso, where everything lends to power. The muscles are well

defined, the bone structure is tight, and the movement is powerful. Is this what we are imagining when we see a Mastiff in the ring?

Originally, the foundation of the Mastiff was a predator. Bas relief sculptures thousands of years old show powerful, muscular dogs called *alauntes* that were the predecessor of many of the current molossers, including and especially the modern Mastiff. The Mastiff was a strong, powerful dog that could hunt, was used for combat in wars, and fought in the coliseums of

Rome. Large numbers of Mastiffs crossed the Alps with Hannibal; although the actual number is not known. Genghis Khan supposedly maintained over 50,000 Mastiffs in his kennels.

Seen in the conformation ring, the structure of the Mastiff changes noticeably according to its age. A puppy that weighs a pound and a half or two pounds at birth may weigh as much as 170 pounds or more at 12 months of age. The dramatic growth and physical changes that take place in the first year or two of a Mastiff’s

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life are extreme. Puppies do not generally display the hard-bodied, chiseled structure that they will demonstrate as mature dogs. This is when many judges look at puppies and make a critical mistake. A puppy that moves well is a treasure, but consider the rapid growth factor.

A normal Mastiff puppy gains four pounds or more a week during its first year of life. The bones are malleable. Imagine that the long bone in your arm or leg grows at a rate of an inch in a week. Think how soft the bone would have to be to sustain that level of extension. Judges will occasionally look at a Mastiff puppy and say, “Your puppy needs to gain about 5 to 10 pounds.” They see this growing youngster as being too thin and needing more heft. Veteran breeders know better. Keeping puppies lighter-weight preserves the structure while the puppy is growing. Too much weight on a puppy damages the underlying bone structure and shortens the life of the dog.

Mature Mastiffs have powerful movement and cover ground quickly with great reach and drive. Muscles are strong and defined, and bone is large and well developed. The appearance of the dog lends to power and strength. The movement never wobbles or appears loose. The well-knit frame is apparent. The Mastiff does not suspend, paddle, or flip its front feet. It should not be cow-hocked, sickle-hocked, nor straight stifled showing piston action in the rear. Correct drive extends behind the dog, propelling him forward.

From across the ring, the Mastiff should look like a Mastiff, move like a Mastiff, and behave like a Mastiff. Breed type is apparent. The judge’s eyes define structural proportion and correct movement, but the judge’s hands tell the real story. In going over the dog during the examination, a judge should be able to confirm the quality of muscle and bone.

“Well-knit” refers to the

underlying structure of the dog, the hard muscle, and the powerful skeletal assembly with correct balance and angulation. One of the noticeable characteristics in a Mastiff is that when moving, the Mastiff has some loose skin on its body. It should never have folds or wrinkles such as a Neapolitan does, but when a Mastiff moves the skin will roll slightly side to side. This is not incorrect and is more noticeable on a brindle than on a fawn or apricot, simply because the pattern makes the skin movement more distinguishable. This does not apply to quality of the underlying structure. A mature Mastiff should have a stable, cohesive frame, tight, strong joints that allow correct movement, a ground-covering gait, full extension, and great power. These are the components of a well-knit frame.

—Catherine Angus
(Zavoras),

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[Mastiff Club of America](#)

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Neapolitan Mastiffs

FIVE CONCEPTS TO REMEMBER WHEN CHANGING AN AKC STANDARD

These are five concepts I think need to be remembered when changing a breed standard.

The first rule is the simplest:

1. Do not add words unless absolutely necessary.

What you and I think is crystal clear will be misunderstood in the most amazing ways by others. Every word is a potential for another word to be misunderstood. So the fewer words the better.

Remember, most judges are trying to learn multiple standards for multiple breeds at the same time. They are not just listening to your explanation of what you mean, but they are also listening to other breed explanations about the same words. Often if the other breed's explanation makes more sense to them, that's what sticks.

So be very clear on the reason for and the meaning



Neapolitan Mastiff

of any word you want to add.

The second rule sounds simple but is very important:

2. If you must add or change a word, have a good reason.

Not all reasons are good ones. To me, the *only* good reason to add or change a word in the standard is if the word (phrase) was wrong, and judges who truly fol-

lowed it were picking the wrong dogs.

Less good reasons: "Someone 'might' make a mistake!" The way to fix this is not to change the standard but to be sure you have clear judges' education materials. And during your JE, speak up about these possible mistakes and how to not make them.

DAVID WOO ©AKC

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Another less-good reason: You believe this is a better word. Whatever word you pick will introduce more questions or will result in the problem of rule #5. Instead, use your judges' education seminar to discuss this word and other possibilities and explain why.

And another less-good reason: Trying to eliminate common questions. Some questions are inevitable, and that's not always bad. Remember, often judges come from "the same place" as one who took the seminar last time, so they will ask the same question. You'll never eliminate questions by changing words or adding more words to the standard; you'll just create different questions. I recommend welcoming common questions. Expect them, respond to them before they get asked! (Besides, it makes you look prescient.)

The third rule is simple:

3. Be sure anything clearly measurable in the standard is something on which you want the dogs selected or eliminated.

Judges will feel justified in focusing on that when making their decisions, and they'll say, "Well, your standard says you want this, so I couldn't put that dog up." If it is measurable, it will be measured.

The fourth rule is a little more complicated:

4. The average judge tends to focus on construction first.

This is actually logical, because construction is definable and measurable, and much of it is in fact common across most breeds, so it's easier to learn.

Because of this, I have learned that when a judge first reads a standard, they quickly look at:

- DQs
- Topline (level, sloped, rising, or—?)
- Front (straight, wrap-around, bowed, or—?)
- Proportions (rectangular or square, or—?)
- Skull Proportions (muzzle to cranium, type of stop, where are the ears, size/shape of eyes)
- Bite (scissors, level, undershot, overshot, or—?)

- Angulation (moderate, extreme, or—?)
- Tail (length, carriage)
- Foot shape and dewclaws
- Anything the breed focuses on as measurable

Remember, judges must be able to easily and quickly assess an entry in the ring, and they will do so first on these visible characteristics. So, for example, if the standard says "level topline," they will nearly always mentally eliminate all dogs without a level topline first, no matter what other attributes the dog has. Same thing with bite, and so on.

I'm not saying this is bad. But you need to be aware of this when understanding how to word a standard. And how to teach it.

The fifth rule is probably the most important:

5. Remember: Anything you change will be perceived as important and will receive major focus in all future judging.

Changing standards in the world of AKC is not done quickly or easily, and it's always controversial in any

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breed community. Because of this, any change that makes it through all the steps within the club and within the AKC will be perceived as critical to judges. Why else would the club want it changed?

Judges will read all the changes and think these are very important things to pick the dogs on. They will think they must have been getting it wrong before—why else would the club change it?

Even if you think you're just clarifying something, the result will be that you've now raised the level of importance so that it now becomes something the judges use to eliminate (or select) dogs.

Personally, 99 percent of the time I personally am a bigger fan of adjusting, changing, adding to your JE presentation and discussion than of changing the actual standard.

—Margaret R. (Peggy) Wolfe,

Margaret.peggy.wolfe@gmail.com

United States Neapolitan Mastiff Club

Newfoundlands

FLYING NEWFOUNDLANDS

Newfoundland dogs are well known for their water skills, but did you know they can now take flight? We recently traveled on dog-friendly RetrieveAir from Long Island to Denver with our two Newfoundlands—Willow, a 4-year-old female, and Elsa, a 15-week-old puppy.

Although “gentle giant” breeds are sometimes prohibited from flying on the dog-friendly airlines, RetrieveAir allows dogs of all sizes. A separate seat must be booked for large dogs, so we purchased four seats for \$7,600. As in other aspects of Newfoundland ownership, flying with this breed is expensive, more than the cost of first-class tickets on a commercial airline.

The entire experience was in keeping with the airline's retriever-like values of friendliness, joy, reliability, and trust. These are good traits in a dog, and equally good traits for an airline.

The company currently offers a weekly flight from west to east, and then back again from east to west. However, RetrieveAir's founders recently presented on Shark Tank and successfully secured additional funding. They have seen an uptick in bookings and will be adding more flights.

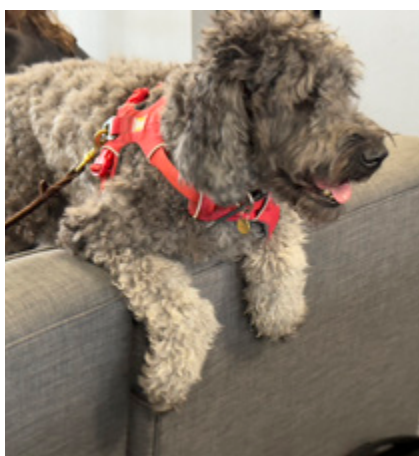
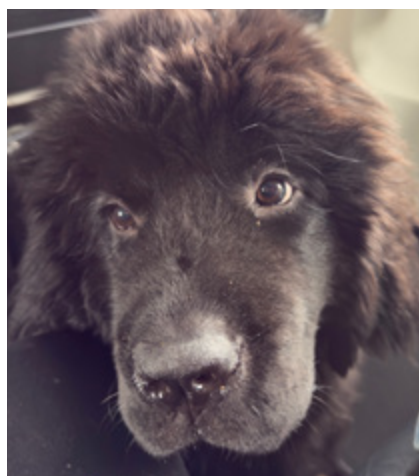
Dog-friendly flights where dogs and their humans fly together in the cabin are a growing market, and the global pet travel services industry, estimated at \$2.6 billion, is expected to grow to \$5.4 billion in 2030.

Many dog airlines did not allow large dogs, but that is beginning to change. JXC airlines, with numerous flights connecting southern cities in the U.S., permits only dogs less than 80 pounds. Bark-Air allows larger dogs and is a good option for international destinations, while K9air allows giant breeds but mostly flies to international cities.

For our trip to Denver last Friday, we arrived early at the designated terminal

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Newfoundland Elsa boarding; Elsa on the plane; canine passengers and their owners waiting to board.

at Farmingdale airport on Long Island. When we entered the lobby and saw two Shetland Sheepdogs and their owners comfortably resting on an oversized couch, we knew we were in the right place.

Over the next hour, 15 dogs and their people arrived with luggage and leashes. Everyone asked

friendly questions about each other's dogs and travel plans. Many customers were flying home with their pets for the Thanksgiving vacation. Many were repeat customers, even though the airline only started flying in May 2025. Most dogs calmly sat next to their owners, but a few barked at the furry commotion, and a feisty Chihuahua was escorted into the pilot's lounge to chill out. I'll confess, the lobby smelled a bit doggy, but in a nice way.

As we waited to go through a relaxed TSA screening and board the flight, several upbeat ladies

offered samples of Smush, a healthy premium dog snack that the Newfs loved.

Liz, an extremely friendly greeter, stewardess, and receptionist rolled into one, arrived and checked in passengers. She told me, "It's a dream job. There is an immediate connection through dogs before people even get on the plane."

On the flights since May, there have been no dog fights and no poops. Even the two Cane Corsos got along with the other dogs. This is quite an impressive record!

The trip from New York to San Francisco is divided

KATIE DOLAN

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into segments of approximately two and a half hours, which works well for people and pooch potty-breaks at each stop. In the air, people read while their dogs slept. Liz offered human refreshments and additional Shmush biscuits. Elsa, with teddy-bear fur, fit under the seat and promptly fell asleep after a morning of pats.

Willow's front end stuck out into the aisle on the segment from New York to Chicago (Liz graciously stepped over her as she served everyone), but the problem was solved when we were reassigned to the bulkhead seat for the Chicago to Denver segment. Willow could comfortably lie down at my feet.

The camper van gatherings at dog shows create lifelong friendships, but sometimes you just need to get from Point A to Point B. So, the next time you need to travel with your Newfoundland, you might want to explore this relaxing, retriever-like flying option. And be sure to request the bulkhead seat!

—Katie Dolan,
katie@katiedolan.net
Newfoundland Club of
America

Portuguese Water Dogs

RAISING CAIN!—REARING PORTUGUESE WATER DOG PUPPIES

When I and my brood bitch make it through the whelp and all is well, I get to enjoy a few weeks when my main job is taking care of the dam and keeping her whelping box warm and clean. The pups start out as rather uninteresting potatoes with legs, and by the 10th day or so, they start opening their eyes and staggering about like drunken sailors and become more interesting.

By week three, they are toddling around, a few might try to escape, and they are starting to play, though clumsily, with their littermates. Except for early neurological stimulation exercises, I let my dam pretty much do all the work with the puppies the first

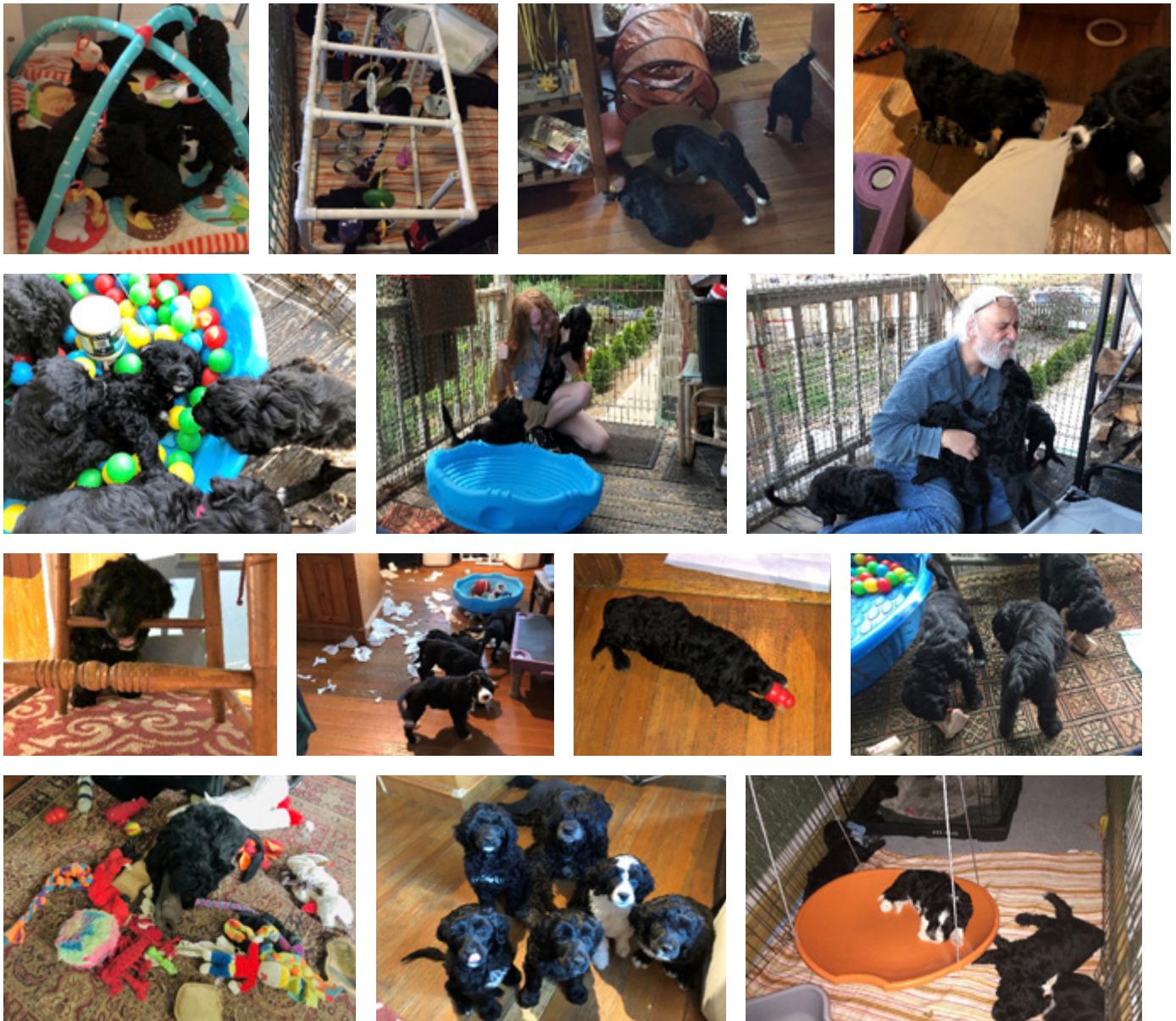
few weeks. But in my last two litters, I started exposing the puppies to novel odors (rabbit fur, pinecones, grass, and so on) before they opened their eyes and noted their responses to these substances (repelled, attracted, neutral). Once their eyes opened, I started introducing something new into their pen each day.

The big change comes in the fourth week, when I move the litter to a bigger space and start feeding the pups mushy food. The dam is still doing a lot of work to keep the pups clean, but this is when many breeders start introducing barrier challenges, singing/moving toys, different surfaces (tarps, carpets, wood), small cat tunnels, and so on.

Because I live in an old 1890s house, I move my litters from the quiet upstairs bedroom where they are whelped to my first-floor area between my living room and kitchen, where they are exposed to kitchen sounds and TV programs. Their

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Four-week-old PWD pups with new toy; “adventure box”; tunnels and wobble-board; pant legs make great tugs; ball-pit pool; niece’s hair is a great tug-toy; husband’s beard is also an alluring tug-toy; beaver-like activity on chair legs; PWD pups are very fond of paper; getting frozen food out of a Kong is a useful mental game; meaty bones provide another good pastime; a “puppy midden” of various toy items; young pups can learn to sit and be calm; tired pups.

sleeping space doubles, but all playtime occurs in the

kitchen, so my puppies must learn to leave their quarters,

cross a barrier, and run into the kitchen, where I gate

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them in for feeding and playtime.

As the weeks progress from 4 to 9, my puppies get more and more things to navigate: puppy tip-boards, larger tunnels, a ball-pit box, an adventure box with all kinds of hanging objects made of different materials, kibble scatters or kibble-dispensing toys, my very patient and dog-friendly cat, and a variety of visits by potential owners, who come with shoelaces, long hair, and baggy pants—all of which are wonderful potential tugs.

When the weather is warm enough, I also let the puppies out the kitchen door into an enclosed porch, where they are exposed to traffic noises, sirens, and children playing street hockey.

Because these are water dogs, I also set up a baby pool filled with pit balls—for the first week or so I toss kibble into that pool, so the pups snuffle around the balls to find the food. After this pool is a favorite item, I sur-

prise the puppies by putting water into the pool to assess which puppies are water lovers, and which are more skittery about getting wet.

Portuguese Water Dogs are very resistant to fatigue. This resistance also applies to the puppies, and they often play for one to one-and-a-half hours before passing out. This surprises potential owners who think that hard play should wipe the puppies out in a half-hour or so.

While all puppies are bitey while teething, PWDs are particularly bitey, and they love to chew—in fact, they can and will act like a family of beavers and chew through chair legs, cabinet edges, and door edgings. Hence it is important to provide the pups with meaty bones and other chew objects to satisfy their seemingly endless obsession with chewing.

Stuffed toys get demolished. Pit balls get punctured and crushed. Paper towel rolls and toilet paper are particularly

alluring, and shredding can happen in seconds.

This breed also finds jumping up and grabbing particularly rewarding—in that regard they are Malinois wannabes, with equally hard mouths. Basically, these pups are chaos incarnate.

Nevertheless, I have found that pups younger than 8 weeks can learn to sit, take treats calmly while taking turns, and control their impulses.

No matter how much breeders try to prepare potential owners for the activity level, mouthiness, and jumpiness of this breed, most new owners are always surprised at how much work these puppies are for the first year of life. Owners think that physically exercising their puppies should help tamp down their energy—but in fact that just builds endurance. Instead, providing lots and lots of mental stimulation through scent work games, tricks, and cleaning up toy middens, and teaching manners is far more exhausting for

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puppies and the best way to approach owning this working breed.

We breeders try to lay the foundation for a well-rounded puppy that has been exposed to many sounds, textures, and objects, and if owners keep mentally stimulating their young dogs and focusing their mouthiness onto bones and chew toys, this breed can make a wonderful companion.

—Kari L. Lavalli, Ph.D
Portuguese Water Dog
Club of America

Rottweilers

WORDS OF WISDOM ON STUD DOGS, ACCORDING TO JILL

There is, of course, no definitive guide on stud dogs. The following is based on experience as a competitor, occasional breeder, and rescuer.

Back in the 1990s, I was the usual critique typist for the American Rottweiler Verein, a German-style active club founded by Eckart Salquist of Jenecks



Rottweiler

Rottweilers. A couple of guys were hounding Eckart with questions such as “Who has good stud dogs?” “Who do you like?” “What dog should I use?” and “How do *you* choose a stud dog, Eckart?” I was standing nearby, just listening.

Eckart calmly said, “Breed to the dog you like.”

He didn’t mean the #1 dog, or the most titled dog, or the dog owned by someone prominent in the breed, or anything extraneous to the actual real-life

dog. *Breed to the dog you like.* In other words, do you actually *like* the dog? Do you like the dog’s personality? Do you like the way the dog holds and presents himself? Do you like the dog?

It doesn’t matter if the dog belong to your neighbor, has no titles, or hasn’t been campaigned for the Top 10. Is it a nice dog that has what you like and could be a partner in a good pairing?

Which leads me to a few of my own sayings.

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First: If I don't like the owners of the bitch enough to invite them in to my home for dinner with my non-dog husband, I turn down the breeding. I must feel comfortable with their sanity, ability to adapt to obstacles and tough situations, to be able to help any offspring that needs to come home for any reason at any time—no if, ands, or buts—and to keep me advised as to where puppies are going and how their doing.

In short, no crazy people, no victims, no blamers, no double-talking gossipers.

Next, I always say, "A good stud dog can *complement* a good bitch, but he cannot *compensate* for a poor one."

I know it's exciting when someone brings a bitch to you for breeding. But look at her: Is she ugly? How is her angulation? Hocks? Shoulders? Head type? Is she correct? How is her temperament? Confident? Loves to play? Shy? Anxious? Stable and trustworthy? Reactive

and insecure?

This leads to my follow up saying: "If I wouldn't take her home to live in my own house, then I won't breed to it." I must love the bitch enough I would gladly bring her home, be confident she would be good with family and lifestyle. She is trustworthy and adaptable, thoughtful, judicious and appropriate.

Above all else, both breeding partners must be healthy, tested, and good with children. Yes, I said it: good with children. If they are not, then they are not right in the head for our breed. And I would hope you would not like the dog. Enough said.

—Jill Kessler Miller,
jillkessler@me.com
American Rottweiler Club

Saint Bernards

The following is written in the voice of a young boy who is happy to get his first puppy after having wanted a Saint Bernard for as long as he could remember.

MY PUPPY

We are getting a puppy for Christmas. I am so excited. I have wanted a Saint Bernard for all of my nine years on this earth. We are going to a kennel to pick out our puppy tomorrow. I can hardly wait.

The puppies are so cute and wiggly. One just licked my face. I think he wants to go home with me. I asked if I can have this one, and the lady said yes.

So after getting some paperwork done, we are off to home. The puppy is riding in the back of the car, while I am in the back seat.

At home we set up his water bowl and a quiet place to feed him every morning and afternoon. He is so happy to be with me, and I love him so much.

Day after day I take care of him. We have decided to call him Bruce. I think it is a nice name. Bruce sleeps in my room (sometimes I get up in the middle of the night and put Bruce in my bed with me). He loves to snuggle. Sometimes he puts

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Saint Bernard

his head on my pillow, and I think it is cute so I let him have it.

Bruce is now 5 months old, and boy, is he growing. His paws are really big. He goes outside to “do his business,” and when he comes back in the house he makes footprints all over the kitchen floor. Mom doesn’t like that, so I mop the floor almost daily. Bruce drinks a lot of water and sometimes makes a mess around his bucket (he grew out of the bowl).

Bruce eats a lot. We still feed him twice a day as he

is still growing. I wonder if he will get as big and heavy-looking as his parents.

At night we watch a little TV together. Bruce likes to sit on the couch with us. He takes up one whole seat. He is a good boy.

Tonight Bruce spread out over two couch cushions, Mom did not like that. He is taking up a lot of room now. He is growing up quickly. I think he is going to be a really big dog. Mom said that Bruce is not to be allowed on the couch from now on. I don’t think Bruce is going to like that. At least

he still can get in bed with me. He is so big now he can get up on the bed all by himself. He also has his own pillow now. I got a new one. His pillow has slobber on it, and that is gross.

He weighed 125 pounds at the vet’s office this morning. He is big. Mom said that Bruce might have to be outside in a kennel. I will cry if that happens, and I think Bruce will cry too.

There is a moral to this story: If you have a big dog such as a Saint Bernard or any other large breed, you cannot treat them like a lapdog. They grow up and take up a lot of room. Keep them on the floor, not on the couch, and definitely not in a child’s bed. Big dogs have big appetite for water and food. They eliminate large amounts of digested food and water. And they have big feet that will track in dirt. Please be aware of the consequences of owning a large animal.

Don’t forget you can donate to the tax-deductible Saint Bernard Club of

COURTESY LYNDA BEAM

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America Charitable Foundation by contacting Bill Hinchman at nightsky-saints@gmail.com. You can ask that your donation be used to publish the *Saint Fancier*, if that is your preference. Just let Bill know.

Until next time, majors to all.

—Anna May Fleischli Brown, Edelweiss Kennels, reg. since 1894

www.edelweisskennel.com;
stedelweis@aol.com

[Saint Bernard Club of America](#)

Standard Schnauzers

YOUR STANDARD SCHNAUZER IS STILL HERE

Although for me 2025 was a year of loss, this column is about love and joy. While our own Standard Schnauzers, Larissa and Flash, are as healthy and exuberant as ever, several of our friends and family have grieved over their deceased dogs, mostly in other breeds.

I thought about loss: the loss of our beloved canine family members, how we as

adults deal with it, how we explain their loss to children, and how to help their canine brethren (and sistren?) grieve.

Charley, my first champion Standard Schnauzer, was born in 1967, and I became hooked on dog shows. I searched and located Charley's mail-order bride in Pittsburgh; we showed Frosty to her championship and got hooked on performance, pursuing her CD. I've had these multi-titled salt-and-pepper comedians ever since.

We've lost many SS since then, each of whom had their own distinct little quirks and personalities. Sometimes remembering prompts a surge of grief and tears, but however short their lives are, the delight of years in their company outweighs the grief of their passing.

Dog lover Rudyard Kipling wrote about "giving your heart to a dog to tear," and Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote: "'Tis better to have loved and lost than never to

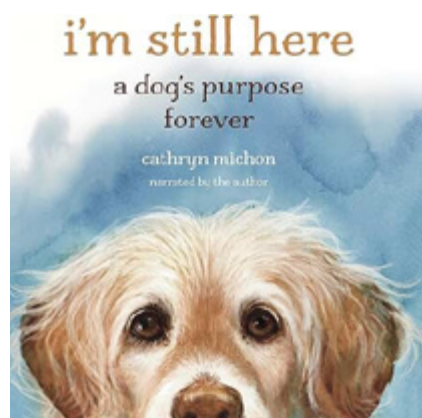
have loved at all." Surely he meant dogs!

As adults, we keenly feel the loss of every one of our SS. Losing one is bad enough, but one horrific year both my Wüstefuchs foundation dogs, Charley and Frosty, died three weeks apart. (I've always thought Frosty died of grief.) Another awful year, we lost three of our wonderful clowns, champions and performance titleholders all. We told each other stories of their antics, tales of our travels to dog shows around the country, and of the canine characters our furkids met along the way who became their friends—these yarns made us laugh in remembrance and eased our grief somewhat, but grief never fully goes away.

Our SS grieved in their own doggy way. For a few weeks after each death, our grieving SS spent much time lying in "special" spots (under the dining-room table, by one of the sliding doors, near the hearth), snuggling one or another of

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the deceased's favorite toys.

I found a wonderful book for helping both adults and children through the initial phase of intense grief from a dear dog's death.

I'm Still Here (ISBN 978-1-5248-9381-1), by Cathryn Michon, is narrated by her angel dog, who is still Here while at the same time being There.

Full of excellent watercolors by Seth Taylor illustrating the book's points, it was intended as a children's book, but it grapples with adult emotions as well. The dog may have left this plane of existence (Here) to go to Heaven or the Rainbow Bridge (There), but the love between a dog and his humans lives on in the memories of those who



I'm Still Here provides help and comfort for both adults and children grieving a pet's death; above, "Rainbow Bridge" originator Edna Clyne at age 19 with Major, her yellow Labrador Retriever, Inverness, Scotland, 1959; right, Edna Clyne-Rekhy, age 82, and her dogs Zanussi (11) and Missy, February 2023.

loved and knew him.

This clever angel dog rhapsodizes about "the eternal nature of our souls and the amazing sound of crinkly wrappers that means a treat is about to be given." *I'm Still Here* is a book to comfort both children and adults for its uplifting prose and its admirable watercolors.



The book's back cover has a fine illustration of canine friendship: our angel dog racing in joyous competition with an angel black Lab. On the back cover, W. Bruce Cameron, author of *A Dog's Purpose*, wrote: "This is not a book about grief; this is a book about a return to joy. Who better to explain the

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eternal nature of our souls, and the love between them, than one very wise dog who loves you and is watching over you, eagerly awaiting until you meet again? *I'm Still Here* is a brilliant, healing, happy book.”

“The death of a beloved pet, whether it’s the family dog, a furry kitty, or something a little more obscure, is a sad occasion. Rainbow Bridge National Remembrance Day on August 28 is the day that we remember the pets that are no longer with us. Whilst the pain of losing a pet somewhat heals over time, they are never forgotten, and [Aug. 28] is their day. The day was founded by author Deborah Barnes as a way for people to share their memories of the pets that they have lost, whether it’s a dog, a hamster, or a snake.” <https://nationaltoday.com/rainbow-bridge-remembrance-day/>

“The Rainbow Bridge,” originally an essay about pet loss, joy, and healing, has appeared in several forms

over the years, sometimes with word changes, usually as a poem, and always attributed to that great and prolific author, Anonymous. No matter the incarnation, it never fails to bring on my tears.

Despite the overwhelming popularity of “The Rainbow Bridge,” its author had never received credit. At the request of a fan, a version of “The Rainbow Bridge” appeared in a “Dear Abby” column in 1995; an appeal for the author to step forward brought on a flurry of spurious claims to authorship. However, Paul Koudounaris, Ph.D., at the time working on a book chronicling pet cemeteries, repeatedly encountered references to the Rainbow Bridge. He was not content to let this beautiful tribute to a much-loved dog spend eternity without its true author being recognized. After his retirement in Tucson, he devoted several years trying to track down the author. At last, he found Edna Clyne-Rekhy in a remote village in

Scotland. His discovery later was validated by National Geographic.

In 1959, Edna Clyne, at age 19, was living in Inverness, Scotland, when her first dog, Major, a yellow Labrador Retriever, died in her arms. “‘He was a very special dog,’ she told me, ‘Sometimes I would just sit and talk to him, and I felt that he could understand every word I said.’... It was natural between them. Many of us who have had pets have known one like that, the one that truly understands, the one who lives as a piece of us.”

Koudounaris writes, “The day after Major died, Edna felt a compulsion. There was something she needed to write, and while she hadn’t preconceived any of it, it was there, words longing to be heard. She remembers it being a warm and wonderful feeling, like Major himself was guiding her.”

Koudounaris continues: “It is probably impossible, at least in the English-speaking world, to have lost

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a cherished pet and have never heard of the Rainbow Bridge. The words composed by Edna at Major's passing are nearly ubiquitous in the world of animal mourning. They are printed on sheets passed out to people when they pick up the ashes of cremated pets. Snippets of the text are frequently used in epitaphs dedicated to beloved animals. Some pet cemeteries even have them inscribed, for all visitors to see, on giant stone tablets that look like something handed by God to Moses. Her words are so well known that even though they are confined to grieving pet owners they comprise one of the most influential pieces of mourning literature ever written."

<https://www.order-ofthegooddeath.com/article/the-rainbow-bridge-the-true-story-behind-historys-most-influential-piece-of-animal-mourning-literature/>

Edna hasn't lived in Inverness continuously. She married Jack Rekhy, a phy-

sician, and they spent years living in India, where Edna rescued street dogs. After Jack retired, they moved to Spain and bought an olive farm. One day her dogs came running to her; she followed them to the back of the house, where cowering inside the washing machine was a young Andalusian Podenco dog, badly beaten by another olive farmer trying to train him to hunt boar. She took him in, naming him Zanussi, after the manufacturer of the washing machine.

When Jack first showed Alzheimer's symptoms in Spain, they returned to Scotland, where he eventually died from the dreadful disease. Edna wrote again, this time a book called *Zanussi and Jack*, with a cover photo of Zanussi as she had found him in the washing machine.

Once again her words were stolen; this time she wasn't flattered. She had intended the book's proceeds to go to an Alzheimer's research fund in memory of Jack.

A shady printer had been making his own copies and selling them, so she pulled the book. She hopes to put out a revised edition. (Note: the book is available both in Kindle and hard copy, but online searches bring up only pirated editions. If you purchase a pirated copy, please donate a percentage of the purchase price to Alzheimer's research, honoring Edna's original intentions.)

As of 2023, she still had Zanussi, who then was 11, as well as "a Bichon Frisé, Missy, a professionally trained caregiver dog who is so thorough in her work that every night at 8 p.m. she brings forth Edna's slippers, pajamas, and nightgown, one piece at a time, and gives a bark to signify that it is time to prepare for bed."

Zanussi was at Edna's feet when she and Koudounaris spoke, and she offered to tell him a secret about dogs. "Maybe it's not so much a secret, and for Edna it is more like an essential truth. Certainly it is the truth

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which underlies the Rainbow Bridge itself, and why words written for Major over six decades ago have touched so many people, and no doubt will continue to touch them for generations to come. ‘If you love a dog,’ she explained, ‘if you truly love it, it will always live on.’”

Dr. Koudounaris writes that Edna, now 85, “confessed that when she took [the original copy of “The Rainbow Bridge”] out of its storage box to take photos of it for me that she started to cry, the old piece of paper still carries that much emotional power for her. I asked her thoughts on the strange journey those words have taken, and whether she harbored any resentment about her authorship of them having been forgotten.

“She told me it was wrong of people to try to claim it as theirs, and like anyone who has poured their heart into a text she’s not too keen on the alternate versions floating around, with people hav-

ing changed some of her original prose. More than anything, though, she is simply flattered that something she wrote so long ago has resonated with such a vast number of people—the fact that it has comforted so many is the greatest possible homage to her love for Major.”

Get your hankies ready—here is “The Rainbow Bridge” as transcribed from Edna’s original handwritten text written upon Major’s death:

The Rainbow Bridge

By Edna Clyne-Rekhy
Just this side of heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge. When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, your pet goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water, and sunshine, and friends are warm and comfortable. All the animals who have been ill and old are restored to health and strength, those who were

hurt are made better and strong again, like we remember them before they go to heaven. They are happy and content except for one small thing, they each miss someone very special to them who had to be left behind. They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance, his bright eyes are shineing[sic], his body shakes. Suddenly he begins to run from the herd, rushing over the grass, his legs carrying him faster and faster, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cuddle in a happy hug never to be apart again. You and your pet are in tears. Your hands again cuddle his head and you look again into his trusting eyes, so long gone from life, but never absent from your heart, and then you cross the Rainbow Bridge together.

—Suzanne T. Smith, Los Alamos, New Mexico;
WustefuchsSS@aol.com | www.GoodFoodGreatDogs.com
Standard Schnauzer Club of America



SECRETARY'S PAGES

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ATTENTION DELEGATES NOTICE OF MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Delegates will be held at the Doubletree Newark Airport Hotel on **Tuesday, June 9, 2026**, beginning no earlier than 10:30 a.m. It will follow the Delegate Forum which will begin at 9:30 a.m.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Rat Terrier Club of America

DELEGATE CREDENTIALS

Terry R. Bridges, Athens, IL, Illinois Capitol Kennel Club

Dennis N. Corash, PhD, Penrose, CO, Terry-All Kennel Club

Sharon A. LeVan, Amelia, OH, Clermont County Kennel Club

Joao Machado, Humble, TX, Oakland Dog Training Club

Christian A. Morales Reyes, CPA, Miami, FL, Greater Miami Dog Club

Lori Sage, Beaver Creek, OR, Sherwood Dog Obedience Club

Sharon Smith, Greenville, SC, Greenville Kennel Club

Sharon Tracy, Pocatello, ID, Pocatello Kennel Club



gazette

Click here to read the April 2026 issue!

Barbara J. Wood, Cranford, NJ,
American Lhasa Apso Club

Linda C. Wozniak, Chapel Hill, NC,
Durham Kennel Club

NOTICE

REPRIMANDS AND FINES

As a result of an Event Committee determination the following individual stands suspended of AKC privileges. It should be noted that this determination may still be appealed and may be reversed. Upon expiration of the appeal process, an appropriate notice describing the status of the individual's suspension, if any, will appear in this column:

Mr. Matthew Perry (Berkeley, IL)

NOTICE

Ms. A'ishah Jackson (Little Rock, AR). Action was taken by the Kennel Club of Texarkana for conduct at its February 6, 2026 event. Ms. Jackson was charged with neglect at or in connection with an event by individual. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the penalty as a three-month suspension of all AKC privileges and imposed a \$500 fine, effective February 22, 2026. (Multiple Breeds)

NOTICE

Mr. Phillip Lanier (Stafford, VA). Action was taken by the American Kennel Club for conduct at its December 13-14,

2025 event. Mr. Lanier was charged with entering/exhibiting dog that the entrant knew or should have known is ineligible to complete in the event. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the penalty as a five-year event suspension and imposed a \$5,000 fine, effective January 7, 2026. (Basset Hounds)

NOTICE

Mr. Joseph Williams (Lebanon, MO). Action was taken by the American Brittany Club for conduct at its November 26, 2025 event. Mr. Williams was charged with improper treatment in connection with an event. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the penalty as a six-month suspension of all AKC privileges and imposed a \$500 fine, effective February 13, 2026. (Brittanys)

NOTICE

Mr. DJ Wade (Mount Union, IA). Action was taken by the East Central Iowa Beagle Club for conduct at its October 10, 2025 event. Mr. Wade was charged with inappropriate, abusive, or foul language. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the penalty as a three-month event suspension and imposed a \$500 fine, effective January 27, 2026. (Beagles)

NOTICE

The AKC's Management Disciplinary Committee has suspended the following individuals from all AKC privileges for six months and imposed a \$500 fine, for refusal to make their dogs and records available for inspection when requested:

Effective February 24, 2026:

Ms. Marie Lewis (Trenton, GA)

Airedale Terriers, Poodles

Mr. William Lewis (Trenton, GA)

Chow Chows

NOTICE

The AKC's Management Disciplinary Committee has suspended Ms. Abigail Anderson (Goodman, MO) from all AKC privileges five years and imposed a \$1,000 fine, for refusal to make her dogs and records available for inspection when requested, effective February 24, 2026. (Multiple Breeds)

NOTICE

The AKC's Management Disciplinary Committee has suspended Dr. Lawrence Wallace (Deland, FL) for ten years of all AKC privileges and imposed a \$2,000 fine, for violating AKC's Judicial or Administrative Determination of Inappropriate Treatment policy, effective January 20, 2026. (Bulldogs)

NOTICE

On January 28, 2026, the Trial Board (Vincent Indeglia, Esq., Chair, Laurie Maulucci, Dr. John Ioia) of The American Kennel Club heard charges against Mr. Karl Hoffrogge, (Moore Hill, IN) for violating AKC's Personal Conduct Policy. The Trial Board sustained the charges and suspended Mr. Hoffrogge from all AKC privileges for a lifetime, imposed a \$10,000 fine, and prohibited him from being on the grounds of AKC events, effective February 16, 2026. (Beagles)

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE RULES APPLYING TO DOG SHOWS – CHAPTER 3, SECTION 12

The AKC Board has endorsed the following amendment to **Chapter 3, Section 12** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*, proposed by the Dog Show Rules Committee. This will be voted on at the June 9, 2026 Delegate Meeting.

CHAPTER 3 DOG SHOW CLASSIFICATIONS SECTION 12

Event committees may provide such other classes of recognized breeds or recognized varieties of breeds as they may choose, provided they do not conflict with the conditions of the above-mentioned classes, and are judged before Best of Breed competition, and castration or spaying is not a condition of the class. Such additional classes shall be divided by sex.

No class may be given in which more than one breed or recognized variety of breed may be entered, except as provided in these rules and regulations.

No class may be given for which castration or spaying is a condition of class.

CONFORMATION JUDGES

Letters concerning judges and provisional judges should be addressed to the Judging Operations Department at PO Box 900062, Raleigh, NC 27675-9062. Letters concerning Agility, Obedience, Rally, Tracking, and VST applicants should be addressed to the Companion Events Department in North Carolina.

The American Kennel Club will, at the request of a judge or judge applicant, provide that individual with copies of letters received regarding their judging qualifications. As a result, it should be understood that any such correspondence will be made available, upon request, to the judge or judge applicant.

It is the responsibility of all Conformation and Junior Showmanship judges to notify the Judging Operations Department of any changes or corrections to their address, phone, fax or emails. These changes are very important because they affect your judges' record, the web site and the Judges Directory. Please notify Judging Operations by email at judgingops@akc.org.

APPLICANTS

The following persons applications have been submitted for the breed(s) specified ***but they are NOT eligible to accept assignments.***

NEW BREED JUDGING APPLICANTS

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Belgian Laekenois, Belgian Malinois,
Belgian Sheepdogs, Belgian Tervuren

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American Eskimo Dogs, Bichons Frises, Chow Chows, Coton de Tulear, Finnish Spitz, Keeshonden, Lowchen, Norwe-

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American English Coonhounds, American Foxhounds, Beagles, English Foxhounds, Harriers

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Miniature Pinschers, Pugs, Russian Toys,
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PERMIT JUDGES

The following persons have been approved on a Permit basis for the designated breeds in accordance with the current judging approval process. *They may now accept assignments* and the fancy may still offer comments to Judging Operations.

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Elkhounds, Petits Bassets Griffons Ven-
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brambliepup@gmail.com

Balance of Herding Group (Beaucero-
ns, Briards, Canaan Dogs, Entlebucher
Mountain Dogs, Lancashire Heelers)

Mrs. Jean Pero (30743) CO

(303) 475-7302

jmpero3@gmail.com

Maltese, Pomeranians, Russian Tsvet-
naya Bolonki, Shih Tzu

Mrs. Sharon Ann Redmer (2711) MI

(734) 449-4995

sredmer@umich.edu

Kerry Blue Terriers, Parson Russell Ter-
riers, Soft Coated Wheaten Terriers

Mr. Jeffrey P. Ryman (93219) WA

(425) 876-2213

jeff_ryman@hotmail.com

Balance of Herding Group (Australian
Cattle Dogs, Belgian Tervuren, Border
Collies, Bouviers des Flandres, Miniature
American Shepherds)

Ms. Joyce Siddall (98695) CO

(303) 548-1125

catalinakennels@yahoo.com

Beaucerons, Briards, Entlebucher Moun-
tain Dogs, Polish Lowland Sheepdogs,
Pulik, Spanish Water Dogs

Rhonda Silveira (100061) OR

(503) 428-2021

rsilveira.akcjudge@outlook.com

Akitas, Boxers, Portuguese Water Dogs,
Rottweilers

Mrs. Carol Sommerfelt (7007) TN

(865) 986-1614

carolsommerfelt@gmail.com

Kerry Blue Terriers, Affenpinschers, Ha-
vanese, Maltese, Russian Toys, Russian
Tsvetnaya Bolonki, Yorkshire Terriers

Mr. Walter Sommerfelt (4787) TN

(865) 986-1614

loracvizsl@aol.com

Balance of Non-Sporting Group (Finn-

ish Spitz, Keeshonden, Norwegian Lundehunds, Schipperkes)

Ms. Amy Sorbie (36968) CO

(720) 245-5781

amy.sorbie@vca.com

Australian Cattle Dogs, Briards, Canaan Dogs, Lancashire Heelers, Miniature American Shepherds, Spanish Water Dogs

Mr. Eric Steel (98787) NY

(646) 479-9177

ericsteel@mac.com

Azawakhs, Basenjis, Bloodhounds, Petits Bassets Griffons Vendeens, Portuguese Podengo Pequenos, Scottish Deerhounds

Ms. Angela Stevanus (112189) CA

(951) 640-6819

angeldotz@yahoo.com

Miniature Bull Terriers, Lhasa Apsos, Tibetan Terriers

Mr. Cledith M. Wakefield (80829) MO

(573) 760-3616

n2rotts@yahoo.com

Australian Terriers, Kerry Blue Terriers, Norfolk Terriers

Janet Warner (103607) NM

(253) 255-6796

janagram@aol.com

German Wirehaired Pointers, Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Gordon Setters, Wirehaired Pointing Griffons

Ms. Kathy Wilkins (6799) GA

(770) 315-4452

lochlynfarm@gmail.com

Bearded Collies, Canaan Dogs, Norwegian Buhunds, Pumik, Swedish Vallhunds

Ms. Claire Wisch Abraham (100709) VA

(571) 318-2768

outlawgwp@aol.com

Manchester Terriers, Russian Toys

Mr. George Wright (105383) NJ

(908) 996-3024

georgewright221@gmail.com

Dachshunds, Poodles, Pugs

JUNIOR SHOWMANSHIP PERMIT JUDGES

Mrs. Morgan Brooks (118187) FL

(904) 962-3182

monarkgoldens@gmail.com

Mr. Brett Duncan (107127) TX

(806) 281-4924

baduncan@beckman.Com

Mrs. Rebecca McMilton (118405) CA

rebeccamcmilton@gmail.com

Mr. Michael Simpson (118218) TX

(737) 240-1444

mike01simpson@gmail.com

RESIGNED CONFORMATION JUDGES

Cynthia Stahle

Mr. Jerry M. Watson

EMERITUS CONFORMATION JUDGE

Ms. Georian Bridger

DECEASED CONFORMATION JUDGE

Judith A. Adams

REGULAR STATUS APPROVED OBEDIENCE/RALLY/TRACKING JUDGES

The following persons have completed their Provisional Judging assignments, and their names have been added to the list of regular approved judges for the class indicated.

Ira Kaplan (71504) MA

781-275-0513
amfmick@oakridgeblm.org
Regular Obedience Utility

Elizabeth Cleaves (105181) MA

978-833-0619
auntie@auntiedog.com
Regular Obedience Novice

Stelle Rowlet (109327) NV

206-437-5862
stellacello@gmail.com
Regular Obedience Utility

Stella Rowlet (109327) NV

206-437-5862
stellacello@gmail.com
Regular Rally

Lynn Hamilton (112053) AZ

520-904-2925
lynnham2001@yahoo.com
Regular Rally

Susan Yonemura (113357) CO

970-988-8197
susan.yonemura@gmail.com
Regular Tracking TD/TDU

Kayelene Hawthorne (108326) CA

949-246-3114
tutu619@yahoo.com
Regular Tracking TDX

NEW PROVISIONAL OBEDIENCE/RALLY/ TRACKING JUDGES

The following persons have been approved as a judge on a Provisional basis for the class/test indicated in accordance with the Provisional judging system. They may now accept assignments.

Anne Rosenberg (103175) NJ

609-519-8289
annelrosenberg@hotmail.com
Provisional Obedience Novice

Patty Fulton (95283) MN

651-276-9843
corgizoom@gmail.com
Provisional Obedience Utility

Shirley Baker (117379) FL

352-216-4340
belgiandoglover@gmail.com
Provisional Rally

Tricia Boychuk (113295) FL

561-246-2452
tbEsquire1@gmail.com
Provisional Tracking VST

EMERITUS OBEDIENCE/ RALLY/ TRACKING JUDGES

Cheryl Bishop-Obed & Rally, (ONT)
Bill Craig-Obed (MA)
Richard Strong-Obed & Rally (IN)

APPLICATION FOR BREED-SPECIFIC REGISTERED NAME PREFIX

The following applications for a breed-specific Registered Name Prefix have been submitted to The American Kennel Club. Letters in regard to these applications should be addressed to Sheila Goffe, Executive Secretary:

4 CLOVERS – Miniature American Shepherds – Erica R. Beattie

AMSCOT – French Bulldogs – Amy E Traufler

BIRCHVIEW – Miniature American Shepherds – Sharon L. Hulke & Amy J. Pirk

COPPERRIDGE – Rhodesian Ridgebacks – Lin Hainlen & Bob Hainlen

CU SEILGE – Scottish Deerhounds – Terri L.B. Crawford

ENCHANTED MESA – Miniature American Shepherds – Kristin Hill

GLEANNFAE – Cavalier King Charles Spaniels – Lorraine C. Wood & Evelyn Wood

JB – Portuguese Water Dogs – Nina A. Britton

LAVISH – Bernese Mountain Dogs – Loyal L. Bouaoun & Christopher D. Petersen

LEBORIA – Border Collies – Zihui (Hebr) Lin & Yuan (Olivia) Wang

LONGMILE – Miniature American Shepherds – Stacy L. Miller

PONDSIDE – Cardigan Welsh Corgis – Robert J. Smead

ROCKIN-B FARMS – Golden Retrievers – Elizah Brandstuddt & Brian Brandstadt

REGISTERED NAME PREFIXES GRANTED

The following applications for a breed-specific Registered Name Prefix have been granted

ABOSCOBEL – Cavalier King Charles Spaniels – Helen K. Norton

CAERLEONDANES – Great Danes – Dr. Rachel M. Wisnoski

CASTLE RIDGE – Cardigan Welsh Corgis – Edward T. Castellano

CLEAR CREEK – Pembroke Welsh Corgis Kristina Elsik

CUMBERLANDRIDGE – Australian Shepherds – Gregory A. Horn

EDGEWATER – Papillons – Macy L. Green & Melanie L. Green

HAPICHIN – Japanese Chin – Lisa K. White

HOLD'EN POINT – Brittany – Samantha N. Choffel & Madeline J. Marshall

LAKERIDGE – Poodles – Debra Ferguson-Jones

MTN-TOP – Doberman Pinschers – Rod S. Brooker

PEMBERLEY – Labrador Retrievers



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SECRETARY'S PAGES

SAILAWAY – Portuguese Water Dogs –
Ellen W. Cousins & David D. Cousins

STELLA – Border Collies – Patricia A.
Williams & Tony Williams

TYE RIVER – Havanese – Lillian E. Bibb



ANNUAL MEETING OF THE DELEGATES

OF

THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

MARCH 10, 2026

Gina M. DiNardo, President

PRESENT 338

Affenpinscher Club of America—*Mrs.*

Pamela B. Peat

Afghan Hound Club of America, Inc.—

Ms. Constance Butherus

Airedale Terrier Club of America—*Aletta*

L. Moore

Akita Club of America—*Ms. Nancy S.*

Amburgey

Alaskan Malamute Club of America,

Inc.—*Kate McCallum*

American Belgian Tervuren Club, Inc.—

Teresa Nash

American Bloodhound Club—*Mary Lou*

Olszewski

American Boxer Club, Inc.—*Sharon*

Steckler

American Brittany Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Terry*

Hilliard

American Bullmastiff Association, Inc.—

Howard Gussis

American Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

Club, Inc.—*Richard Alexander*

American Chinese Crested Club, Inc.—

Neil Butterklee

American Fox Terrier Club—*Connie Clark*

American Maltese Association, Inc.—*Ms.*

Sandy Bingham-Porter

American Manchester Terrier Club—

Roberta Berman

American Miniature Schnauzer Club,

Inc.—*Barbara Donahue*

American Rottweiler Club—*Mr. Peter G.*

Piusz

American Sealyham Terrier Club—

Barbara Shapiro

American Shetland Sheepdog

Association—*Marjorie Tuff*

American Shih Tzu Club, Inc.—*Mark*

Stempel

American Toy Fox Terrier Club—*Laura Johnson*

American Whippet Club, Inc.—*Karen B. Lee*

Anderson Kennel Club—*Laura A. Rockwell*

Anderson Obedience Training Club, Inc.—*Ms. Patricia A. Sample*

Ann Arbor Kennel Club, Inc.—*Anne R. Palmer*

Asheville Kennel Club, Inc.—*Corie Haylett*

Ashtabula Kennel Club—*Mr. Vincent P. Chianese*

Atlanta Kennel Club, Inc.—*Ann Wallin*

Atlanta Obedience Club, Inc.—*Gail A. LaBerge*

Austin Kennel Club, Inc.—*Pam Whitley*

Australian Cattle Dog Club of America—*Joyce Rowland*

Australian Terrier Club of America, Inc.—*William I. Christensen*

Baltimore County Kennel Club—*Lucy C. Campbell*

Basenji Club of America, Inc.—*Katie Campbell*

Basset Hound Club of America, Inc.—*Dr. Norine E. Noonan*

Baytown Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jean W. Durdin*

Bearded Collie Club of America, Inc.—*Mr. Robert M. Lamm*

Beaumont Kennel Club, Inc.—*Carl Holder*

Beaver County Kennel Club, Inc.—*Phyllis Belcastro*

Bedlington Terrier Club of America—*Howard Solomon*

Belgian Sheepdog Club of America, Inc.—*Lisa Leffingwell*

Bell Vernon Kennel Association, Inc.—*Mike Kriegel*

Berger Picard Club of America—*Jacqueline Carswell*

Berks County Kennel Club, Inc.—*Kathleen Kurtz*

Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America, Inc.—*Georgeann Reeve*

Bexar County Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Jennifer Delmer*

Bichon Frise Club of America, Inc.—*Mayno Blanding*

Big Apple Working Group Club—*Andrew*

I. Kalmanash

Birmingham Kennel Club, Inc.—*Martha*

Griffin

Border Collie Society of America—*Lisa*

M. Pruka

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Borzoi Club of America, Inc.—*Prudence*

G. Hlatky

Boston Terrier Club of America, Inc.—

Mrs. Sandie Friend

Bracco Italiano Club of America—*Allison*

Schultz, M.D.

Briard Club of America, Inc.—*Diane Reid*

Bronx County Kennel Club—*Alexa*

Samarotto

Brookhaven Kennel Club, Inc.—*Marie A.*

Fiore

Bryn Mawr Kennel Club—*Victoria*

Glickstein

Bull Terrier Club of America—*Jane*

Messineo Lindquist

Bulldog Club of America—*Link Newcomb*

Burlington County Kennel Club, Inc.—

Mr. Daniel J. Smyth, Esq.

Butler County Kennel Club, Inc.—

Barbara Ioia

Cairn Terrier Club of America—*Wayne*

Gilpin

Cambridge Minnesota Kennel Club—

Theresa Goiffon

Canaan Dog Club of America—*Pamela S.*

Rosman

Canada Del Oro Kennel Club—*Dr. Sophia*

Kaluzniacki

Capital Dog Training Club of

Washington, D.C., Inc.—*Dr. Joyce A.*

Dandridge

Carolina Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jaimie Ashby*

Carolina Working Group Association—

Matthew Townsend

Carroll Kennel Club—*Mrs. Rachann E.*

Mayer

Catoctin Kennel Club—*Joseph Fitzgerald*

Catonsville Kennel Club—*Beverly A.*

Drake

Central New York Kennel Club, Inc.—

Mrs. Diane D. Almy

Central Ohio Kennel Club—*Rebecca*

Campbell

- Chain O'Lakes Kennel Club—*Jason Hoke*
- Charleston Kennel Club—*Terri Hallman*
- Charlottesville-Albemarle Kennel Club,
Inc.—*Mr. John J. Lyons*
- Chihuahua Club of America, Inc.—*Tracy
J. Potts*
- Chinese Shar-Pei Club of America, Inc.—
Marge B. Calltharp
- Chow Chow Club, Inc.—*Margaret
DiCorleto*
- Clackamas Kennel Club—*Tami Worley*
- Clarksville Kennel Club—*Sylvia
Arrowwood*
- Classic Toy Dog Club of Western
Massachusetts—*Dr. Stephen Lawrence*
- Clearwater Kennel Club—*Daniel T. Stolz*
- Collie Club of America, Inc.—*Isabel Ososki*
- Colorado Kennel Club—*Mrs. Louise Leone*
- Colorado Springs Kennel Club—*Mr.
Douglas W. Johnson*
- Columbia Kennel Club, Inc.—*Crystal
Messersmith*
- Columbia Missouri Kennel Club—
Jefferson Sossamon
- Columbia Terrier Association of
Maryland—*Leslie A. Jaseph*
- Conroe Kennel Club—*Jane Bates*
- Contra Costa County Kennel Club, Inc.—
Leslie E. Savoye
- Conyers Kennel Club of Georgia—*Dr.
Yves Belmont*
- Cudahy Kennel Club—*Mr. Don H. Adams*
- Curly-Coated Retriever Club of
America—*Leslie Puppo-Rogers*
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John Brading*
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Charles Garvin*
- Dandie Dinmont Terrier Club of
America, Inc.—*Richard Yoho*
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Sandra McCue*
- Del-Otse-Nango Kennel Club—*Stephanie
A. Crawford*
- Delaware County Kennel Club, Inc.—
Mark Brandsema
- Delaware Water Gap Kennel Club—*Dr.
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- Detroit Kennel Club—*Lawrence A. Letsche,
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- Devon Dog Show Association, Inc.—*Meg Weitz*
- Doberman Pinscher Club of America—*Glen Lajeski*
- Dog Fanciers Association of Oregon, Inc.—*Patti L. Strand*
- Dog Owners' Training Club of Maryland, Inc.—*Karen L. Keagle*
- Durango Kennel Club—*Donald E. Schwartz, V.M.D*
- Eastern Dog Club—*Frederick R. Vogel*
- Eastern German Shorthaired Pointer Club, Inc.—*Robert Rynkiewicz*
- English Cocker Spaniel Club of America, Inc.—*Mrs. Beth Hendrick*
- English Setter Association of America, Inc.—*Dr. Brenda J. Parsons, D.V.M.*
- English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association, Inc.—*Cristy K. Joy*
- Erie Kennel Club, Inc.—*Julie W. Parker*
- Evansville Kennel Club, Inc.—*Heidi Kilgore*
- Farmington Valley Kennel Club, Inc.—*Terrie Breen*
- Fayetteville Kennel Club, Inc.—*Teresa M. Vila*
- Field Spaniel Society of America—*Lori Carver*
- Finger Lakes Kennel Club, Inc.—*Margaret B. Pough*
- First Dog Training Club of Northern New Jersey, Inc.—*Mary D. Curtis*
- Flat-Coated Retriever Society of America, Inc.—*Neal Goodwin*
- Forsyth Kennel Club, Inc.—*June Guido*
- Fort Lauderdale Dog Club—*Alejandro Lima*
- Fort Worth Kennel Club—*Harold Tatro III*
- Framingham District Kennel Club, Inc.—*Gale Golden*
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- Furniture City Kennel Club, Inc.—*Merry J. Millner*
- Galveston County Kennel Club, Inc.—*Cathy De La Garza*
- Garden State All Terrier Club, Inc.—*Mr. Richard L. Reynolds*
- Genesee County Kennel Club, Inc.—*Ms. Cynthia (Cindy) Collins*
- German Shepherd Dog Club of America—*Dr. Carmen L. Battaglia*

- German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America, Inc.—*Joan Payton*
- Giant Schnauzer Club of America, Inc.—*Steven A. Sansone*
- Gig Harbor Kennel Club—*Tom Lewellen*
- Glens Falls Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Bonnie Lapham*
- Golden Retriever Club of America—*Mrs. Ellen Hardin*
- Gordon Setter Club of America, Inc.—*Nance O. Skoglund*
- Grand Rapids Kennel Club—*Mrs. Carol L. Johnson*
- Grand River Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Cindy Stansell*
- Great Dane Club of America, Inc.—*Ms. Dale Suzanne Tarbox*
- Great Western Terrier Association of Southern California—*Karen Smith*
- Greater Clark County Kennel Club Inc—*Ms. Karen J. Burgess*
- Greater Fredericksburg Kennel Club—*Helen Norton*
- Greater Miami Dog Club—*Dr. Azalea A. Alvarez*
- Greater Murfreesboro Kennel Club, Inc.—*Gloria Askins*
- Greater Ocala Dog Club, Inc.—*Rhonda Shifferd*
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- Hendersonville Kennel Club—*Elizabeth Ann Brown*
- Hockamock Kennel Club, Inc.—*Nancy Fisk*
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Hungarian Pumi Club of America —

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Huntingdon Valley Kennel Club, Inc.—

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Huntington Kennel Club, Inc.—*Ms.*

Marile A. Waterstraat

Ibizan Hound Club of the United States—

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Intermountain Kennel Club, Inc.—

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International Kennel Club of Chicago,

Inc.—*Mr. D S. Pfeil*

Irish Red and White Setter Association of

America—*Christopher M. Orcutt*

Irish Setter Club of America, Inc.—*Ms.*

Karolynne M. McAteer

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Irish Wolfhound Club of America—

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Inc.—*Jennifer Graves*

Jefferson County Kennel Club of

Missouri—*Mr. Cledith M. Wakefield*

K-9 Obedience Training Club of Essex

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Kalamazoo Kennel Club, Inc.—*Angela*

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Mississippi State Kennel Club—*Roxanne Hilsman*

Mississippi Valley Kennel Club—*Gretchen Bernardi*

Monticello New York Kennel Club, Inc.—*Barry A. Hoovis*

Morris Hills Dog Training Club, Inc.—*Eleanor Campbell*

Mount Vernon Dog Training Club (MVDTC)—*Christopher Marston*

Mountaineer Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mary Yoders*

Myrtle Beach Kennel Club—*Erin M. Keen*

Nashville Kennel Club—*Anne Gallant*

National Beagle Club—*Eddie Dziuk*

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- New England Dog Training Club, Inc.—
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- Newfoundland Club of America, Inc.—
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- Newtown Kennel Club, Inc.—*Susan Marucci*
- Nisqually Kennel Club—*Sylvie McGee*
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America, Inc.—*Mrs. Lisa Peterson*
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- Poodle Club of America, Inc.—*Patti Jason*
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- Rubber City Kennel Club—*Cathy Gaidos*
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- Saluki Club of America—*Monica H. Stoner*
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- Santa Barbara Kennel Club, Inc.—*Anita R. O'Berg*
- Santa Clara Valley Kennel Club, INC.—*Mr. David J. Peat*
- Santa Cruz Kennel Club, Inc.—*Melissa Robison*
- Santa Maria Kennel Club, Inc.—*Anita Forde*
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- Sawnee Mountain Kennel Club of Georgia—*Lynn Tyler*
- Schipperke Club of America, Inc.—*Lee A. Stusnick*

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Sharyn Y. Hutchens

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Skye Terrier Club of America—*Brice
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Skyline Kennel Club, Inc.—*Gloria Shaver*

Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of
America—*Sally Sotirovich*

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South Shore Kennel Club, Inc.—*Linda C.
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South Windsor Kennel Club—*Mrs. Laurie
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Southeast Arkansas Kennel Club—*Ricky
Adams*

Southeastern Iowa Kennel Club—*Dr. Troy
C. Dargin*

Southern Adirondack Dog Club, Inc.—
John V. Ioia

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Allen*

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St. Bernard Club of America, Inc.—*Susan
Weigel*

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Martorella*

Steel City Kennel Club, Inc.—*Miss Susan
M. Napady*

Suffolk County Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mr.
Robert Eisele*

Susque-Nango Kennel Club, Inc.—*Laura
Trainor*

Sussex Hills Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs.*

Florence Duggan

Sussex Spaniel Club of America—*John R.*

Lewis, Jr.

Taconic Hills Kennel Club, Inc.—*Marylyn*

DeGregorio

Tennessee Valley Kennel Club—*Mrs.*

Richella M. Veatch

Texas Kennel Club, Inc.—*Dr. Michael*

Knight

Tibetan Terrier Club of America, Inc.—

Stacey La Forge

Tidewater Kennel Club of Virginia, Inc.—

Donald M. Bright

Trap Falls Kennel Club, Inc.—*Christopher*

L. Sweetwood

Tri-City Kennel Club, Inc.—*Dawn Sealy*

Trinity Valley Kennel Club—*Debby Fowler*

Troy Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mr. Donald S.*

Gillett

Tucson Kennel Club—*Dr. Kenneth H.*

Levison

Twin Brooks Kennel Club, Inc.—*Patricia*

C. Sarles

Two Cities Kennel Club—*Eduardo T.*

Fugizwara

Union County Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jennifer*

V. Modica

United States Australian Shepherd

Association—*Judy A. Harrington*

United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club,

Inc.—*Mr. Carl C. Ashby, III*

United States Lakeland Terrier Club—

Maria Sacco

Upper Potomac Valley Kennel Club—

Robert Lachman

Valley Forge Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs.*

Carol Fisher

Vancouver Kennel Club—*Jolyne Lea*

Vizsla Club of America, Inc.—*Mrs. Kathy*

A. Rust

Wachusett Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs.*

Virginia T. Rowland

Wampanoag Kennel Club, Inc.—*Christine*

Gonsalves

Washington State Obedience Training

Club, Inc.—*John J. Cadalso, Jr.*

Waterloo Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jan R.*

Gladstone

Waukesha Kennel Club, Inc.—*Marthina*

L. Greer

Weimaraner Club of America—*Jennifer A.*

Martin

Welsh Springer Spaniel Club of America,

Inc.—*Richard Rohrbacher*

Welsh Terrier Club of America, Inc.—

Bruce R. Schwartz

Westbury Kennel Association, Inc.—*Peter*

ƒ. Festa

Western Fox Terrier Breeders

Association—*Torie Steele*

Western Reserve Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs.*

Ann F. Yuhasz

Westminster Kennel Club—*Michael*

Faulkner

Whidbey Island Kennel Club Inc—*Laura*

Myles

Windham County Kennel Club, Inc.—

Nanette Prideaux

Winston-Salem Dog Training Club,

Inc.—*Jane Fitzin*

Woodstock Dog Club, Inc.—*Karen Dewey*

Yorkshire Terrier Club of America, Inc.—

Pamela A. Langstein



**AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB
DELEGATES MEETING
MARCH 10, 2026**

Gina M. DiNardo, President in the Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. ET.

(National Anthem played.)

Delegates were reminded to check in at the reception desk for attendance purposes. When Staff prints the yellow-colored badge, the Delegate is automatically marked as present.

The Chair introduced the persons seated on the dais: Chairman, Dr. Thomas M. Davies; Vice Chairman, Dr. Michael Knight; Joan Corbisiero, Professional Registered Parliamentarian; Sheila H. Goffe, Executive Secretary; Shari Cathey, the Court Reporter.

The Chair announced that this meeting was the annual election of the Directors.

The Executive Secretary read the report of the Nominating Committee.

Ms. Goffe: Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 2, of the Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club, the

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- Gail LaBerge, Chair – Atlanta Obedience Club
- Gretchen Bernardi – Mississippi Valley Kennel Club
- Ellen Hardin – Golden Retriever Club of America
- Barbara Shaw – Greater Collin Kennel Club
- Matthew Townsend – Carolina Working Group Association

Alternates:

- Robert (Bob) Rynkiewicz – Eastern German Shorthaired Pointer Club
- Monica Stoner – Saluki Club of America

appointed by the Board of Directors at its July 2025 meeting have nominated the following Delegates as candidates for such vacancies on the Board of Directors as to be filled at the next Annual Meeting of the Club on March 10, 2026. There are 3 vacancies for the Class of 2030.

Nominees for the Class of 2030

- Dominic Palleschi Carota – Pharaoh Hound Club of America
- Jason Hoke – Chain O'Lakes Kennel Club
- Thomas S. Powers – Kennel Club of Beverly Hills

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 4, of the Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club, the following Delegates have

been endorsed in writing by the required number of Delegates as a candidate for the vacancies on the Board of Directors for the Class of 2030, to be filled at the next Annual Meeting of the Club on March 10, 2026:

- Carl C. Ashby III – United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club, Inc.
- Karen J. Burgess – Greater Clark County Kennel Club, Inc.
- Patricia M. Cruz – Heart of the Plains Kennel Club
- Sue Goldberg – Lewiston-Auburn Kennel Club, Inc.
- Laurie Maulucci – South Windsor Kennel Club
- Lisa Peterson – Norwegian Elkhound Association of America, Inc.

Ms. DiNardo reported that the Bylaws state that nominations may not be made from the floor. Nominations, therefore, closed on November 15, 2025. Delegates were reminded that elections, in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, require a majority vote to elect.

The election procedure is overseen by the accounting firm of KPMG. The ballots are scanned and tabulated electronically. All candidates were offered the opportunity to observe the election procedures.

(Recess for voting.)

(Session resumed.)

The Executive Secretary to read the names of Delegates seated since the last meeting:

Debarah Billings, Blountville, TN, to represent Biewer Terrier Club of America

Mark Brandsema, Media, PA, to represent Delaware County Kennel Club

Kate DeSanto, China Spring, TX, to represent American Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Association

Crystal Messersmith, Columbia, SC, to represent Columbia Kennel Club

Mary Miller, Lexington, KY, to represent Lexington Kennel Club

Isabel Ososki, Troy, IL, to represent Col-lie Club of America

Ricki V. Silveria, Mount Pleasant, SC, to represent Siberian Husky Club of America

Alan E. Welch, Esq., Whitehouse Station, NJ, to represent Kennel Club of Philadelphia

The following Delegates, who were attending their first meeting since being officially seated, were introduced from the floor:

Mark Brandsema, to represent Delaware County Kennel Club

Donald Bright, to represent Tidewater Kennel Club of Virginia

Erin Keen, to represent Myrtle Beach Kennel Club

Crystal Messersmith, to represent Columbia Kennel Club

Mary Miller, to represent Lexington Kennel Club

Isabel Ososki, to represent Collie Club of America

Ricki V. Silveria, to represent Siberian Husky Club of America

Alan Welch, Esq., to represent Kennel Club of Philadelphia

The minutes of the December 12, 2025 Delegate Meeting were published in the online January 2026 issue of the AKC Gazette. The complete transcript was posted on the Delegate Portal on AKC's website. There were no corrections, and the minutes were adopted as published.

The **Oak Ridge Kennel Club** was duly elected as a member of The American Kennel Club.

Dr. Thomas Davies delivered the Chairman's Report as follows:

Good morning. When we speak about the strength of the American Kennel Club, we rightly reflect on our history, our traditions, our standards, and our unwavering commitment to purebred dogs. But our strength is not defined by our legacy alone. It's demonstrated in how we lead. How we show up for our sport, how we serve the public, and how we position our organiza-

tion for the future.

Peter Drucker once said, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." That principle has been clearly reflected in the work accomplished in recent months.

Two of our flagship events – the 25th Annual AKC National Championship presented by Royal Canin and the AKC Meet the Breeds® in New York City, exemplify that forward-looking leadership. Each not only celebrated excellence, but reinforced the vitality, the relevance, and the enduring promise of the American Kennel Club.

The AKC National Championship once again demonstrated why it remains the gold standard in our sport. Held on December 13-14, 2025, at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, the event welcomed a grand total of 5,557 dogs competing for the title of *America's National Champion*, a remarkable showcase of depth, quality, and competition.

In addition, 1,602 entries competed for *Puppy and Junior of the Year* in the AKC/Royal Canin National All-Breed Puppy and Junior Stakes, while 1,040 dogs vied for *Best Bred-by-Exhibitor in Show*. Combined with the other weekend events, overall show entry totals exceeded 9,162 entries, reaffirming the AKC National Championship's standing as the largest dog show in North America.

That excellence was mirrored on the national stage. The 2025 AKC National Championship broadcast that aired on ABC television and ESPN2 on December 28, 2025, delivered a historic performance. In a highly competitive Sunday broadcast window, it averaged more than 1.35 million total viewers, making it the most successful airing since the franchise moved to ABC and ESPN2 six years ago.

Outside of the NFL, it was the highest-rated program in its time slot, ranking as the number one non-NFL sports special of the day between noon and 6 p.m. Out of more than 900 programs airing during that window, the AKC National Championship ranked 11th overall, maintaining a remarkably steady audience from start to finish. That level of performance speaks volumes about the strength of our sport and our brand.

AKC Meet the Breeds® held at the Javits Center on February 7-8, 2026, continues to be one of our most powerful opportunities for contact with the public. With more than 145 breeds represented and 38,000 dog lovers welcomed, the event brought our mission to life, educating the public and promoting responsible dog ownership, while reinforcing the importance of breed preservation through direct engagement with knowledgeable breeders, clubs, and enthusiasts.

A sincere thank you to all the clubs, the volunteers, and AKC staff whose dedication and hard work made Meet the Breeds such a success again. Their commitment is central to advancing the AKC mission and ensuring it resonates well beyond our community.

From world-class competition to meaningful public education, these events showcase not only the great dogs but the passion, the expertise, and the teamwork that the AKC puts behind everything we do.

On behalf of the Board, I want to thank our Delegates, clubs, exhibitors, volunteers, broadcast partners, and AKC staff, and all of you. These successes belong to all of us and reflect an organization that continues to be visible, relevant, and moving forward with confidence. Thank you. See you in June.

Ms. DiNardo delivered the President's Report as follows:

I'd like to share with you something I'm genuinely excited about this morning. I've established an AKC Breeder Focus Committee formed with the intention and deep respect for the people who sustain this organization, our breeders. I believe we must listen more closely, think more strategically, and act more decisively in how we support breeders. Special thanks to AKC staff members Vanessa Skou and Susan Myers for their work with this committee.

The committee serves as a consultative body focused on issues related to breeding, litter, and puppy registration. It will identify concerns, examine trends, and develop thoughtful recommendations to strengthen the value, accessibility, and integrity of AKC registration.

Just as importantly, it is charged with helping us build stronger, more meaningful relationships with breeders. Our discussions have reinforced a simple truth. Without breeders, there is no AKC. No registrations, no events, no future generations of purpose-bred dogs. Breeders are not adjacent to our mission. They are central to it, and we need breeders to help drive the registry. Yet too many breeders do not feel valued. If we are serious about protecting and advancing purebred dogs, we must first protect and advance the responsible people who produce them. That begins with tangible support. In the years ahead, AKC will focus on practical tools and resources that recognize breeding as the serious, deliberate, and responsible work that it is. We will elevate the public conversation around ethical breeding confidently and unapologetically. Health-tested, purpose-bred dogs preserved to a standard represent a public good, and we must say so clearly and proudly. We're also exploring a structured breeder mentorship initiative, particularly for newcomers who often feel isolated

or unsure of next steps. When a dog is placed on full registration, that moment should trigger connection, guidance, education, and support. Foundational education will also be visible, accessible, and positioned as essential, not optional. Our community must be more inclusive. Ethical breeders should find guidance and partnership, not barriers. The takeaway from this work is straightforward. Without breeders, nothing exists.

So, what must we do? We must be welcoming. We must reduce unnecessary barriers. We must provide clear education and meaningful support, and we must publicly champion ethical breeding. We must intentionally cultivate the next generation of responsible breeders.

Our Delegate experts play a vital role in this effort. Your leadership means reaching out, mentoring, replacing exclusivity with encouragement. Breeding excellence is sustained through relationships, knowledge transfer, and shared responsibility. If we want strong breeds, strong clubs, strong events, we must invest in the people who make them possible, our breeders. When AKC thrives, breeders thrive, and vice versa.

(Standing ovation.)

Thank you. We're all in this together, my friends.

Ted Phillips, CFO, delivered the Financial Report as follows:

Good morning. That standing ovation for Gina is how I start my day because I like working here! We all need to talk about one thing before we get into this presentation, and that's taxes. Nobody likes them. We all have to do them. For any of you who have a tax-exempt entity, please remember to file your 990s. I cannot give you tax advice, but I can encourage you to make sure to file. For calendar-year-organizations like AKC, ending December 31st, you have until May 15, 2026, unless you go on extension, if you need an accountant, there's a lot of CPAs like me out there that will help you. Ask them for free services, because we CPA's must do this to provide support for our exempt organizations.

This report that we're going to go through has two sections to it. The first one is what I would call a management discussion and analysis. A little different than the past, but it leads us to the 12 slides that I will take you through. It allows us to have a conversation about what's going on in the organization. It's a summary of the preliminary and unaudited financial results of operations for the year ended December 31, 2025.

Let's start out with understanding total revenues of \$94.2 million as compared to 2024, which were \$97.1 million. This is a

3 percent decrease versus 2024. Also, we are going to do a three-year look here, that it's a 6.8 percent decrease versus 2023, when revenues were \$101 million. Our primary line of business, as you all know, is registrations. The registration revenue over those three years has decreased by \$10 million due to lower activity. Since 2023, the number of dog registrations has decreased by 28 percent, from 608,000 to 441,000 in 2025. Again, this is a key driver that determines our operations. A corollary and most important metric is the number of litter registrations, and they have decreased by 27 percent since 2023 to 216,000. As a result of lower revenues and stable expenses over the past three years, we ended 2025 with a net loss of \$3.2 million. Total expenses are \$97.4 million, which is 2 percent higher than 2024, and 1 percent higher than 2023. This completes three years of consistent expense levels despite an inflationary environment, which, in terms of percentages, is much greater than these expense increases. Overall, we've managed to be operating expense neutral despite price inflation ranging from 6 to 8 percent and higher in the case of IT expenses. Also understand that management has had to work through health benefit increases as high as 17 percent, even after taking our health plans to market and offering additional options. To understand this, we must remember that the AKC staff population is 20 percent

older than comparable organizations, and the increase for health costs are shared by the organization and staff. The combination of staff costs and professional fees totals 70 percent of our annual operating expense budget.

Now, looking back to the beginning of 2025, our approved budget was \$5.5 million higher than where we ended the year. After the first quarter, we did a forecast, looking ahead, and our direction projected a \$9 million loss for the year. Following that analysis, we reduced planned expenses by \$5.5 million and re-evaluated how we operate the organization. This effort to reduce expenses was spearheaded by Gina and staff leadership, who set a mandate to provide services in a more efficient, less costly manner. This effort continues beyond 2025, and a full picture of the future cost structure will take shape in 2026, and will require several years to implement, but we will keep you updated. Please note that the budget plan recently approved for 2026 has total expenses comparable to 2025, despite a rising cost environment.

Let's go through some of the major programs of AKC in terms of revenue. Registration and events in 2025, totaled \$59.6 million versus the prior year of \$62.3 million, and as perspective, \$69.3 million in 2023. The other two primary revenue sources, or major programs, as we call them in the exempt organization world,

are advertising, sponsorships, royalties, and product and service sales. Advertising has decreased, while sponsorships and royalties have held solid, but the overall decrease is about \$1.2 million due to lower advertising revenues, which we'll explain shortly. Product and service sales have increased by 7 percent or \$753,000, principally due to DNA health testing sales.

Looking at a deeper dive on dog registration and litter registration, you can see the decrease of \$2.7 million or 12 percent to \$19.9 million in 2025, on 441,126 registrations, versus \$22.5 million on 522,160 registrations in 2024. Again, as compared to 2023, we had 608,990 dog registrations on revenues of \$25.8 million. In 2025, litter registration revenue increased by \$1.4 million to \$11.4 million, as we revised methods of discounting, we adjusted certain prices despite a decrease in unit volume. Over these two years, litter registration revenues have increased due to strategy changes, not simply price changes. Here's your numbers. As we can see, when we look at the fuchsia box, those are your dog registration numbers at 441,000 in 2025, and 522,000 the prior year. Litters in the blue box, 214,000 versus 246,000. Related to registration, we have other sales and revenues for pedigrees and those good things like registration certificates, AKC Canine Partners™ for our mixed breeds, AKC Puppy Folders, and certificate trans-

fers. Pedigrees, like other areas of our business, follow registration, so you can see that decrease by \$1 million or 18 percent in 2025 to \$4.5 million.

Now let's look at events in terms of base metrics. We have a 1 percent decrease in 2025, which is solid when you think about where we were in 2024 and 2023, so it's essentially flat. Our number of events has increased to 29,650, which is 1 percent higher, but an important comparison to 2023, that number 29,650, is 11 percent higher than 2023, so the outreach is strong. Here's our major sports revenues, Conformation, Companion, Performance, and Family Dog. We can see the revenue for 2025, for Conformation was \$5.9 million, or 3 percent lower than 2024, and flat versus 2023. Companion events revenue in 2025, totaled \$6.5 million is 14 percent higher than 2023 and flat versus 2024. Performance events revenue in 2025 was \$4 million, or 8 percent higher than 2024, and again, 14 percent higher than 2023. Rounding out this area is the Family Dog program with \$3.9 million of revenue, which is consistent with 2024.

Sponsorship, advertising, and royalties, specifically advertising revenue, in the center boxes, you see the \$1.8 million decrease. Again, this tracks to registration. It's an important number to watch and understand that due to data privacy rules, changes in search engine optimization,

the way searches are done, our advertising revenue have all been challenged. It's a key revenue line that we are evaluating and examining as we go forward. Sponsorship is the one that I wanted to really speak to because it's 11 percent of our revenue. This whole area is 18 percent of our total revenue, but sponsorship is 11 percent or \$10.8 million. It now sustains AKC's operation. It follows a vision that broadens awareness of the brand. Ron Furman and his team are doing an excellent job. This includes the Geico truck at ANC which was a \$1 million sponsorship. We appreciate support from our sponsors, certainly, from you, and obviously our breeders, as we try and broaden the awareness and knowledge of our brand. Here's the plug – look for us on the ESPN and ABC networks because content capture obviously drives our public presence.

Reviewing expenses, the total, as we mentioned earlier, was \$97.4 million, which is 2 percent higher than prior years. We are consistent with most service-based organizations because staff and professional fees are the principal expenses of our organization. Staff expenses here presented include travel for staff increased by 6 percent, which is the same increase as it was in 2024, over 2023. This is driven principally by market competition, health benefit costs, and a process we put in place where we evaluate travel costs on a quar-

terly basis, and we ask the hard questions: Do you need to go? And if you need to go, how effective are you? Fulfillment costs include delivering public events like ANC and AKC Meet the Breeds®, as well as product fulfillment, and that decreased slightly in 2025 by 3 percent. Rounding out the expenses, we have insurance, rent, and depreciation. That includes \$5.8 million of depreciation and amortization due to many years of building an internally developed software infrastructure. We will see that reliance because we use three-year depreciation on those projects for the next couple of years, and until we're able to sunset a majority of that, that number will stay with us. Insurance for property and liability, which is extremely well managed, has held steady at \$1.2 million, representing 1.2 percent of expenses, despite adding events. Our lease and rental expense for the entire organization is 3.9 percent of our total expenses, or \$3.9 million. AKC continues to support our charitable affiliates, the Museum of the Dog, the Canine Health Foundation, by contributing \$5.1 million of cash and in-kind support. Finally, in expenses, as required by our governance documents, AKC Bylaws, Article VII, Section 11, I'm reporting that the 2025 expense for the Board of Directors totaled \$491,445.

The balance sheet presents our statement of financial position for the year. Assets

total \$258 million, which includes market-based investments of \$194 million and property and equipment of \$50 million. Please remember that the market-based investment strategy is focused on long-term growth. It follows approved investment policy statements, which are reviewed with the investment consultant monthly, and the dollars are there to support retirement plan obligations and maintenance and development of our IT systems. As of December 31, 2025, investment performance was positive at 12 percent for the year. The liability section is primarily comprised of retirement plan and lease obligations and totals \$71 million. As per our financial statement footnotes, net assets were restricted by the Board of Directors in 2009, for the protection of retirement plans and obligations to affiliates.

Thank you for your time today. As always, I'm available at your convenience for questions. The slides will be posted as soon as I get them to my very able colleague, Amy Hamernick, who puts them up very quickly for all of you, and I welcome your questions.

The Chair called on Ernest Obubah, from KPMG, for the Teller's Report.

Mr. Obubah: Good morning. I'm Ernest Obubah, KPMG, with the Teller's Report.

Total number of ballots cast, 329. Invalid ballots, 2. Majority vote needed for elec-

tion, 165. Results: Carl Ashby, 93; Karen Burgess, 57; Dominic Carota, 167; Patricia Cruz, 45; Sue Goldberg, 112; Jason Hoke, 181; Laurie Maulucci, 47; Lisa Peterson, 54; Thomas Powers, 113.

The Chair declared that Dominic Palleschi Carota and Jason Hoke were duly elected as members of the Class of 2030.

The Chair announced that there would be a second ballot to fill one vacancy for the Class of 2030.

(Recess for voting.)

(Session resumed.)

The Chair called on the Executive Secretary to read the proposed amendment to Chapter 3, Section 12 of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*.

Ms. Goffe: This amendment is to **Chapter 3, Section 12** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*, which codifies the clarification to the rule adopted by the Board at its May 2025 meeting, that a competitive non-regular class may not be offered by an event committee for which castration or spaying is a condition of the class.

This amendment was proposed by the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee and brought forward with the approval of the AKC Board of Directors.

It will be published in two issues of the *AKC Gazette* and you will be asked to

vote on it at the June 2026 meeting. The full text is on the worksheet previously emailed.

There were no questions or discussion.

The Chair called on Sheila Goffe, Executive Secretary and VP, Government Relations, and Stacey West, Manager, Patriotic Puppy Program, for an update on the Detection Dog Task Force and the Patriotic Puppy Program.

Ms. Goffe spoke as follows:

Good morning again. As many of you know, the story of the Detection Dog Task Force goes back to September 11, 2001, when the world awakened to the threat of global terrorism. Since then, many cities have experienced terrorist attacks and international conflicts have expanded in the Middle East, Europe, and Latin America. As the threats have grown, so has the demand for the single most effective way to detect explosives and prevent attacks, the specially trained detection dog. But there's a problem – America and the world have shortages of high-quality detection dogs. Traditionally, the U.S. Government has procured more than 80 percent of our detection dogs from overseas. Having to compete for dogs on the open market has meant that the U.S. lacks a stable source of detection dogs. We're not able to acquire the best quality dogs, and of those we get, many wash out in training. At the same

time, previous U.S. breeding programs have failed due to lack of transparency, lack of incentive for breeders, and intimidating contracting processes.

Several years ago, the TSA reached out to our own Dr. Battaglia and asked for AKC's help in addressing the problem. It makes sense: AKC is a preeminent expert on dogs and breeders. We have some 5,000 clubs with top dog breeders, and we have a history of providing assistance to government and law enforcement programs dating back to World War I. Although many breeds can be trained for detection work, the preferred breeds are sporting dogs and especially Labrador Retrievers, one of the most popular breeds in our registry.

The Board created the AKC Detection Dog Task Force to address the problem. Current members are Dr. Carmen Battaglia, Chris Sweetwood and Ann Wallin. Staff are Doug Ljungren, Stacey West, Melissa Farrell and me. We created a multifaceted program that focuses on three areas. In the area of public policy and advocacy, we've worked to streamline government procurement practices and change federal laws and appropriations to better support detection dogs and their development. We're raising awareness of this issue through media, congressional testimony, the biennial AKC National Detection Dog Conference – which incidentally is in Raleigh this August, and you're

all invited to attend – and also crucial breeder outreach and education, including quarterly webinars and hands-on seminars throughout the country, as well as newsletters, best practices, and online educational courses with AKC Canine College and our Patriotic Puppy Program. Our success in these areas is enabling AKC and our participants to play an important role in protecting public safety and national security. It's raising the profile of working dogs and purebred dog breeders and is creating relationships that help protect our breeders and our sports from animal rights and other extreme legislation.

Today, we're pleased to update you on the jewel of this program, the AKC Patriotic Puppy Program, which provides one-on-one assistance to help AKC breeders breed, raise, train, and place dogs for future careers as detection dogs.

I'm pleased to introduce Stacey West, our Patriotic Puppy Program Manager, and also Retriever Executive Field Rep to share the fun, hands-on side of the program, how it fits in with traditional Performance events, and some exciting updates.

(Video Plays.)

Mr. West spoke as follows:

I am in a very unique position at AKC as a former professional retriever trainer, now Executive Field Rep for retriever events, where I get to go watch some of the top

performance retrievers in the country, in the world to be honest, and explore how to pull those same genetics with our breeders and produce the dogs that our law enforcement are looking for to keep the country safe. What is Patriotic Puppy? Our goal was to decrease dependency on our foreign suppliers, and to do that we built a network of breeders and trainers and industry leaders with one goal, and that is to produce puppies that can go on to become selected for law enforcement programs. We have a dedicated program manager, but from day one I told Sheila that the only way we would be successful is if this program had to be bigger than me. We developed a group of mentors who are industry leaders, the people I lean on around the country, who want breeders in the program to be successful. We have an active social media group that's a closed group, which promotes peer-to-peer interaction between our breeders and trainers, where there is an opportunity to say, "I think I've got a dog ready, I'm just not real sure where I go next," and that's where those industry leaders act as mentors.

Why Sporting breeds? We saw a transition away from the intimidation factor of a Belgian Malinois or a German Shepherd, to where we wanted people to act normal at these large events. For large venue security, I don't need people avoiding the security dog who's sweeping the group of people,

I need them to act normal and only the bad guy to be the one who starts trying to avoid our security. The Labrador or the German Shorthaired Pointer became two breeds in particular that TSA was focused on. But we're AKC, so we don't discriminate against breed. We always have the hard conversation when someone thinks their breed can do it.

I just have to convince the law enforcement handler to be willing to take on a new breed that they're not traditionally comfortable with. Program requirements to get involved – we expect the puppy to come out of an AKC registered litter and for that puppy to be AKC registered.

We send them a DNA kit at the beginning so we can bank the DNA. We want the DNA of dogs that fail just as much as we want the ones who are successful and go on to be placed. We ask that our participants record and submit training records in specifically designated training areas – you'd be surprised how difficult it is to get folks to submit their training records. Finally, once a month we get together and we have a conversation. It's a chance to bring up program issues, find out who's looking for dogs within the industry, and if you've got a training problem, this is where to get that peer-to-peer interaction and when I can give my input as the subject matter expert.

What started out as a pilot program has grown into a nationwide program. I think we're now in 46 states. This is all subject to the email that comes in once a week of new people that are getting in. The program continues to grow. Graduates by breed, obviously we started with Labradors, and we get a big push for our law enforcement folks. We're heavy on the Labradors, but as you can see, when that first Chesapeake got selected, it looked like a unicorn had gone into the kennel. Everybody came to see the dog, because it's not a traditional breed. We've continued to add new breeds almost yearly. One of the most common questions is whether males or females are selected more. There's really no preference. I have a couple of breeders who like training the males better, and so their kennel gets a little skewed toward males. If you know anything about the Field Trial Labrador lines, it doesn't surprise you that we get more black Labradors being selected than we do other colors.

TSA is the one who got us into this, but one of the biggest things that I brought in when I came on board in 2020, was to open this up to local and state law enforcement. I had a trainer from the state of Maine ask, "Why don't I get first choice? Why do you have to go to TSA first before I can look at your dogs?" Once we expanded to not only TSA but all federal

agencies as well as local and state law enforcement, the program took off. You can see where the numbers are headed, 222. I always laugh that every time I put a total number up here, it's wrong. Yesterday on the flight over here, I got an update, four more dogs have been placed and two are headed to the Pentagon. Some weeks we have new dogs placed almost daily.

I mentioned the mentor program. These are folks that contribute not only to interaction with our participants, but they support everything we do. They present at our conference; they participate in our webinars. When I have an issue, they're my go-to. They're my sounding board on the technical side of things.

Lessons learned, breeders aren't always trainers. One of the things we talk about with our hands-on events are adding tools to your toolbox. You don't have to be a great dog trainer to get involved with Patriotic Puppy. You just have to be willing to learn and add a new tool to your toolbox. Note-taking is a hard habit to start. Once I started getting our participants to advocate for how they're using their notes in training the next group of dogs, I knew we were turning the corner. Because they can now say, "I was horrible at it, but once I started using it, it was easier to decide when I needed to stop, wash out a dog and find him a new job." Mentorship is a necessity. I can't do this by myself. We have

people all over the country, and bringing those mentors in was critical. Finally, right dog, right job. The hardest thing some of our participants had to learn was no means not today. It means this agency didn't want your dog, but two weeks later, that dog could have a job. Those lessons were difficult at times to be involved with. Thank you. If you've got any questions, I'll be happy to answer.

The Chair recognized Joan Savage, Delegate from the Portland Kennel Club, who spoke as follows:

How old do you take these puppies? How long do the breeders have to hold on to them?

Mr. West: Every situation is different. We have had some breeders that have started the training process and found that career for the dog as early as five months of age. We have a dog at Cornell University that they wanted the dog to grow up on campus, so they specifically said five to seven months, German Shorthaired Pointer female. There were three in the program at the time, so they selected the one that fit their needs. Traditionally, the federal contracts, they won't look at a dog until they're one year of age. The 10–12-month age is where most of our dogs get evaluated.

The Chair recognized Nancy Shaw, Delegate from the San Antonio Kennel Club, who spoke as follows:

Is the DNA testing to make sure it's purebred, or are there things that you've noticed in DNA that make better dogs?

Mr. West: It's to bank that DNA so that once we have enough power to start looking at markers that predict that dog's success or failure for that matter. Right now, that DNA is being collected purely as an opportunity to collect data for the future, to improve our breeding.

The Chair called on Ashley Jacot, Vice President of Education, to talk about upcoming projects from AKC Education.

Ms. Jacot spoke as follows:

Thank you. Today I'm going to share two upcoming projects from AKC Education. The first program is AKC Family Pack Fundamentals. This program focuses on helping families navigate one of the most important transitions in dog ownership, life with children. For many households, bringing home a baby, having grandchildren visit, raising young children alongside the dog can be incredibly rewarding. But it can also introduce new risks if families aren't properly prepared. Our goal with this program is simple but powerful. We want to help families create safer homes, stronger bonds, and positive lifelong relationships between dogs and children. Through education and practical tools, we can give families the knowledge they need to prevent problems before they happen. To

understand why this initiative matters, it's important to look at the data. Each year in the United States, there are approximately 4.5 million dog bites. Of those incidents, about 800,000 require medical treatment. Even more concerning is about half of dog-bite victims are children. Children between five and nine years old have the highest injury rates, and younger children under five are most likely to suffer bites to the face, head, and neck because they're physically closer to a dog's level. Young children are curious, energetic, and impulsive. They move quickly, make unpredictable noises, and often don't understand boundaries. When those behaviors meet a dog that may be stressed or confused, the risk increases significantly. This highlights a critical need for education and prevention. One of the most important points to understand is that most dog bites involving children actually happen at home. They typically involve a familiar dog, not a stray or an unknown animal. That means this isn't primarily a problem of dangerous dogs or dangerous breeds. Instead, it's about family dynamics, supervision, and communication. Dogs thrive on routine and predictability, but family life changes frequently. A new baby arrives. A toddler begins crawling. Grandchildren visit more often. Suddenly, the dog's environment becomes louder, busier, and far less predictable. Most incidents happen because signals were missed or structure wasn't

clear, and that's exactly where education can make the big difference.

Family Pack Fundamentals was designed to fill that education gap. It's a multi-course digital learning series hosted within AKC Canine College. The program teaches families how to read dog body language, structure their home environment, and practice proactive supervision.

We guide families through the different phases of raising children with dogs, from pregnancy through preschool years. Importantly, the program is not fear-based. Instead, it focuses on prevention and preparation. Our goal is to give families practical, repeatable tools that reduce risk and help create a calm, structured environment where both dogs and children can thrive. The program begins with a three foundational course that applies to every dog-owning household. The first course is Understanding Your Dog. This teaches families how to recognize body language, stress signals, and early warning signs. The second course is Setting Your Dog Up for Success. Here, we help families evaluate their home layout and establish things like relaxation zones and clear boundaries. The third course is Guiding Everyday Interactions. This focuses on supervision levels and how to respond to situations in real time. Those foundational skills apply to every breed, every size dog, and every type of household. They form the base

knowledge families need before addressing specific life stages. After the foundational course, the program expands to meet families where they are in their journey. We're developing stage-specific courses for several life stages. Expectant parents, families with a newborn, families with crawling babies and toddlers, families with preschool-aged children. Each stage presents unique challenges. For example, preparing a dog for a newborn is very different than managing a household with an active toddler. Rather than offering generic advice, these courses provide targeted strategies tailored to each developmental stage. This makes the program much more practical and relevant for real families. What really sets this program apart is that it's designed to be interactive and actionable. Families won't just watch videos or read information. They'll actively engage with the material through tools like interactive planning snapshots, downloadable playbooks, and real-world scenarios. We also include demonstration videos that show essential training cues such as leave it, drop it, place, and out. These tools help families turn knowledge into practical action plans for their homes.

This approach moves AKC Education from simple awareness to real-world application. Family Pack Fundamentals was designed around real family scenarios. For example, dog owners expecting a

baby, grandparents who frequently host grandchildren, families managing multiple dogs and multiple children, urban households teaching children safe interactions in public spaces. We also consider blended families, newly adopted dogs, and households where children host frequent play dates. By addressing these real-life situations, AKC Canine College can reach families earlier in their dog ownership journey and support them with credible, trusted education.

Beyond the educational benefits, this initiative also supports AKC strategically. First, it positions AKC as the trusted authority in dog child safety. Second, it expands AKC's digital education ecosystem through scalable online learning. Third, it allows us to build relationships with young families earlier, creating opportunities for long-term engagement. It also helps counter misinformation that often spreads through social media or unverified training sources. Ultimately, this program strengthens AKC's leadership role in responsible dog ownership while protecting both children and dogs. This video provides a preview of the Family Pack Fundamental program and highlights the practical tools that families will receive.

(Video Plays.)

Now I'd like to shift gears slightly and talk about another exciting project from the

AKC Public Education team. This project focuses on developing a children's book that celebrates the human-canine bond while introducing families to AKC. Like Family Pack Fundamentals, this initiative supports our broader goal of education and engagement with families. The idea for this book came from a simple observation. When we search for children's books that promote literacy while highlighting the relationship between people and dogs, we found the options were surprisingly limited. Many dog-themed books are purely fictional or focus on only a few well-known breeds. Very few books introduce children to the diversity of dog breeds or to the activities and sports that dogs participate in. We saw an opportunity to create a book that could both educate and inspire young readers.

Once the idea was established, our team began learning more about the process of writing and publishing a children's book. We enrolled in courses to understand the steps involved, including outlining, drafting, editing, and publishing. The manuscript went through multiple revisions. Feedback came from educators, families with children, AKC subject matter experts, and team members within public education. One of the biggest challenges at this stage was finding an illustrator with experience drawing dogs accurately. Once we selected an illustrator, the collaboration

process began with developing the book's characters. This stage helped us align on artistic style while ensuring the illustrations would remain both child-friendly and accurate to the breed. Balancing those two goals was extremely important because we the illustrations to reflect the breed standard while still appealing to young readers.

Next, we work with the illustrator to determine the layout of each page. We discussed text placement, visual storytelling, and specific details that should appear in the illustrations.

The illustrator then created thumbnail sketches for each page. These small sketches gave us an early preview of how the story would visually unfold. After thumbnails were approved, the illustrator created rough versions of the full interior pages. Each illustration went through multiple rounds of revisions. The Public Education team and AKC staff reviewed every stage and provided detailed feedback. Additional team members and subject matter experts also contributed feedback to ensure accuracy and clarity. One of the most exciting stages was adding color to the illustrations. Our illustrator used a detailed process that begins with drawing the artwork, painting it with watercolor, and then transferring it digitally to refine the final image. Because the process is so detailed, providing clear and thorough feedback at this stage was essential. One of the biggest challenges was

ensuring the sports and breeds were represented accurately while still being easy for children to understand. Our illustrator had limited background in dog sports, so we needed to provide reference images and detailed explanations. In some cases, entire pages had to be redesigned. For example, the dog show illustration was scrapped and redone to ensure the details were clearer and easier for readers to recognize. The back of the book will include educational pages featuring real images of dog breeds and AKC Sports. These pages will also include information about the AKC and links to learn more.

This book helps achieve several goals. It introduces families to the AKC brand. It highlights lesser-known breeds and dog sports. It provides educational content for families and educators. It also supports programs like Bailey's Book Club, where books can be distributed to schools nationwide. We anticipate the book will be completed by the second quarter of this year. Once published, it will be available through several channels, including the AKC Shop, the traveling AKC Booth, Amazon, and major AKC events. In addition, copies will be donated to Title 1 schools through the Bailey's Book Club program. This project helps expand AKC's educational reach while introducing new families and children to the world of dogs in the AKC community. You can pick up a flyer

about this book on the check-in table.

Education has long been a part of the AKC mission, but 2026 marks a milestone year. This year is the 10-year anniversary of the AKC Education Department, and I'm proud of the progress our team has made building programs that serve the entire AKC community. You can scan the QR code to visit our website, and you can also contact me anytime. Thank you for your continued support.

The Chair called on Ernest Obubah, from KPMG, for the second Teller's Report.

Mr. Obubah: Here's the report from the second ballot.

Total number of ballots cast, 332. Invalid ballots, 9. Majority vote needed for election, 167. Results: Carl Ashby, 49; Karen Burgess, 26; Patricia Cruz, 8; Sue Goldberg, 100; Laurie Maulucci, 16; Lisa Peterson, 14; Thomas Powers, 110.

The Chair announced that as no candidate received a majority vote, there would be a third ballot to elect one candidate to the Class of 2030.

Laurie Maulucci, Delegate from the South Windsor Kennel Club, withdrew her name from the ballot.

Patricia Cruz, Delegate from the Heart of the Plains Kennel Club, withdrew her name from the ballot.

Karen Burgess, Delegate from the Greater Clark County Kennel Club, withdrew her name from the ballot.

Lisa Peterson, Delegate from the Norwegian Elkhound Association of America, withdrew her name from the ballot.

(Recess for voting.)

(Session resumed.)

The Chair called on Gail LaBerge, Delegate from the Atlanta Obedience Club, to provide an update on the AKC PAC.

Ms. LaBerge spoke as follows:

Good morning, everyone. Normally, I come up and I ask you for money. Well, of course, I'm asking for money. But today, I want to share a story that happened in the past week to show what your PAC money is doing and how giving local PAC money really makes a difference. A week ago, Friday night, after business hours, I received a notification from the Georgia State Senate that we had a dog bill coming up on Monday morning in committee. I read the bill, and it's an anti-breeder bill, similar to others we've been seeing across the country. So, I notified Sheila Goffe and her staff, and then I called Ronnie Gaskins, Chairman of Georgia Hunting & Fishing. He also happens to be a County Commissioner in South Georgia. When Ronnie decided to run seven years ago for County Commissioner, the AKC PAC

supported his campaign. He said to me, "There's three people running. It's an open seat. I expect a runoff." But he won outright, and he told me that AKC PAC support money allowed his campaign to do some that made the difference in his election. All these years later, he lets me know the senator sponsoring this bill is his senator, blind copies me on an email that I will tell you, it was apparent he knew this guy personally because I'd never said what he said to him in an email! By Saturday AKC has an alert out, Ronnie Gaskins has been in touch with the AG Commissioner, who also wasn't happy about the last-minute surprise, and Georgia Canine Coalition and AKC supporters are blowing up the sponsor's email box. One of the Georgia Canine Coalition members happens to be a neighbor of a very influential committee member, a senator. She goes down the road and has a chat with him. He also calls the sponsor. That little bit of money that we gave years ago went a long way in helping us!

I also have to share this. Ronnie told me that when he called the senator, he told him, Georgia Hunting & Fishing Federation will not support this, and they have a large group in his area. Nor will the Georgia Canine Coalition, and I am told that the American Kennel Club will oppose this bill as written. And the senator's words were, "Don't bring AKC down here on

me.” By Sunday evening, the bill no longer had a hearing scheduled for Monday morning, which meant he did not get it passed before the session deadline. It was a great victory, and I believe it’s a victory for the AKC PAC. When you give, it does open the door for the AKC GR team and dog owners everywhere. Please think about what it can do for you and your community and your state. And remember, you have the right when you donate to also recommend individuals that you want us to consider giving a PAC donation to. We’re happy to give that money away because that’s the whole idea.

Finally, we’re excited to announce that this year’s sweepstakes is a trip to Costa Rica for a week and a \$1,000 gift card to pay for your airfare. We hope you’ll make a contribution and encourage all your club members to do the same! Now is a great time to give.

The Chair informed the Delegates that the Tuesday, June 9, 2026, Delegate Meeting will be held at the Doubletree Newark Airport Hotel. Detailed information will be emailed as soon as it becomes available.

The following Delegates spoke during New Business:

Kevin Dryman, Delegate from the Skokie Valley Kennel Club, praised the Patriotic Puppy Program, emphasizing the need for first responders to have adequate resour-

es. He called attention to the significant decrease in service dog availability, leading to wait times of over five years due to volunteer shortages, high costs and funding problems, training limitations, industry regulation gaps, and fraudulent dogs. He inquired about the AKC Service Dog Pass website, which currently shows no available services and questioned AKC’s plans to increase volunteer support for service dogs, due to the exigency of combat veterans.

In response, Ms. Goffe explained that the AKC Service Dog Pass program was currently on hiatus. However, the AKC is actively promoting the breeding of service dogs, as demonstrated by the Patriotic Puppy Program. She directed Mr. Dryman to the AKCGR website at akcgr.org for more information on service dogs and also invited him to speak with her on the topic.

Connie Butherus, Delegate from the Afghan Hound Club of America, reported for the Parent Clubs Committee on the Pat Laurans Difference Maker Awards for the quarter. The four honorees were Wayne Ferguson, David Frei, Bill and Tina Truesdale.

Ann Wallin, Delegate from the Atlanta Kennel Club, spoke as a member of the Board of Directors of AKC Reunite to provide an update on their charitable giving programs thus far in 2026:

- AKC Reunite Pet Disaster Relief Trailers: 120 donated to date. 8 trailers in production.
- AKC Reunite K-9 Cop Grant Program: 964 grants have been awarded to date, representing over \$7 million in total grants; 75 of 80 have already been approved for 2026.
- Emergency Disaster Grants: 1 grant has been awarded so far in 2026, totaling \$2,500.
- Search and Rescue Grants: 6 grants have been awarded so far in 2026, totaling over \$15,000

Monica Stoner, Delegate from the Saluki Club of America and Editor of Perspectives, expressed gratitude to the Delegates who contributed photos and articles for the March issue. She encouraged everyone to read it, noting that the feature on low entry breeds was a highlight. The next photo theme has yet to be determined. She stated that submissions on any writing topic are welcome and offered assistance in refining them if needed.

Sandra Rolenaitis, Delegate from the Harrisburg Kennel Club, shared that as Shiba Inu breeders, she and her husband have donated \$105,000 over the last 11 years to East Coast Shiba Inu rescues and a glaucoma DNA marker research trial. When placing puppies, they ask buyers to donate \$20 to the National Rescue, SIRRA, a 501(c)(3) organization, which allows

them to get a tax deduction. Donations are tracked, and after their Christmas fund drive, the collected funds are sent to SIRRA to distribute to reputable Shiba rescues. This year, they have raised \$15,000, including a \$6,000 donation to Michigan State for the glaucoma trial.

Staying connected with puppy owners allows them to make a positive impact on their breed and give back to the dog community.

Hearing no further business, the Chair advised the Delegates that the meeting would recess while the votes were being counted for the third ballot.

(Recess.)

(Session resumed.)

The Chair called on Ernest Obubah, from KPMG, for the third Teller's Report.

Mr. Obubah: Here's the report from the third ballot.

Total number of ballots cast, 325. Invalid ballots, 1. Majority vote needed for election, 163. Results: Carl Ashby, 45; Sue Goldberg, 141; Thomas Powers, 138.

The Chair announced that as no candidate received a majority vote, there would be a fourth ballot to elect one candidate to the Class of 2030.

The Chair advised the Delegates that the meeting would recess while the votes were

being counted for the fourth ballot.

(Recess.)

(Session resumed.)

The Chair called on Ernest Obubah, from KPMG, for the fourth Teller's Report.

Mr. Obubah: Here's the report from the fourth ballot.

Total number of ballots cast, 306. Invalid ballots, 0. Majority vote needed for election, 153. Results: Carl Ashby, 23; Sue Goldberg, 149; Thomas Powers, 134.

The Chair announced that as no candidate received a majority vote, there would be a fifth ballot to elect one candidate to the Class of 2030.

Carl Ashby, Delegate from the United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club, withdrew his name from the ballot.

(Recess for voting.)

(Session resumed.)

The Chair advised the Delegates that the meeting would recess while the votes were being counted for the fifth ballot.

(Recess.)

(Session resumed.)

The Chair called on Ernest Obubah, from KPMG, for the fifth Teller's Report.

Mr. Obubah: Here's the report from the

fifth and final ballot.

Total votes cast, 307. Number of invalid ballots, 1. Majority needed, 154.

Results: Sue Goldberg, 162. Thomas Powers, 144.

The Chair declared that Sue Goldberg was duly elected as a member of the Class of 2030.

Board members were instructed to go to the Salem/Warren room.

The Chair thanked the Board members whose terms ended, Chris Sweetwood, Red Tatro, and Ann Wallin, for their service over the last eight years.

The Chair adjourned the meeting. (*One sharp rap of the gavel.*)

(Proceedings concluded at 12:19 p.m. ET.)

The opinions expressed by the speakers may not necessarily reflect those of The American Kennel Club.

PARENT CLUB LINKS



SPORTING GROUP



American Water Spaniel



Barbet



Boykin Spaniel



Bracco Italiano



Brittany



Chesapeake Bay Retriever



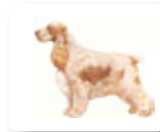
Clumber Spaniel



Cocker Spaniel



Curly-Coated Retriever



English Cocker Spaniel



English Setter



English Springer Spaniel



Field Spaniel



Flat-Coated Retriever



German Shorthaired Pointer



German Wirehaired Pointer



Golden Retriever



Gordon Setter



Irish Red and White Setter



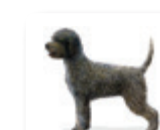
Irish Setter



Irish Water Spaniel



Labrador Retriever



Lagotto Romagnolo



Nederlandse Kooikerhondje



Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever



Pointer



Spinone Italiano



Sussex Spaniel



Vizsla



Weimaraner



Welsh Springer Spaniel



Wirehaired Pointing Griffon



Wirehaired Vizsla

PARENT CLUB LINKS



HOUND GROUP



Afghan Hound



American English Coonhound



American Foxhound



Azawakh



Basenji



Basset Hound



Beagle



Black and Tan Coonhound



Bloodhound



Bluetick Coonhound



Borzoi



Cirneco dell'Etna



Dachshund



English Foxhound



Grand Basset Griffon Vendéen



Greyhound



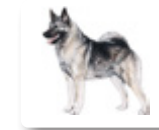
Harrier



Ibizan Hound



Irish Wolfhound



Norwegian Elkhound



Otterhound



Petit Basset Griffon Vendéen



Pharaoh Hound



Plott



Portuguese Podengo Pequeno



Redbone Coonhound



Rhodesian Ridgeback



Saluki



Scottish Deerhound



Sloughi



Treeing Walker Coonhound



Whippet

PARENT CLUB LINKS



WORKING GROUP



Akita



Alaskan Malamute



Anatolian Shepherd Dog



Bernese Mountain Dog



Black Russian Terrier



Boerboel



Boxer



Bullmastiff



Cane Corso



Chinook



Doberman Pinscher



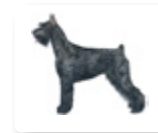
Dogo Argentino



Dogue de Bordeaux



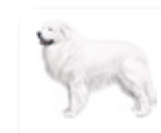
German Pinscher



Giant Schnauzer



Great Dane



Great Pyrenees



Greater Swiss Mountain Dog



Komondor



Leonberger



Kuvasz



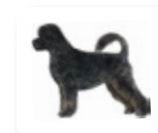
Mastiff



Neapolitan Mastiff



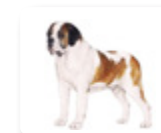
Newfoundland



Portuguese Water Dog



Rottweiler



Saint Bernard



Samoyed



Siberian Husky



Standard Schnauzer



Tibetan Mastiff

PARENT CLUB LINKS



TERRIER GROUP



Airedale Terrier



American Hairless Terrier



American Staffordshire Terrier



Australian Terrier



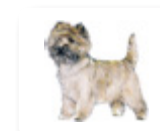
Bedlington Terrier



Border Terrier



Bull Terrier



Cairn Terrier



Cesky Terrier



Dandie Dinmont Terrier



Fox Terrier (Smooth)



Glen of Imaal Terrier



Irish Terrier



Kerry Blue Terrier



Lakeland Terrier



Manchester Terrier



Miniature Bull Terrier



Miniature Schnauzer



Norfolk Terrier



Norwich Terrier



Parson Russell Terrier



Rat Terrier



Russell Terrier



Scottish Terrier



Sealyham Terrier



Skye Terrier



Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier



Staffordshire Bull Terrier



Welsh Terrier



West Highland White Terrier



Wire Fox Terrier

PARENT CLUB LINKS



TOY GROUP



Affenpinscher



Biewer Terrier



Brussels Griffon



Cavalier King Charles Spaniel



Chihuahua



Chinese Crested



English Toy Spaniel



Havanese



Italian Greyhound



Japanese Chin



Maltese



Manchester Terrier (Toy)



Miniature Pinscher



Papillon



Pekingese



Pomeranian



Poodle (Toy)



Pug



Shih Tzu



Silky Terrier



Toy Fox Terrier



Yorkshire Terrier

PARENT CLUB LINKS



NON-SPORTING GROUP



American Eskimo Dog



Bichon Frise



Boston Terrier



Bulldog



Chinese Shar-Pei



Chow Chow



Coton de Tulear



Dalmatian



Finnish Spitz



French Bulldog



Keeshond



Lhasa Apso



Löwchen



Norwegian Lundehund



Poodle (Miniature)



Schipperke



Poodle (Standard)



Shiba Inu



Tibetan Spaniel



Tibetan Terrier



Xoloitzcuintli

PARENT CLUB LINKS



HERDING GROUP



Australian Cattle Dog



Australian Shepherd



Bearded Collie



Beauceron



Belgian Laekenois



Belgian Malinois



Belgian Sheepdog



Belgian Tervuren



Bergamasco



Berger Picard



Border Collie



Bouvier des Flandres



Briard



Canaan Dog



Cardigan Welsh Corgi



Collie (Rough)



Collie (Smooth)



Entlebucher Mountain Dog



Finnish Lapphund



German Shepherd Dog



Icelandic Sheepdog



Lancashire Heeler



Miniature American Shepherd



Mudi



Norwegian Buhund



Old English Sheepdog



Pembroke Welsh Corgi



Polish Lowland Sheepdog



Puli



Pumi



Pyrenean Shepherd



Shetland Sheepdog



Spanish Water Dog



Swedish Vallhund



AKC REGISTERED HANDLERS

The American Kennel Club Registered Handlers Program establishes criteria and standards for responsible, knowledgeable professional handlers. All handlers enrolled in the Program have met these criteria and made the commitment to follow the guidelines and Code of Ethics as set forth by the AKC.

For additional information concerning the Registered Handlers Program, click here:

<http://www.akc.org/events/handlers/>

For information on upcoming RHP Handling Clinics

<http://www.akc.org/events/junior-showmanship/junior-clinics/>

<http://www.akc.org/events/handlers/adult-clinics/>