



gazette

JULY 2026

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*Screwworm
Update*



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BREED COLUMNS SCHEDULE

Sporting and Working Groups	Hound and Terrier Groups	Toy, Non-Sporting, and Herding Groups
January, April, July, and October issues	February, May, August, and November issues	March, June, September, and December issues

Capital City Cluster

Stormont Vail Event Center, 1 Expcentre Drive, Topeka, Kansas 66612

AUGUST 20-23 2026

4 All Breed Conformation Shows * Obedience/Rally

*** Junior Showmanship * Pee Wee Exhibition**

*** NOHS Best Of The Best**

*** Multiple Breed Specialties**

*** Barnhunt * Dock Diving * Scentwork * Fetch* ATT**

*** Health Clinics * Reproduction Services**

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Superintendent Jack Onofrio



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Celebrate 250!

As I write this month, I am still energized by the success of AKC Celebrates USA 250 in Philadelphia. Over three days, June 5–7, dog lovers from across the region gathered to experience the excitement of AKC sports, meet incredible dogs, and learn more about the many ways AKC supports responsible dog ownership. From agility and diving dogs to family-friendly activities and educational opportunities, the event showcased the very best of our organization and the community that makes it so special.

The excitement will continue well beyond Philadelphia, as the competitions were taped for ESPN broadcasts that will begin airing over the July Fourth weekend and continue throughout the summer,

bringing the spirit of the event to audiences across the country.

Events like AKC Celebrates USA 250 demonstrate the power of dogs to bring people together while introducing new audiences to the world of purebred dogs, dog sports, and the AKC. They also remind us that our mission extends beyond any single event or competition. Every day, AKC works to preserve the future of purebred dogs, support responsible breeders, educate dog owners, and create opportunities for people and dogs to enjoy meaningful lives together.

That commitment extends well beyond our borders. I am pleased to share that the American Kennel Club and the New Zealand Kennel Club have entered



into a mutual-cooperation agreement, strengthening our shared efforts to support purebred dogs and the people who care for them. This partnership reflects our mutual commitment to expanding and enhancing canine events and registrations, advancing education and health initiatives, supporting responsible breeding practices, and promoting purebred dogs as valued family companions.

The agreement creates new opportunities for collaboration between our organizations, including exploring events, encouraging the registration of purebred dogs, expanding educational resources

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Philadelphia Navy Yard: Sailors present the colors during AKC Celebrates USA 250.

for judges, exhibitors, and breeders, and sharing knowledge and best practices related to canine health and welfare. Through partnerships such as this, AKC continues to strengthen its role as a global leader and advocate for dogs while fostering relationships that benefit the worldwide canine community.

As we look toward the future, it is important that we continue to recognize the individuals who help make our sport wel-

coming, enjoyable, and rewarding for everyone involved. Nominations for the President's Sportsman Award are now open and will be accepted through August 17. Now in its second year, the award recognizes individuals whose actions embody the principles of the AKC Code of Sportsmanship and Civility through integrity, mentorship, respect, and service to others. You can learn more about the award and nominate someone [here](#).

Last year's inaugural award demonstrated just how many extraordinary people contribute to the culture of our sport every day. Whether they are mentoring newcomers, demonstrating kindness and respect in and out of the ring, or helping create positive experiences for fellow exhibitors, these individuals represent the very best of the dog community. I encourage you to take a moment to recognize those who have made a meaningful impact by submitting a nomination.

One of the things I value most about AKC is the people who make this organization what it is. Your expertise, generosity, and commitment to dogs continue to move us forward and create opportunities for future generations to enjoy and participate in the world of purebred dogs.

Gina M. DiNardo
President and CEO
American Kennel Club



FCM Universal Championship

Four AKC International Dog Shows 2026

For AKC breeds fully recognized.

FCM Universal Championship

Special Attraction Dog Shows

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



Expo Santa Fe. Mexico City



November 12–15, 2026

FOUR ALL - BREED DOG SHOWS

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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AKC GAZETTE (ISSN 1086-0940), July 2026, Volume 143, No. 7, published monthly at 101 Park Ave., New York, NY 10178, USA, by The American Kennel Club, Inc. Copyright The American Kennel Club, Inc., 2025. No portion of this magazine may be reprinted without permission of the publisher. AKC is a registered trademark of The American Kennel Club, Inc.

From CHF: *Dogs and Screwworm*

For the first time in 60 years, New World screwworm has been detected in American livestock. What does this mean for you and your dogs? What follows is a message from [AKC Canine Health Foundation](#) CEO Dr. Stephanie Montgomery.

Reports of New World screwworm cases in the United States have understandably raised concerns among dog owners. New World screwworm was eradicated from the United States decades ago, but recent detections have brought renewed attention to this serious pest and the importance of early detection. USDA is tracking confirmed cases and urging animal owners to watch for bloody or foul-smelling wounds or visible larvae or eggs in or around wounds.

On Our Cover

World Cup Fever!

Dachshund ©AKC



While an increase in reported cases may feel alarming, it also means surveillance is working. As awareness grows and veterinarians, animal-health officials, and the public know what to look for, expect more cases to be identified and reported.

As with any outbreak, information will continue to evolve. Public-health officials and veterinarians are closely monitoring the situation, and guidance will continue to be updated as new details become available.

[Continue reading](#)

All-Breed Puppy/Junior Stakes Judges

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—The AKC has announced the judges panel for the 2026 AKC Royal Canin National All-Breed Puppy and Junior Stakes to be held in conjunction with the AKC National Championship presented by Royal Canin at the Orlando Convention Center.

Best in Stakes will be judged on Friday, December



11, by a panel of three judges: Dr. Thomas M. Davies, David J. Kirkland, and Daniel J. Smyth, Esq.

GROUP JUDGES

Sporting Eileen Hackett, **Hound** Patricia

Anne Keenan, **Working** Channing Sheets, **Terrier** Phillip Booth, **Toy** Nancy Martin, **Non-Sporting** Tammie Sommerson-Wilcox, **Herding** Bryan Martin

Breed Judges

Calling All Parent Clubs: Eddy Awards

Applications for the AKC Eddy Award are now open.

The AKC Eddy Award is designed to encourage and reward parent clubs that demonstrate a breeder-education effort that provides information beyond the expected in an interesting and unique manner.

A submission form was provided this month to each parent club by an announcement sent to the president, secretary, and delegate. The deadline for submitting the completed form is September 1. Clubs will be divided into four tiers based on their membership size, and there will be a maximum of eight recipients a year.

[More Information](#)



UPDATES

Reminder: Wheaten on Ramp

The AKC Board of Directors approved a request by the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America to remove the ground as an option for the breed to be examined at the discretion of the judge effective August 5.

For all conformation

events occurring on or after August 5, the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier will be required to be judged on the ramp. The [Table-Ramp List](#) has been updated to reflect this information and can be found the Conformation Judges Resource Center.



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Sharon Pitz models her Volunteer Service Medallion with Governor Josh Stein.

NC Gov Honors Durham KC Member

Therapy-dog handler Sharon Pitz “inspired countless smiles.”

By Penny Leigh

North Carolina resident Sharon Pitz thought her Golden Retrievers might have the right stuff to be therapy dogs. They had good manners and loved people. So, she enrolled them in a therapy-dog certification class at her local kennel club.

When the course at [Durham Kennel Club](#) concluded, Sharon had two certified therapy dogs and the start of a three-decade-long journey of service to others.

“I’ve had 10 registered

therapy dogs over the past 30 years. All worked at Duke Hospital,” she says. Without fail, Sharon and her Golden Retrievers visited patients every other week.

Her unwavering devotion to brighten patients’ days has been rewarded with the 2026 North Carolina Governor’s Volunteer Service Medallion. Only 20 to 25 volunteers in the state receive the annual honor that recognizes those who make significant contributions to their communities.

“Sharon’s tireless commitment has touched countless lives—both among the patients she personally visited and the many others who have experienced the comfort and connection that Pets at Duke provides,” says Kevlin Swepston, Oncology Volunteer Services & Pets at Duke Coordinator with the Duke Cancer Patient Support Program.

“Over the years, Sharon has logged at least 1,400 volunteer hours, though the true number is likely much

PHOTOS COURTESY DUKE CANCER PATIENT SUPPORT

UPDATES

higher, as records weren't consistently kept in the program's early days."

In addition to visits to Duke Hospital, Sharon and her Golden, Delilah, worked every Sunday for the last seven years at Crosdaile Village retirement community's health-care unit in Durham.

Sadly, Delilah passed away a few months ago, leaving Sharon without a partner, but Sharon continues to serve as an assistant to therapy dog visits at Duke Hospital.

JOY AND RELIEF

Sharon has been very involved in the dog world. She has shown her dogs in numerous sports, including obedience and rally, and served as the president and in other important roles for the Durham KC. She continues to volunteer as an obedience instructor for the club.

Sharon was honored in May by North Carolina Governor Josh Stein, who



Sharon attends the awards ceremony at the State Capitol in Raleigh.

presented her with the medallion at a ceremony at the Capitol in Raleigh. She also will be honored in early July by the Triangle Nonprofit & Volunteer Leadership Center.

"Her impact is impossible to measure: She has brightened days, eased

loneliness, and inspired countless smiles," Swepston says. "Many still remember the joy and relief they felt when Sharon and her pups entered their hospital rooms, bringing genuine warmth and a moment of peace amid treatment and uncertainty."—P.L.



To casual dog-show viewers, it can be puzzling as to why the breeds of the Hound Group are all shown under the same banner. They are, after all, a motley bunch—the towering Wolfhound and the low-slung Dachshund, the sleek and streamlined Greyhound and the shaggy and shambling Otterhound, the leggy, high-flying Ibizan and the

deliberate, earthbound Basset—all standing for appraisal in the same ring before the same judge.

What makes them all hounds is, of course, not physical resemblance but a common job description: the pursuit of furred prey above ground (as opposed to terriers, who root out their fellow mammals from underground lairs). Some

boast panoramic eyesight and great speed, others a prodigious nose and a durable frame. Together they present a picturesque and varied spectacle to the ring-side faithful.

In this month's slideshow we go around the rings to observe hounds pursuing not rabbits but ribbons.

(See photo credits on the slideshow's YouTube page.)



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TO SUBSCRIBE!

Judge Carol Ruthenberg, Greg Hayward and Zena, judge Pam Thornburg, and tracklayer Bev Krejsa. Note the gusty winds!



Inside Tracking

One man, one dog, and 18 minutes inside the world of Variable Surface Tracking

By Greg Hayward

ANKENY, IOWA—On April 12, the Des Moines Obedience Training Club held a Variable Surface Tracking (VST) event at Des Moines Area Community College. Among the participants was Greg Hayward with his 2-year-old German Shepherd Dog Champion Tracker Zena vom Mittelkvest II. If you have never observed an AKC Tracking event, Hayward's following account of Zena's big day is the next best thing to being there.

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY AUTHOR

FEATURE

Zena was in heat and, per AKC rules, females in heat run last in the test and are separated from all other dogs in tracking tests. She stayed in the car, or we walked in designated areas. I watched the other entrants track: four Tracking Dog Urban (TDU), with two passes, and four Variable Surface Tracking (VST), with one pass, Zena.

We started our track number 4 at 12:12 P.M. and finished at 12:30 P.M. for 18 minutes. The track was aged 3½ hours. Winds were gusty, skies were cloudy and bright, with damp grassy veg cover and dry non-veg surfaces. Total track length was 620 yards, with 405 yards (65 percent of vegetative and 215 yards (35 percent) of non-vegetative surfaces. There were four turns and five legs. The start article was fabric, leg 2 article metal, leg 3 article plastic, and “The Elusive 4th” article was leather at end of leg 5. Zena’s job was to scent

and follow the tracklayers footsteps, find/indicate all four articles, and make a 90-degree Moment-of-Truth (MOT) Turn on a hard non-veg surface.

Zena got a rip-roaring start, bouncing up and down and pulling me along on grass for 130 yards before crossing a sidewalk, grass, and driveway to grass on the other side.

She indicated a right turn that led us to a parking lot where she quartered back and forth over the track. She slowed to indicate and find a metal faceplate next to the curb 50 yards past the turn.

I held it up for the judges and gallery to see, while praising her with my happy voice, saying *What did you find?*, then *Let’s track* and *Find the next*. She bolted off on the hard surface toward more grass and made a tight right turn on to leg 3.

Zena found a random black plastic Styrofoam plate, which was not a test article as it’s too large. As

she moved forward past the plate, a wind gust blew the plate in the air. Zena circled back and chased the plate. I stood my ground while feeding out my tracking line to my 25-foot knot. I held on tight as she pulled. The judges and gallery found this particularly entertaining and fun to see Zena’s playful energy and puppy spirit. I heard them laughing. Zena ignored them.

When the wind died down, she circled back toward me and the track. I reeled in the leash to keep it taut, preventing her from getting tangled, and to shorten up to 15 feet as she passed me and resumed tracking down leg 3 of the track.

At 70 yards, she slowed and searched until she found a lime-green plastic article barely visible in the grass. I held it up, praised her, and she bolted 50 more yards to a left turn. Zena looked left, circled right around the turn, then gave me a strong head-check

FEATURE

left, so I moved with her on 130 yards of grass into the second parking lot.

In the second parking lot Zena indicated a turn. She looked and circled left around the turn and went right at the 90-degree Moment-of-Truth (MOT) turn as required in VST. If you miss the MOT turn or cut the corner you fail the test.

LOOKING LEFT BEFORE CIRCLING RIGHT AT MOMENT-OF-TRUTH

We were on leg 5 and she pulled to the final article, *Our Elusive Fourth*, a white leather article marked



Leg 4: a strong head-check left

“Four” per test rules! I was overwhelmed as I held up the fourth.

Woo-hoo! Pass!

THE WRAP-UP

The entire VST test was completed in 18 minutes.

Zena proved her commit-

ment to tracking down all four articles on the “spread out” 620-yard track. It’s like finding four needles in a haystack; while defying the wind, random cups, cans, wrappers, and the Black Plastic Plate! No stalling, no detours, no missed turns, no missed articles, and a tight Moment-of-Truth 90-degree turn on hard-surface.

Carol said, “Great teamwork, stunning!” Pam said, “Great job! It was a pleasure to watch! Way to go!” Bev said *Yay!* several times. All were smiling ear to ear. I heard someone say, laughing, “Zena was very entertaining with the plate!”



A tight Moment-of-Truth 90-degree turn on hard surface

FEATURE



The four scent articles found by Zena

Zena earned the Variable Surface Tracking Title *plus* Champion Tracker (CT) because this VST title makes three required for CT. She had already earned Tracking Dog (TD) and Tracking Dog Excellent (TDX) titles.

Our GSD Rudy earned his VST/CT in 2011 and was one of four GSDs to earn CT that year. It took

me and 5-year-old Rudy almost 4 years and many tries.

Zena, the 2-year-old, did it all in just 10 months: TD, May 18, 2025; TDX, October 12, 2025; VST and CT April 12, 2026—four titles in, amazingly, only four tests. This was her second VST test. She passed her TD and TDX on the first try.

Per AKC tracking title records for GSDs, Zena is the 96th CT, the fourth youngest GSD, and completed CT in the fourth-shortest amount of time from first to last test/title.

THANKS!

DMOTC is an extremely friendly and welcoming club! Thank you to the Des Moines Obedience Training

FEATURE



The spirited Zena: Who's a good girl!

Club, test secretary Deb Owens and committee, all tracklayers, volunteers, Bev Krejsa *our* tracklayer, and to judges Carol Ruthenberg and Pam Thornburg for a wonderfully laid-out track. Tracking tests only work when many generous volunteers donate at least two days of their time!

Also, I thank my tracking friends, supporters,

and mentors at Pecatonica Tracking Club, Moraine Tracking Club, and Lincolnwood Training Club for German Shepherd Dogs.

If you get a test track, pay it back and lay a track!—

G.H.

POSTSCRIPT

This just in: Zena earned a Tracking Dog Urban on her first attempt at the Flat-



Coated Retriever National in Sullivan, Missouri, on June 12. It was Greg's first TDU. Zena earned all four AKC Tracking titles in 12 months. **GZ**

The author has earned titles and instructed AKC Tracking and Rally in the northwestern suburbs of Chicago. Zena is his sixth TD and second TDX, VST, and Champion Tracker.

Information

Regulations

Beginner's Guide

Contact

Tracking@akc.org



THE 2026 AKC PHOTO CONTEST — NOW OPEN TO ALL!

Are you an accomplished shutterbug (or aspiring to be one)? Then we invite you to enter the 2026 AKC Photo Contest! Our theme this year is **"The Great Outdoors."** As always, the entries are based solely on creativity, quality, and originality. The top winners will take home cash prizes! For more on that and other details, check out the [contest rules](#).

The 2026 AKC Photo Contest starts April 27, 2026. Entries must be sent via email or postmarked no later than Oct. 31, 2026. Email your high-resolution photos to photocontest@akc.org — please include your name and the breed of the dog (if applicable).

Start snapping!

*June Harrah, ECSCA
medallion (proof),
bronze, 13⅛-inch
diameter; gift of the
estate of Kate
Romanski*



They Might Be Giants

The story behind an iconic artwork brings together famous fanciers and artists of 20th-century dogdom.

By Alan Fausel, AKC Museum of the Dog

FEATURE

The much-appreciated donation to the [AKC Museum of the Dog](#) of Geraldine Rockefeller Dodge's personal [English Cocker Spaniel Club of America](#) medallion by June Harrah, from the estate of Kate Romanski, brings into focus several towering figures associated with the breed, including Mary Crane, who may have sponsored the first ECSCA medallion.

GERALDINE ROCKEFELLER DODGE

Mrs. Dodge, with her vast resources of land, wealth, renowned kennels, and, of course, the [Morris & Essex](#) dog show, was arguably one of the most influential figures in 20th-century dogdom. Of the many breeds she admired, none benefited more from her advocacy than the English Cocker Spaniel. She was instrumental in promoting the breed as distinct from its American cousin, establishing its independent parent club in 1935 and ultimately helping to



A hand-colored Thomas Fall photo of Mrs. Dodge's imported English Cocker Ch. Blackmoor Barnabas of Giralda.

secure AKC recognition 11 years later.

In 1942, Mrs. Dodge enlisted sculptor June Harrah to memorialize the breed in the form of a bronze medallion featuring the portrait head of the English Cocker Spaniel.

JUNE HARRAH

By the time of this commission, June Harrah (American, 1910–1997) had already established herself as one of the pre-eminent canine sculptors of her era. Her seminal 1936 edition of 49 small-scale

FEATURE

bronzes depicting many of the most famous dogs of the day demonstrated both her technical mastery and her keen understanding of canine form. Selected by Anton Rost, the subjects collectively provide a fascinating window into the show-dog world of the early 20th century. Harrah's life-sized bronze of the Newfoundland Ch. Dyad's Strong Sea Pirate still welcomes visitors to the Museum at its entrance.

Mrs. Dodge presented Harrah's proposed sculpture at the ECSCA annual meeting in 1942. The following year, the club approved the production of 50 small-scale medallions to be awarded to champion dogs and bitches, along with a limited-edition large-scale version.

The dog who sat for the portrait was reportedly Mrs. Dodge's red dog, Giralda Jack. She later remarked, "... [T]hough Jack did pose for it at first, I think it is just about the ideal English Cocker head."

The choice of a profile portrait may have followed the conventions of medallion art and coinage, but fittingly, it is the head of the English Cocker Spaniel that most clearly distinguishes it from the American breed.

In 1998, the ECSCA donated June Harrah's original 15-inch plaster maquette to the Museum. It is most likely the final version from which molds were made and bronzes subsequently cast.

The recently donated bronze is identical in size and composition to the plaster, though it lacks the surrounding inscription. One can reasonably speculate that the bronze represents an earlier iteration of the final design, prior to the inclusion of the club's name.

When Mrs. Dodge first proposed the medal in 1942, the board did not authorize production until the following year, at which point the addition of the club name was approved. Further sup-



June Harrah, English Cocker Spaniel Club of America Medallion (maquette), plaster, 15-inch diameter; gift of the ECSCA

porting this theory is the work's provenance: Kate Romanski acquired the bronze from the William Secord Gallery around 2010. While most of the contents of Mrs. Dodge's Giralda Farms were dispersed through a series of monumental sales in 1975, a small number of objects remained with her charity, St. Hubert's Giralda, and were sold decades later through Mr. Secord.

The provenance, coupled with the absence of the inscription, strongly suggests this may have been

FEATURE

the first Harrah bronze of the series, and perhaps even from Mrs. Dodge's personal collection.

MARY CRANE

Mary Crane's lifelong devotion to the Great Pyrenees breed through her Basquarie Kennels has, to many, overshadowed the fact that she was also a charter member of the ECSCA and bred English Cockers in the club's earliest days.

Though she would later devote herself almost entirely to establishing the Great Pyrenees in America, she remained a respected English Cocker judge throughout her life.

Just prior to the Second World War, Mrs. Crane traveled extensively through France, identifying and selecting champion Great Pyrenees for her kennels, driven in part by the fear that another world conflict would devastate Europe's breeding programs as the previous war had

done. During her travels, she became acquainted with the French sculptor Richard Fath (1900–1952). Museum visitors may recognize his striking pair of coursing Greyhounds, seemingly suspended impossibly in midair.

In 1936, Mrs. Crane commissioned Fath to create a standing sculpture of the famed Int. Ch. *Estat d'Argelès*, as well as a 4½-inch portrait medallion of the dog. Apparently, around the same time, she also commissioned him to design a medallion for the ECSCA. The AKC Museum of the Dog retains a five-inch bronze example, along with no fewer than three plaster maquettes by the artist. Little documentation survives regarding the circumstances of their production, though they almost certainly stem from Mrs. Crane's association with Fath in 1936.

In her monograph *The Great Pyrenees*, Mrs. Crane noted that the bronze medallions featuring *Estat's*

head "... were awarded to winners of three-point shows until the supply became exhausted in 1940." One may reasonably assume that a similar fate befell the Fath ECSCA medallions, with wartime realities ultimately leading Mrs. Dodge to commission a new medallion from the American sculptor June Harrah.

KATE ROMANSKI

Kate Romanski was among the last links to the founders of the English Cocker Spaniel in America. For many years, she served as secretary and historian of the ECSCA and, together with Beth McKinney, authored the four volumes of *The English Cocker Spaniel* between 1986 and 2000.

My own association with Kate began in 2020, shortly after she donated thirty-three boxes of archival material to the AKC Library & Archives while also financially supporting the Cocker Spaniel shelves

FEATURE



Three Richard Fath medallions came to the AKC Museum of the Dog as gifts from the estate of Mary Crane:

Estat d'Argeles of Basquarie medallion, bronze, 4½ inch diameter;

ECSCA medallion, bronze, 5-inch diameter;

ECSCA Medallion (maquette), plaster, 5-inch diameter.



Kate Romanski: "She gently reminded me that Mrs. Dodge's medallion was headed our way."

within the Museum's library. In the lead-up to the Morris & Essex show, postponed until 2021, Wayne Ferguson circulated a list

of about a dozen surviving members of the fancy who had attended the last original Morris & Essex in 1957. Kate's name appeared

alongside legendary figures such as Wendell Sammet.

Over the following year, Kate and I shared many long and thoroughly enjoyable conversations. The Museum hoped to bring her to the show to be honored, though ultimately, because of her failing eyesight, she worried she would be embarrassed not to recognize old friends and acquaintances. Still, in nearly every conversation, she gently reminded me that Mrs. Dodge's medallion was headed our way.

While we are deeply grateful to welcome this remarkable acquisition into the collection, I miss those conversations even more.
—A.F.

Bonus Art!

These pieces from the AKC Museum collection were created by this month's featured artists.



“PIRATE” BY JUNE HARRAH

June Harrah was commissioned in 1975 to produce a life-sized bronze of Ch. Dryad's Strong Sea Pirate for Elinor Ayres, owner of Seaward Kennels in Vermont. Founded in 1932, it was the first U.S. kennel for Landseer and black Newfoundlands.

Through the mid-20th century, Harrah was among the most prominent sculptors of dogs and horses.

Walter Chrysler once remarked, “[O]f all the sculptors with whose work I am

familiar, there are several who have the ability and talent; but few have the energy, the character, the self-discipline and the patience which is so evident in Miss Harrah's work.” For years the “Pirate” stood guard at the entrance to Ayres's kennels in North Rupert, Vermont. Upon Ayres's passing, “Pirate” was gifted in her memory to the AKC museum in St. Louis, and today he continues to welcome visitors to our collection in New York.

“RUNNING GREYHOUNDS” BY RICHARD FATH

After serving in the military in the first world war, Fath embarked on a career as a sculptor, continuing the 19th-century tradition of famed *Animalier* artists such as

Barye, Mêne, and Moigniez.

In addition to the bronze medallions and plaster maquettes, the museum has numerous other works by Richard Fath, including the two bronze statuettes of the Great Pyrenees Ch. Estat d' Argeles of Basquerie.

Perhaps his most recognizable and ambitious composition in the collection is “Running Greyhounds.” The two hounds seem to be flying through the air in the midst of a double-suspension gallop, while their conjoined bronze bodies are supported by two of their combined eight paws. It is truly a masterpiece of bronze casting and ingenuity.—**A.F.**





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The 31st annual show of [Santa Barbara KC](#), July 26, 1959: Oliver C. Harriman gives Best Team in Show to a quartet handled by Mrs. Carlton Jones of May-He-Co Kennels.

From an archived *Los Angeles Times* clipping we learn, “The four schipperkes pictured are owned by Mr. and Mrs. Carlton

Jones, of Malibu.

“From the left, they are May-He-Co’s Ima-Dan-Dee; May-He-Co’s Lin-Bingo, CDX; Ch. May-He-Co’s Dan-Dee-Daun, CD; and Ch. May-He-Co’s Don Im-Ree-Kardu, CDX.

“This team is considered the first of the breed ever shown and is often seen going ‘best team in show,’

an award given for four dogs of the same breed or variety with identical ownership.”

It was a big day for the gang from May-He-Co. Earlier, judge Joseph Faigel put up Dan-Dee-Daun as Best of Breed, with Ima-Dan-Dee as Best of Opposite.

Schley photo, colorized by Chris Espiritu



Southern Charm

PERRY, GEORGIA— AKC.tv covers the Peach Blossom Cluster's [Atlanta KC](#) show, with Dr. Michael Woods judging BIS. 3:17:55



Once Around ... with Pat Trotter

Newly posted: The mistress of Vin-Melca gets down to the nitty-gritty of breeding and showing. 44:16

VIDEOS



Trailer: *Heart of the Beast*

Brad Pitt and a German Shepherd Dog vs. the vast Alaskan wilderness. Guess who wins.

2:29



Allison Sunderman, Sun Oak Welsh Terriers

A 50-year veteran explains why breeding great terriers takes far more than producing champions. 47:08

VIDEOS



The History of Dogs: Evolution, Archaeology, and Mythology

An illustrated lecture by anthropologist, archaeologist, and comedian David Ian Howe

58:13



Gilbert Win Shots: The Kodachrome Years

A Gazette Gallery salute to the master photographer's vivid work of the 1970s. 1:14



Adrian Woodfork

“I was 12 years old when I saw Gene Blake’s photo in *Dog World* magazine, and that is when I knew I wanted to play the dog game,” veteran Working Group judge Adrian Woodfork told the GAZETTE in 2009. On his life in dogs: “Of course there have been problems here and there, but that’s life. There have certainly been more positives than negatives. I love it. It has been a grand time.”



BUD BOCCONE ©2026

BREED COLUMNS



Edited by **Arliss Paddock**

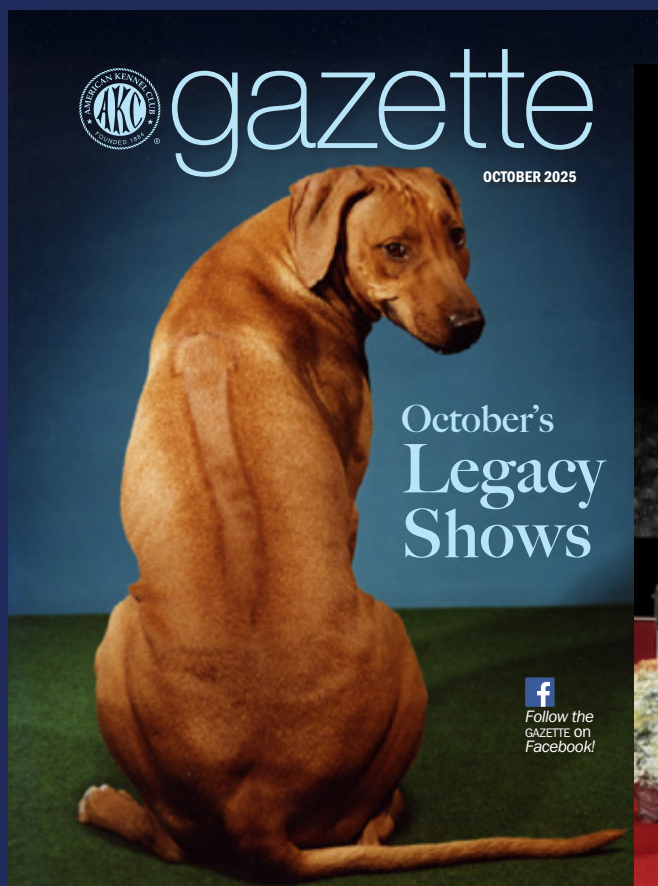
Young handler Mackenzie Wagoner brought smiles all around at the Newfoundland national. In "Big Dogs, Little Handlers," on p. 105, columnist Katie Dolan writes about the pure joy youngsters are bringing to the sport.



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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 ArlissPaddock@akc.org



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Chesapeake Bay Retrievers

RACH TITLES

The AKC established the Rally Champion title (RACH) on November 1, 2017. After approximately one year in the titling progression, the title requirements were revised effective February 1, 2019, and the new title requirements were grandfathered back to November 1, 2017. The title requirements were grandfathered since the change to the RACH title was completed in the title's infancy, and they were backdated to the beginning of the titling program. Only three dogs titled under the original rules.

Current rules are as follows:

1. Earn 300 points from Master, Excellent B, and Advanced B classes. A score of 91 is required to earn any points from a set point scale. 100 is a perfect score. 150 points of the 300 points must be earned from the Master level. The dog must have 20 triple qualifying scores from the three classes.



Chesapeake Bay Retriever Norm, GCh. RACH Chesabar Takes Sedgeblac by Storm, CD, PCDX, GN, RM3, RAE3, JH, NA, NAJ, ACT 2, owned by Kimberly Hitt, DVM, and Sandra Hitt, trained and handled by Kim; on right, with Kim and judge Linda Ferrullo (in Kim's arms is baby Joey).



Owner Heike Frattalone with Lania, GCh. RACH Chessieville Bay Let Freedom Ring, RM2, RAE2DS, TKI, BN-V, CD-V; pictured on right with judge Sylvia Brownlee.

Owner-handler Kimberly Hitt, DVM, writes the following about Chesapeake Bay Retriever Norm:

"GCh. RACH Chesabar Takes Sedgeblac by Storm,

CD, PCDX, GN, RM3, RAE3, JH, NA, NAJ, ACT2, was the first Chesapeake to earn the RACH title. Norm was a pretty exuberant Chessie—anyone who ever

COURTESY KIMBERLY HITT, DVM, AND SANDRA HITT / HEIKE FRATTALONE

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met him remembered him. He loved obedience, was a very flashy heeling dog, and he loved to go fast, making both of us fall in love with rally obedience.

“As soon as the RACH title was introduced, I knew Norm deserved to have those letters before his name, and we got to work!

“It took us nearly two years to earn our RACH from the time AKC first introduced it in late 2017. Rules were changed while we worked on the title. 2019 was a big year for me, personally, as I had my first baby, which kept us out of the ring for several months. Despite the delays, Norm finished in October 2019. He earned more High Combined and High Triple awards than I can remember, with his final wins occurring at the 2021 ACC national specialty in York, Pennsylvania. We made the trek to Rally Nationals once, in 2018, where we had some beautiful runs and truly special moments—but one blunder ultimately kept us

out of the Top Ten.

“Norm was always a character in the ring—everyone could see he was having the time of his life. Some of my favorite memories are the little things that made him unique. Every time we performed the ‘Back Up 3 Steps’ sign, he would woof at me with each step. Some judges did not love that and would dock points, but it always made me smile. He also adored the ‘Send Away & Sit’ sign, where he would race to the orange cone, promptly pick it up in his mouth, turn, sit, and look at me as proud as could be! When I returned to him, I’d say ‘give’ and put the cone back in place, and we’d carry on.”

The most recent RACH was earned by GCh. RACH Chessieville Bay Let Freedom Ring, DS, RM2, RAE2, CGCA, TKI, CGC-V, bred, owned, and handled by Heike Frattalone. Heike writes the following about Lania:

“Our journey towards the RACH began in October

2025. At that time, Lania and I had completed two Rally Master ‘legs,’ and my initial objective was to earn the RM title by November 30, 2025—the deadline for the Rally National Championship competition in July.

“Following a recommendation from an observer who had watched our performance, I decided to pursue RACH points by competing at all three levels: Master, Excellent and Advanced. My goal was to achieve this by June 30, 2026, in time to compete at the RACH Invitational scheduled for December in Orlando. We succeeded in meeting this target, completing the RACH on March 15. Lania performed exceptionally well, with consistent qualifying performances and no non-qualifying runs. We qualified for the Invitational listed above and also earned four Triple Q’s (qualifying in all three classes).

“It is important to remain calm and avoid unnecessary stress: If tension arises, one

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must manage it effectively. I recognize that this is easier to recommend than to practice. Our scores were stronger at the Master level than in Excellent or Advanced. It reinforced the need to maintain full concentration at every level and never take any station for granted.

“On the sign ‘Sit, Pivot Right, Forward,’ I failed to execute the pivot and was unaware of the omission at the time. On the ‘Sit, Front, Left Finish, Sit,’ Lania did not sit, and I did not observe the fault during the run.

“The positive aspect of each experience is that these mistakes occur only once and provide a valuable lesson for future performances. It remains noteworthy that the mind can introduce unexpected challenges during competition, even when one believes that stress is absent.

“We deeply enjoy this sport. It demands continuous focus, sharpens my skills, and fosters a unique and meaningful connection

with my dogs.”

Thank you, Kim and Heike, for your contribution and thoughts when completing the RACH with your Chesapeake Bay Retrievers.

Congratulations to the fourteen Chesapeakes and their owners who have earned the RACH as of this writing.

—Betsy Horn Humer,
tiderunr2@verizon.net
[American Chesapeake Club](#)

Curly Coated Retrievers

TRIMMING NAILS

Ann Shinkle wrote in 2023: “When I acquired my first Curly, I learned that nail grooming is an exceptional challenge with our breed. I tried to clip my young bitch’s nails and could not do it. I took her to the vet, and the vet said, ‘We can handle this.’ However, shortly after taking her back to do so, he said, ‘You are right. We cannot. So she has to be sedated for the ordeal.’

“This went on for a few months. Then I started my

Curly girl in a basic obedience class. Fortunately, the team next to me in class was a groomer with her dog. I mentioned my challenge, and she observed that my bitch’s nails were longer than they should be. She advised me to trim or file one nail per day until the dog accepted the situation in a more relaxed manner.

“The quick is quite close to the end of the nail, and it is easily nicked, which causes bleeding. And Curlies, being sensitive dogs, become quite concerned with it all. Gradually my first Curly did accept this gentle approach to nail grooming. Ever since that time, I have used different nail-care routines for each of my dogs.

“With my two current adult Curly girls, one lies on her side on the couch for nail care. I am able to clip each nail, and I give a treat after each foot. My younger girl lies on the grooming table on her side, and I clip just the very tip of each nail. When I’ve finished each foot, I give a treat and

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*Curly-Coated Retriever Ryedale Wag,
1952 (Evelyn Shafer photo)*

then move on to the next foot. When I've completely finished with all eight feet, everybody gets cookies!"

Jenny Dickinson added:

"As Ann describes, many of our Curlies come to their owners with no experience of nail care, and a window of teaching opportunity has passed. I work with service dog trainers who anticipate that disabled folks might not be able to have a wrestling match every time they need to shorten their dog's nails. Service dog breeders start

trimming nails in the whelping box—not just handling the feet, but letting the pups feel some pressure and hear the sounds of the clippers and the grinding tool while they are being fed yummys by an assistant. They do this every few days.

"Whatever early developmental procedures our breeders are following—and I hope it is Puppy Culture, or a protocol equally science based—*please* add a nail care protocol to it. We do no harm in adding this extra

step, and it prevents a lot of panic and misery for our dogs." —Ann Shinkle and Jenny Dickinson

[Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America](#)

Golden Retrievers

THE NOSE KNOWS

A Golden paradox: We humans smell what we see, while our Golden Retrievers see what they smell. Goldens interpret the world around them through their ultra-sensitive sense of smell, be it a downed duck in a heavy marsh, a landmine buried in a roadway, skin cells filled with cancer, or the sadness of an unhappy child. It's that amazing scenting ability that has spawned the term "that famous Golden nose." The ability to identify specific odors is greater in Goldens and other retriever breeds than in many other dogs. An estimated 300 hundred million scent receptors inside the nose allow them to interpret and identify the infinite variety of smells

AKC GAZETTE COLLECTION

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in the universe. A human, with a paltry five million receptors, could recognize a specific perfume in a small room, while a dog could distinguish the same scent in a football stadium, and at the same time identify the ingredients in the perfume.

So how exactly does each “Golden sniff” work? Using highly specialized photography, researchers have discovered that as the moist, spongy surface of the dog’s nose captures the various scents carried in the air, each of the dog’s nostrils works separately. The imaging also showed the path of airflow in the nostrils, revealing tiny slits in the side of each nostril that enable the dog to inhale and exhale at the same time.

When you see your Golden’s nose quivering during a hearty sniff, you know it’s sorting out information in miniscule amounts.

In addition, these olfactory structures serve as a direct conduit from the dog’s nose to its brain, enabling the

brain to identify and decode the data it receives. The canine brain is far more specialized in analyzing odors, with an estimated 10 percent of the brain dedicated for olfaction. In contrast, humans use about .01 percent brainpower for that purpose.

Yet another complete olfactory system, called the vomeronasal organ, is located above the roof of the dog’s mouth. Also known as Jacobson’s organ (perhaps he discovered it?), the vomeronasal organ detects the unseen hormones that humans and other animals naturally release, allowing the dog to identify feelings, such as aggression, hostility, or sadness, even illness and pregnancy. This special scenting apparatus also gives dogs the ability to sniff out cancers, drugs, and hundreds of invisible odors on land, sea, ice, and snow.

Thanks to the vomeronasal organ, Golden Retrievers are especially adept at identifying human emotions and excel as therapy

and assistance animals. Frequently used by therapy groups and other organizations during catastrophes and individual family crises, the Golden “knows” when to offer a friendly paw, a gentle nuzzle, and nonjudgmental love. Thanks to its unique ability to smell and/or sense our human needs, it could be said the Golden Retriever’s most important role is that of healing hearts. —Nona Bauer, 2016

[Golden Retriever Club of America](#)

Labrador Retrievers

A WORLD OF LABRADOR PEOPLE

For many exhibitors, Crufts represents the pinnacle of the international dog show calendar, drawing breeders, handlers, and dog enthusiasts from across the globe to Birmingham, U.K. Qualifying for the event is its own achievement, and for American breeders, the logistics of getting a dog there add another layer of commitment entirely. It is

BREED COLUMNS

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Labrador Retrievers at Crufts 2026: Judge Margaret Brown looks at her final lineup; Susie and Sage after winning second in a competitive Open class.



not a journey undertaken lightly.

Which made it all the more special when GCh. CedarKey Back to Flo Rida @ Suebel, RN, “Sage,” a bitch I bred and co-own, earned her Crufts qualification at the AKC National Championship in Orlando. There, she was awarded Best Bred-by with her co-owner, co-breeder, and handler Susie Wilcher, and also received an Award of Excellence.

Susie decided to make the trip and handled the logistics and paperwork. As luck

would have it, I was already London-bound for two weeks of work that just happened to coincide with Crufts.

After working in the city, I took the train to Birmingham and was immediately overwhelmed by the magnitude of the event. I did my pre-game shopping on Saturday and had the opportunity to enjoy dinner with Lab breeders from the U.S. and Portugal. On Sunday I was ready to spend my day at the two Lab rings, watching 280 dog and 306 bitch entries.

The ring stewards were great at getting the classes into the ring, and I was impressed by the stamina of the judges as they quickly sorted through their large classes, awarded their winners, and took quick notes for their critiques. Crufts was also a great opportunity to meet many of the breeders I’d only met online, as well as reconnect with several who are regular visitors to the Labrador Retriever Club of the Potomac Specialty. The Labrador community is a small world, and nowhere does that feel more true than in Birmingham in March.

As the competition in bitches drew to a close, the ring was surrounded by people watching. Judge Margaret Brown had her top picks move around the ring before handing her CC ribbon to the lovely MBIS MBISS GCh.B Everland Dance Party at Gallivant, FTN, “Party,” and Mia Juhl. Fabian Negron of Gallivant, co-owner of Party, was one of the first people I truly

COURTESY KARA HITE

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trusted in this breed, and working with him as a stud dog owner has been everything you'd hope for in that kind of partnership.

Watching Party's win from ringside alongside with him was an exceptional experience in itself but made even more so when Sage, the second-place bitch in Party's class, was called back into the lineup and awarded the Reserve CC. The moment felt full circle: Both Party and Sage share the same sire, Ch. Gallivant Joyful Jester, CGC, TKN.

What I carried home from Crufts was a deeper appreciation for just how wide and how generous this breed community really is. No matter where you are in the world, Labrador people are Labrador people, passionate about the same breed, committed to the same standards, and genuinely glad to find one another.

—Kara Hite, Bronson, Florida, cedarkeylabradors@gmail.com

[The Labrador Retriever Club, Inc.](#)

English Setters

A MATTER OF SIZE

A recent survey in a popular show dog magazine asked readers if their breed's standard needed to be changed (and how). As you might imagine, there were all kinds of answers. My favorite answer was “[It] does not need to be changed—it needs to be followed.”

Discussions about English Setters and how our current dogs fit the standard could be described in the same way. For example, there's a lot of conversation about the height of English Setters today. Are they too small? Too big? Not enough leg? Does it depend on where you live and the dogs you see most often? Does it depend on how big your own dogs are? And how much does it matter in terms of breed type?

I've had English Setters for a little over 30 years. There are certainly people who have been breeding and showing longer than I have. I can recall beautiful

top-winning and top-producing small bitches who were definitely under the “about 24 inches” called for in our standard. And we've all seen terrific male dogs who were well over the “about 25 inches” suggested in the standard. You've probably even seen large bitches of excellent quality, and superior males who were on the small side.

These dogs and bitches of varying heights might not be acceptable if our standard said dogs had to be 25 inches and bitches had to be 24 inches. That's not what it says, however. It wisely provides some leeway for the size of our English Setters.

Why is it wise for the standard to be open to allowing some deviation in size (usually considered about an inch up or down—though that is not written anywhere in the standard)? Because we should not dismiss or disqualify dogs without a good reason. The overall quality of a dog and all of his parts considered together should always

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English Setter

be more important than whether he is a little taller or smaller than the standard suggests.

That said, I doubt that most people who love English Setters wish to see them become a giant breed. Or a smaller breed. They are not meant to be “comfort setters.” If all dogs, male or female, begin trending toward 30 inches, there is a problem. Likewise, if English Setters were headed toward 20 inches, the breed would be in trouble. But neither seems to be the case.

We need to keep a variety of dogs and bitches of these varying sizes in our gene pool. Many of them may have something positive to offer for the future.

As for whether English Setters are too short on leg now, that’s harder to determine, especially when adult dogs have such long coats. Shown indoors in small rings, where it’s hard for dogs to stride out, it can be difficult to tell how a dog really moves or how long their legs really are. In order to really see the length of

leg, you might have to see the dog move in the open or put your hands on him to feel the underline and the legs. In some cases, it can be easier to see length of leg in younger dogs, before they have a full coat.

Once you see a dog who is low on leg, the picture really sticks with you. It’s not a matter of the dog being small. A dog can be small yet still be perfectly proportioned. A dog (or bitch) who is low on leg is proportioned differently than an English Setter who is normally proportioned. However, with certain grooming and handling, a dog who is low on leg can look nice to a judge and do a lot of winning. It’s up to breeders to look at dogs carefully and decide whether they want to use this kind of dog for breeding. If you do breed to a dog who is short on leg, you will probably get at least some offspring who have a similar look.

It should also be noted that there are dogs who are well-proportioned who can

COURTESY LYNDA BEAM

BREED COLUMNS

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be made to look short on leg quite inadvertently through less-than-careful grooming. Sometimes a very long coat can make a dog's legs look rather short. When you're finished grooming your dog, it's always a good idea to stand back and take a good look at the overall picture he presents.

If you'll forgive the pun, the long and the short of it is that our breed standard serves us well regarding the height of our dogs.

—Carlotta Cooper,
eshever@embarqmail.com
English Setter Association
of America

Gordon Setters

NOT JUST A PRETTY FACE

There will always be a debate when discussing the breeding of dogs as to whether the sire or the dam contributes the most success. There is no answer other than it depends upon the quality of both.

There are both dogs and bitches who occasionally come along who far exceed

expectations. There are bitches who seem to produce nothing but great puppies, and there are sires who do the same. The bottom line is that a sire can contribute far more across the board simply because he can produce many more dogs than any single bitch can produce. In short, greatness comes in numbers.

The next couple columns are going to shine a light on a couple of the boys who seem to contribute above and beyond the norm, starting with a semi-current dog who is having a great influence in Gordon Setters. In this first case, thanks to the miracles of modern transportation and veterinary medicine, there is one dog who is having a worldwide effect on the breed. And that effect is positive.

That dog is Ch. NZ/AUS/CAN Ch. Triseter Ebony Nirvana. He was bred in Australia by Esther Joseph in 1996. He was shown to his championship and began his stud career there and eventually caught the

eye of folks elsewhere.

In the early 2000s he got the attention of Colleen O'Brien, who was looking for a sire for one of her bitches. She made the contacts that started something I don't think she realized would amount to what it did.

The original plan was not for Nirvana to come to the U.S. Colleen decided to import frozen semen, and Esther in Australia sent two breeding units. The first breeding did not take, and the second attempt was a failure as well—no puppies. It was then that Esther offered to send him to the U.S.

The agreement was that Colleen would pay his shipping expenses to and from the U.S. and he would stay approximately a year to 18 months. While he was here, he would be shown and possibly earn titles in the U.S. and Canada, and he would be available at stud. Nirvana, of course, did so well and was so sought after as a stud dog that it was decided he would stay in the U.S. permanently. And

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Gordon Setter Ch. NZ/AUS/CAN Ch. Triseter Ebony Nirvana, whelped 1996, bred in Australia by Esther Joseph.



that is where the heart of the story began.

His show career took off, and he had no trouble finishing his championship shown by Kristin and David Stout. Over the course of two years, he won seven Gordon Setter Club of America regional specialties and the national specialty in 2003. In 2004, he earned a judge's Award of Merit at the national specialty. In 2006 he was best in Veterans Sweepstakes at the national

specialty. He added 12 group placements, with one of them being a group first, and he was Best of Breed at the Westminster Kennel Club show in 2003.

Along the way Nirvana found the time to sire some litters. He did that quite well too. As this article is being written in the spring of 2026, Nirvana's success as a stud dog is as follows:

- 62 AKC champions
- Four Canadian champions

• Nine Australian champions

Other countries where Nirvana has sired champions through the use of frozen semen include New Zealand, Germany, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus, Russia, Italy, England, and possibly several others.

He has also sired obedience-titled dogs (including a Utility Dog), rally titled, agility titled, tracking titled, and Gordons earning hunt

COURTESY OWNERS

BREED COLUMNS

SPORTING GROUP

test titles, including two Master Hunters, and field trial pointed get as well.

He has also sired two national-specialty Best of Breed winners, as well as several all-breed Best in Show winners.

And now would be a good point to add that the current “top dog” in the U.S., GCh.P Tamarack Valley View River of Dreams, with over 50 Best in Show wins, is a Nirvana grandson.

On his retirement from the ring, he lived with Colleen and Alison Rosskamp. But after George and Dottie Hawke lost their Gordon whom they got from Alison and Colleen, they felt it made the most sense to let Nirvana move to Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, to live with the Hawkes. Both Colleen and Alison were still working, and with the Hawkes Nirvana would get full attention all day from the couple. He loved it.

Dottie, of course doted on Nirvana and decided that he would be the perfect therapy dog. Both she and

George had experienced physical therapy at the Bryn Marr rehab center after hip and or knee surgery, so Dottie enrolled herself and Nirvana in their therapy dog program. He became quite the star at the facility and was much sought after for visits. He was especially great with therapy in the pool, as he absolutely loved to swim. One young boy, especially fearful of the water, was persuaded to join Nirvana in the pool. It's hard to be fearful in the water when you have a black and tan buddy to swim and splash with you. Success comes in many ways.

Finally, for two concurring opinions—mine and longtime breeder and Gordon Setter club volunteer extraordinaire Dianne Avery. Both Diane and I have been around Gordon Setters for half a century, and we both concur that we cannot remember seeing or encountering a Nirvana puppy with a bad temperament. He passed that on to his kids, and they seem to be passing that on to their kids.

Hopefully this cycle continues. That is as important as any titles and awards his descendants might earn.

Greatness comes in lots of little ways, and when all the ways add up you earn the best compliment of all, “Good boy, Nirvana.”

—James Thacker,
dunbargs@sbcglobal.net
Gordon Setter Club of America

Irish Setters

BREEDERS WHO DIDN'T START OUT AS BREEDERS

Recently, I was reflecting on when I acquired my first Irish Setter. It was 1984, and a classified ad in the *Dallas Morning News* listed Irish Setter puppies. She was from a backyard breeder, a litter of 16, and cost \$100. My third Irish Setter came from Pat Haigler, Rendition Irish Setters, in 1997. This breeder took a gamble with me and set in motion a future lifetime of dog events.

How often are first-time potential puppy buyers

BREED COLUMNS

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Above: The author at her first handling class with 4-month-old Irish Setter Rendition Irish Cream, who would become her first champion. Right: The author with Jewel, BIS BISS Ch. Rendition Treasured Moment, winning Best in Show under judge Monica Canestrini.

overlooked in favor of show homes? I set out to visit with three well-known breeders and asked how their journeys began.

Mary Goeke, Antares Irish Setters

“I bought my first Irish Setter in 1975 from an ad in the newspaper. The seller was a backyard breeder. My daughter and I started showing dogs in 1991. We had many patient mentors. But in 2001, I bought a beautiful bitch, Ch. Windrose

Hellen Wheels, and after encouragement from Sue Hahnen and Carol Horner, I bred her in 2004 for my first litter. From my very first litter, GCh.G Antares Amelia Earhart won the 2011 national specialty and was the #1 Irish Setter in the breed.

“I would encourage all breeders and all dog showing people to take the time to talk to new people. You never know what treasure you may discover. We all started as a newbie, and if

our mentors hadn’t taken the time, we may have left the sport before we even gave it a try!”

Carol McGarry, WindnTide Irish Setters

“We got our first Irish Setter in 1969, with no plans to show or breed. Actually ‘Casey’ came from decent dual lines, and the breeders talked us into showing him. At our first show, he defeated the show-quality brother they had kept, and we got to see both Ch.

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Weblin Fame'n'Fortune and Ch. Innisfail Flashbacks Design. Fortune won, but we both preferred IFD. At this show, Jay and Kellie Zirkle mentioned they were expecting a litter grandsired by IFD. Our Am. Can. Ch. Dunbrook Enchantment, Tawny, was the ideal foundation in every way. Bred to Am. Can. Ch. Tirvelde Hunter's Moon, she produced our Ch. Windntide Sophistication, Roxy.

"Certainly, the most memorable experience with our Irish Setters would have to be from Thanksgiving Day 2010, our 43rd anniversary, watching Clooney (GCh.G Windntide Mr. Sandman, CD, RE, SH, CGC, VCX), our seventh generation down from Tawny, going Best in Show at the Kennel Club of Philadelphia on national TV! My advice to first-time owners would have to be purchase the very best dog you can find from a responsible breeder, and if you want to start breeding, the biggest shortcut to producing a great dog is to beg,

borrow, or steal the very best bitch you can find!"

Mary Merlo, Evergreen Irish Setters

"I was working at a pet shop when someone brought in a 9-month-old Irish Setter that they couldn't keep. They wanted \$30 for the dog, which I borrowed from the cash register. Though huge and gangly, she was the most beautiful dog I'd ever seen. I purchased the classic book *This Is the Irish Setter* and began my research. I tried showing my girl at a match and won fourth place. When asking the judge about her potential, I was kindly told she 'had the most beautiful feathering on her front legs.' I was hooked!

"Breeders Joan Viola and Dana Haskell were breeding Ch. Kinvale Majorette of Kindal, CD. The litter would produce my first show dog, Ch. Kindle Royal Irish. I bred her in 1982, and that was the start of Evergreen Irish Setters. Some of most memorable accomplishments

are showing my 6–9 month pup at my first national under Anne Rogers Clark. A second place in a huge class hooked me even deeper. My biggest thrill was winning back-to-back national specialties with GCh.P Evergreen Set Fire to the Rain under Sam McDonald and Betty Anne Stenmark. We all started somewhere, and I try to encourage newcomers with grooming assistance and handling tips. I learned from professionals like George and MaryAnn Alston, Jane Forsyth, and Erica Bandes, who were always supportive and reassuring. So, now I think 'pay it forward.' "

As Mary Merlo told me, "We all started somewhere." Pat Haigler and I still talk dogs. At 92 years of age, she continues to teach me about Irish and critique my dogs. I'm glad she took a chance on me.

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

[Irish Setter Club of America](#)

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Irish Red and White Setters

A GIFT OF MOMENTS

It is a pretty spring day here on the Texas Gulf Coast. The bluebonnets, primroses, and amaryllis are in bloom. Temperatures in the mid-70s, low humidity, wind gusting to 14 MPH, partly cloudy. A lovely day by local standards.

On our second walk of the day, we went to the park, around the neighborhood as usual. Then the sweetest thing happened. An ailing neighbor called out to us. He always loves seeing Duchess. He owns well-trained Border Collies. He lets them out in the front yard, because he knows on command they will return. They come running back to him, then go inside. We know. We have seen this in real life. If he sees us before we see them, he will call them inside. If I see them first, we stop and watch from a distance, so they can have time exploring. Check the latest scents. Catch up on the “dog news” detail. Smell who walked by,



then return home.

Today was different. Duchess walks have become more of a “meet and greet” than exercise. She loves visiting all the neighbors. They love her too. We walked back to speak to him. He called her “Princess,” my previous Irish Red and White Setter Princess Isabella. They are all Princess to him. He petted her and looked at me to say how much he always enjoys watching us walk by.

He said he does not have long. “Every day is a gift.” Mentioning he was

unsteady, he turned to go back inside.

He is right. Every day is a gift. What do we do with our gift?

His words are especially meaningful. A recent column focused on senior dogs and patience, something I am learning from Duchess. As she ages, her temperament remains gentle and sweet, maturing into an elegant, graceful presence. As she slows down, sleeping more and walking less, wanting more attention, she makes me stop. She makes

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BREED COLUMNS

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me focus on her. Appreciate what we have together. Be there with her—not on the phone, not watching television, not doing laundry. Just sitting and being with her.

Our favorite spot is in the front yard. In a cool, grassy patch under an oak tree. The breeze is gentle. Sun shaded. Cardinals chirping in branches above our head. She watches the cars drive by. There are birds and squirrels to monitor.

It is hard. That time every owner knows will come is almost here. There are decisions to be made. Vets to consult. Family discussions. In my mind the most important concern is Duchess's comfort. Her quality of life. Her dignity. We have said goodbye to other dogs. But this one, this one is exceptional. She was awarded my personal Bird Dog Hall of Fame in her lifetime, not posthumously.

As my training partner Barbara McClatchey once told me, "Duchess is your heart dog. She is special." That is correct. She is an

incredibly special girl. I will treasure the time we shared together. Our adventures in AKC events, travel, friends we made, life lessons she taught me, companionship, and everyday joy.

I will always be grateful to her breeder, Judy Baumgartner, for trusting her in my care. Thank you to the many people we have met along the way who have helped us and shared their knowledge. The fancy is an extraordinary community.

Duchess and I will carry on. Cherishing our time together.

—Cynthia Lancaster,
clclancaster@gmail.com
Irish Red and White Setter
Association of America

Clumber Spaniels

WHERE HAVE ALL THE MATCHES GONE?

Where have all the matches gone? Long time passing...

Where have all the matches gone? Long time ago ...

One might recognize the above lyrics from the

song "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?" by Peter, Paul and Mary. They represent the cyclical nature of life, with its celebration and heartache.

The dog world has its cycles as well: Benched shows have come and gone, with a bit of resurgence in the form of Meet The Breeds events. Individual club events are largely now part of clusters. There has been a boom of recognized breeds added in the past few years. Expansion beyond conformation and obedience has broadened our horizons exponentially.

But what of matches? Other than those required for new club formation and recognition, why are there no matches these days?

In pursuit of the answer, I polled the all-breed clubs in my state. Their responses echoed one another:

- Difficulty finding enough volunteers;
- locations are difficult to find and prohibitively expensive to rent;
- clubs don't want to invest

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in, and maintain, a stock of match ribbons;

- so many events are available now that an all-day match show is just not attractive; and
- expense vs. income is just not worth the effort.

The times, they are a-changing. Back in the day, puppy matches were held in most places literally every weekend within easy driving distance. One packed lunch, took along his or her grooming equipment, tent, ex-pens, and whatever else was needed, and staked out a spot near the car, ready to spend the day at a match that was essentially a practice show. It ran just like a show, all the way through groups and Best in Match. Pens full of puppies met strangers, strutted their stuff in the rings, and were immersed in show culture.

Those new to showing dogs got their feet wet and learned the ropes in a relaxed environment. Prospective judges got practice with multiple breeds, clubs organized the shows



*Clumber
Spaniel*

figuring out what worked, and what didn't. So much to be learned! And all in the spirit of good fun. Lifelong friends were made as handlers honed their skills. Matches were all-inclusive events.

Today each element is separate. "Show-n-gos" are popular because they take minutes, not all day. They don't require full staffing. Yet the competitive element is missing. Obedience dogs are not exposed to working

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near the breed rings with distractions they might find at an all-breed show or trial. Camaraderie is no longer part of the equation. Yes, we now have beginner puppy classes, but in a more formal setting. I can think of nothing better than spending the day with Clumber puppies tumbling about and strutting their stuff—albeit in crooked lines! Much of the learning is gone, along with the demise of benched shows where old-time breeders passed on their knowledge and expertise to the up-and-coming through hands-on opportunities with many dogs. Fragmented environments have much to teach, but matches were “the whole package.”

Ah, the passage of time.

A few clubs have recently held a match following their point show. I hope this is an idea that catches on! Everyone is already there, the venue is already rented, the helpers are already present. It is an opportunity for the public to get up close and personal with puppies

while trying to decide on a particular breed. A win for everyone.

“When will they ever learn? When will they ev-er learn?”

—Norma Simpson,
Clumber1@hughes.net
[Clumber Spaniel Club of America](#)

Cocker Spaniels

COCKER SPANIEL DENTITION DOES MATTER

Our foundation for understanding Cocker Spaniel teeth and their importance, as always, comes from the American Kennel Club’s official standard for the Cocker Spaniel.

Checking the standard’s “Head” section, we find wording regarding teeth: “Teeth —Teeth strong and sound, not too small and meet in a scissors bite.”

Following that language in the standard, we locate a definition of “scissors bite”: A canine scissors bite is the standard dental alignment in a dog where the upper teeth closely overlap and touch the outside of the lower

teeth, resembling the blades of a pair of scissors.

Add to this that canine dentition refers to the arrangement, type, and number of teeth in a dog’s mouth and is characterized by specialized teeth adapted for various functions.

A number of years ago, this columnist noticed that Cocker teeth in some specimens were unusually small and wondered why (and also why this would be acceptable in the Cocker breed). Note again that the Cocker standard statement on teeth is short but direct: “Teeth strong and sound, not too small and meet in a scissor bite.” The statement is clear and forthright, but it does not go further into the level of fault that might be attached to a bite not in compliance.

Curious about this? Check the AKC official standard of the English Cocker Spaniel, which *does* address a “fault level” regarding bites which do not comply with the requirement in that breed’s standard. I won’t reprint

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that language here but hope rather that curiosity might compel a look.

Generally, the bite is extremely important, especially depending on the breed's purpose. An incorrect or misaligned bite can impact the dog's ability to do the job it was bred to perform. A proper bite allows a Cocker Spaniel, as a sporting spaniel, to carry birds without excessive pressure or puncturing, thereby maintaining condition of the game. The Cocker, although a relatively small dog, is expected to retrieve and carry large birds.

Watching live demonstrations and videos of Cockers fulfilling that bird-carrying function certainly brought home to me the concept of a strong, correct bite providing the structural, muscular leverage required in successfully carrying a large type of bird to the hunter. As an aside, this concept flows into the proper construction of the neck and shoulders for movement in this retrieving function.



There are different opinions on the “cause” of “bad bites.” Speaking with a top Cocker breeder who has bred Cockers for well over 50 years, I was told that when she was starting in the breed she was told, and it was understood, that a prerequisite to keep and present a Cocker in the show ring was that the dog have a scissors bite. She has followed that construct all these years, firmly believing that bite is a matter of inheritance (as opposed to environmental factors such as, for example, puppies pulling on toys with developing teeth in a game of “tug-o’-war”). Note that

there are various opinions on the environmental influence side of development.

This columnist recalls buying a dog years ago that was going to hopefully have future importance in the breeding program. Wanting to cover as many evaluations as possible, I got an appointment for that dog with a board-certified veterinary dental specialist who examined the dog, provided a diagram of his teeth, and advised that he had correct dentition. Having done that, I certainly felt assured about the dentition situation, as to phenotype anyway, in incorporating that individual into

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a breeding program.

I suggest that you look online at the very helpful, instructive comments of Tim Thomas, vice president of Conformation at the AKC, in the context of imparting information on the process of evaluation and judging of dogs' bites in the dog show conformation ring (2024). Mr. Thomas stated in general that the bite is extremely important, especially depending on the breed's purpose, and that an incorrect or misaligned bite can impact the dog's ability to do the job it was bred to perform. (Note: The purpose of a sporting spaniel is to assist hunters in finding, flushing (springing), and retrieving upland game birds.) He stated, in part, that a dog's bite is primarily determined by genetics, although environmental factors during development can also affect a dog's bite.

That one sentence statement about teeth in the official Cocker Spaniel standard is short yet says so much. It makes great sense

once you take the opportunity to watch Cockers in action doing what they were developed to do.

—Kristi L. Tukua,
columnist

[American Spaniel Club](#)

English Cocker Spaniels

Our column for this issue is contributed by Michele Johnson, National Rescue Chair for the English Cocker Spaniel Club of America (ECSCA). The website for ECSCA Health and Rescue can be found at <https://ecsca-healthandrescue.org/>; the Facebook page is English Cocker Rescue USA (<https://www.facebook.com/EnglishCockerRescueUSA/>).

COMMITMENT BEYOND THE WHELPING BOX: ECSCA'S LONGSTANDING RESCUE MISSION

The English Cocker Spaniel Club of America established its rescue program in 1989 to assist English Cocker Spaniels at risk in shelters, with other

rescue organizations, or in situations where owners are no longer able to provide care. When possible, the program works with owners to explore alternatives to rehoming. Each case is evaluated individually to determine the most appropriate outcome for the dog.

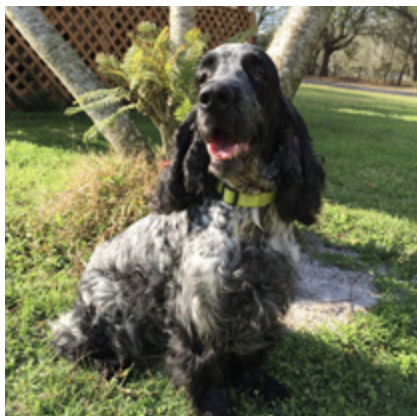
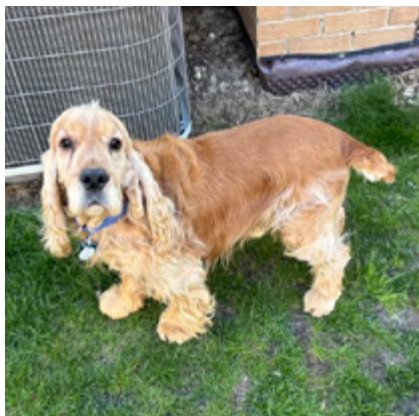
For more than three decades, the ECSCA Rescue program has served as a national safety net for the breed, engaging member-breeders and volunteers to promote responsible breeding, placement, and lifelong accountability.

The program is not punitive in nature. As a courtesy, member breeders are typically notified when a dog they bred requires assistance, allowing them the opportunity to support rehoming efforts or assume responsibility for the dog's care. In all cases, the welfare of the dog remains the primary concern.

Dogs entering foster care receive comprehensive veterinary care, temperament evaluation, and any neces-

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Four English Cocker Spaniels recently adopted through the ECSCA's rescue program—Blossom, Dewey, Reggie, and Yoshi.

sary rehabilitation prior to placement. Foster stays may range from a minimum of two weeks to several months, depending on the dog's medical and behavioral needs. The program also makes reasonable efforts to reunite lost or stray dogs with their owners.

Veterinary care includes a thorough examination;

rabies and distemper vaccinations in accordance with current guidelines; parasite screening; and spay or neuter surgery when medically and age appropriate. Dental care is provided when required, often in conjunction with other procedures. Acute and chronic medical conditions are addressed to a stable and manageable level. Microchipping is performed when possible and registered to the ECSCA.

Temperament assessments are conducted by experienced breed fanciers, with professional behavioral consultation available when appropriate.

Dogs are never placed

for breeding purposes or resold, regardless of pedigree. All dogs entering foster care or rehomed through the program are spayed or neutered prior to placement unless health, age, or other exceptional circumstances prevent it.

Our program uses a website (<https://ecsa-healthandrescue.org/>) and Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/EnglishCockerRescueUSA>) to support our dogs and connect with followers. With about 9,000 followers, our Facebook page helps us quickly find fosters, transport, and adopters nationwide. Both breeders

COURTESY OWNERS / ECSCA

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and rescue advocates follow our posts, enabling us to secure resources for English Cocker Spaniels needing new homes through the reach of social media.

Our rescue team operates throughout the United States, supporting adopters during fostering and after adoption to help ensure life-long success for both dog and family.

We appreciate periodic updates from adopters, especially around holidays or adoption anniversaries. Following are excerpts from a few of those updates.

From Blossom's adopter:

"Birthday girl Blossom is supervising my writing of this message from her favorite spot next to me on the sofa. I want to celebrate her birthday by telling you what a joy she is. The sweetest part of our life together is her gentleness and lovely temperament. She has absorbed my personal routines and has shown me the day-to-day rhythms that she needs.

"I am so grateful for her

presence in my life and thankful for your good-natured support for her to join my household."

From Yoshi's adopter:

"I had Yoshi out hunting yesterday, and once again he stole the show. Hunted with focus and quickly put up four birds, all within shooting distance. He hunted with me and for me because of our bond. For me, that was the best part of the day. I love that dog so much!"

The quiet work of rescue volunteers serves as a vital safety net for dogs placed in unsuitable situations. Through their dedicated efforts, they help each dog transition to a better environment, underscoring the significance of breed rescue and highlighting the fulfillment this work brings to all involved.

Adopting a rescue dog not only provides these animals with a second chance but also enriches family life by fostering compassion, responsibility, and companionship. —M.J.

Thank you, Michele.

—Margaret Wilson,
ECSCA AKC GAZETTE
Column Coordinator, wufwuf113@gmail.com
[English Cocker Spaniel Club of America](#)

English Springer Spaniels

HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY TO THE ESSFTA

Let's celebrate 100 years of preserving and protecting the English Springer Spaniel!

When you speak with ESSFTA President Liz Pike, her devotion to the English Springer Spaniel is boundless. Her excitement to celebrate 100 years of the ESSFTA's stewardship of our breed colors her delight to invite ESSFTA members to join in remembering the club's past and preparing for the very brightest future.

Liz Pike recounts the ESSFTA story:

"The first Field Trial under the ESSFTA was held in 1924 on Fisher's Island, New York. Two

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Celebrating the ESSFTA's Centennial—Lynda O'Connor-Schneider and Pam Holt; Mary Osburn; Erin Kerfoot; the Centennial cake designed by artist Ruth Dehmel.

years later, in 1926, the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association was recognized by the AKC as the parent club for the English Springer Spaniel. The founders chose this name very intentionally, because they firmly believed the Springer should remain a hunting dog, and that the proper way to introduce him to the sportsmen of the United States was to demonstrate his ability in the field.

“The first meeting of the club that would become



the ESSFTA met in 1924 in downtown Manhattan. The first National Open Field Trial championship was held in December 1947, and the first conformation national specialty was held 70 years ago, in 1956. This first national specialty was hosted by the ESS Club of Michigan, in Grosse Point.



“ESSFTA founding board members were Henry Ferguson, W.J. Hutchinson, David Wagstaff, Walton Ferguson Jr., Reginald Halliday, Ezra Fitch, E.R. Wilbur, Julian Bishop, David P. Earle, Samuel G. Allen, and Charles Toy, who was the first ESS columnist for the AKC GAZETTE.

COURTESY ESSFTA

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“One of the treasures in the ESSFTA archive is an actual catalog from the very first field trial/bench show held after our AKC designation as the ESS parent club. The conformation show took place October 27–29, 1926, on the lawn of Mansion House, Fishers Island. There were 35 entries: 24 dogs, 10 bitches, and one champion. The judge was ‘Mr. Allington from England.’

“The AKC began to register ESS in 1910, prior to the formation of the parent club. The first official AKC standard for the English Springer Spaniel was published in 1927 and was designed to maintain the working ability of the breed while defining its physical characteristics. Over time, several updates have been made to reflect standardized heights and weight. For instance, the 1927 standard set the ideal weight for males at 45 pounds (originally proposed to be 40 pounds), whereas the current standard defines the ideal male

weight as 50 pounds. Height ideals similarly changed, from ‘approximately’ 18.5 inches to 20 inches. In 1927, tail docking was standard practice for working safety, so no significant mention of undocked tails was made. Our parent club updated the standard in 2023 to state: ‘The English Springer Spaniel is a medium-sized sporting dog with a compact body and a docked or undocked tail. Both are to be given equal consideration.’

“For a complete overview of changes made to the ESS standard, read the fascinating history in the book *The English Springer Spaniel in North America*, by Beatrice P. Smith (Bea Brown).

“A bench show was held in conjunction with the early trials, with an emphasis on the development of dual champions. Imported dog Tedwyn’s Trex, owned by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Ferguson and American-bred Fast, owned by Mrs. W.A.M. Morin, became the first U.S. dual champions.

“Our breed boasts an

impressive history of wins at the historic and prestigious Westminster Kennel Club. Having won the Sporting Group 16 times, Springers rank second for most group wins. An ESS has won Best in Show six times and ranks third for the breed that has taken home the top prize. Westminster Best in Show winners have been Ch. Wakefield’s Black Knight (1963), Ch. Chinoe’s Adamant James (1971, 1972), Ch. Salilyn’s Condor (1993), Ch. Salilyn ‘N Erin’s Shameless (2000), and Ch. Felicity’s Diamond Jim (2007).

“The first parent club Obedience Springer of the Year was awarded in 1959 to Fleishman’s Spectacular. Since then, parent club awards have been added for Show Springer, Show Dog, Show Bitch, Show Sire, Show Dam, and Best Junior Handler. The ESSFTA presents awards for top dogs in Rally, Agility, and Field Trial dogs. We also honor the heritage of our dogs with a Versatile Springer award

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that highlights the diverse talents of Springer Spaniels for hunting, conformation, and performance.

“The ESSFTA 100 Year Anniversary Committee will celebrate our Centennial throughout 2026 at all regional specialties, the national specialty, and key field trial events. We have a traveling banner that our members are taking photos with at specialties.

“Our beautiful centennial logo was designed by ESSFTA member and artist Ruth Dehmel. Order your Centennial pin at the ESSFTA [year-round shop](#).

“Join us in Albany, Oregon, October 9–17 to celebrate the ‘100 years of Springers’ Centennial at the 2026 national specialty.”

—L.P.

—Sarah Ferrell, Locust Grove, Virginia, 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](#)

Field Spaniels

CANINE ENRICHMENT 101

All dogs have instincts. Various breeds display habits that coincide with their purpose, and Field Spaniels are no exception. As companion hunters, they have drive to explore, sniff, and move. Some demonstrate incredible prey drive. While many aren’t actively hunting—that is, finding, flushing, and retrieving game—they still have needs to be met.

“Enrichment” includes any activity or experience that stimulates the dog physically, mentally, and socially by providing outlet for natural behaviors such as sniffing, chasing, digging, and chewing. Such activity benefits a dog in a sensory manner and can prevent destructive behavior, stress, and boredom.

Exercise, in the form of walks, fetching toys, or running in an enclosed yard are only part of the equation. Some of our dogs are involved in canine sports—physically running, jumping,

and working with their human companions.

What about the mental side of stimulation?

Dogs like to solve puzzles and play in many forms. Owners provide chews and toys that give them opportunities for oral stimulation—this is great, but passive. Interactive toys and activities are better for building a bond with your Field Spaniels. Sometimes inventing games around the house turns into new routines and habits.

Not all enrichment involves expensive toys or treats. Verbal and physical communication with your dog should be clear and honest, and much of training success relies on consistency. I have full-on conversations with dogs throughout everyday life, but the quiet times involve nonverbal communication as well.

Playing hide-and-seek, learning objects and locations, and participating in routines are pretty standard fare in most

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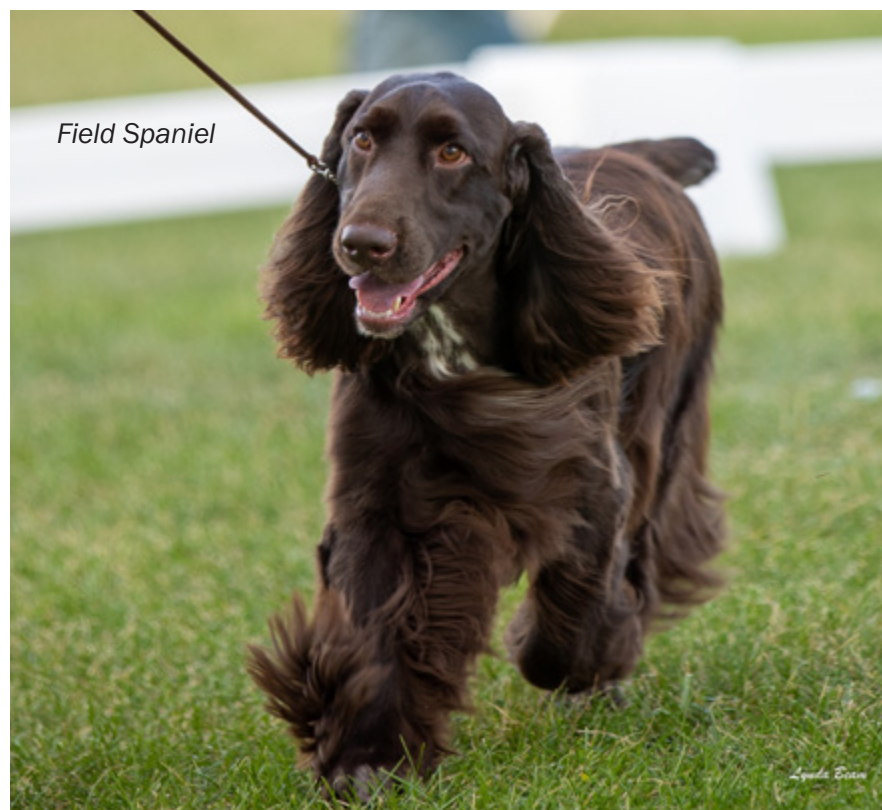
homes—but taking it to new levels is rewarding!

When is the last time you took your dog to a brand-new location just for them to have “sniffari” time, or exposure to a different environment? Creative incorporation into errands or a travel routine can really help your dog enjoy a well-rounded life.

Everyday objects like towels, muffin tins, cardboard boxes, and food containers can become enrichment activities with a little preparation. Try playing treat-hiding games with tennis balls over muffin cups, or rolling some kibble into a damp towel and freezing it.

Problem-solving is a Field Spaniel specialty, and using food or favorite toys is a powerful motivator. We’ve built mazes, used puzzles toys, and experimented with hiding cookies.

Doggie gym equipment is becoming popular, and you can do some great stretches and teach your dog how to use their hindquarters. Gentle exercises generally



involve short platforms and balance substrates. Massage is a relaxing and therapeutic tool. Experiencing varied surfaces can be a fun challenge for dogs. Tiny rubber-nubbed surfaces have proven to be helpful for canine proprioception.

You can appeal to your Field Spaniel’s senses with music and sound recordings. Experiment with whispered commands, and determine their preferred type of music. Notice their reactions

out on a nature hike or out in the yard. Try walking a new route and seeing what sights and sounds capture their attention.

With a little creativity, you can elevate the quality of your dog’s life and create great memories.

Get the family involved by serving up a canine treat taste-test or playing round robin in the yard.

Have your pup sniff out a hidden teabag or try out a

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splash-pad. Show them they can dig in a pile of fabric scraps or search for a toy in a series of empty boxes.

So long as you introduce enrichment safely, it is sure to help keep your dog healthy and happy. After all, they enrich our lives every day! We owe them more excitement than the usual four walls.

Happy summer!

—Shannon Rodgers,

shannontrodders@gmail.com

Field Spaniel Society of America

Irish Water Spaniels

NATIONAL SPECIALTY

If ever there was a location with a name that speaks to the heart and soul of dog show folk, Champion, Pennsylvania, would be that place. And it was on the outskirts of this unincorporated village that the IWSCA national specialty was held this year, and the experience proved every bit as rewarding as it was enchanting.

Mother-daughter co-chairs Dana Louttit and

Hannah Loonsk welcomed a big turnout of both new and “seasoned” club members for a weeklong celebration at the Seven Springs Mountain Resort, a skiing destination that has been hosting their family for years—and dog clubs more recently during the off-season. For IWS fanciers who came from as far away as Scandinavia, the rustic accommodations were a comfortably pleasant surprise. The staff could not have been more accommodating, and the 77,000 square feet of remarkably open indoor space made it feel as though the IWSCA had the whole place to itself.

The hospitality room and its bounty of silent auction items was opened on Monday, conveniently located opposite the elevators that link the high- and mid-rise guest rooms to the activity centers. These included a game room, an indoor pool, and a variety of restaurants and shops. The Timberstone Room provided plenty of space for grooming and vending,

with large glass windows offering a panoramic view of the show ring and mountain slopes.

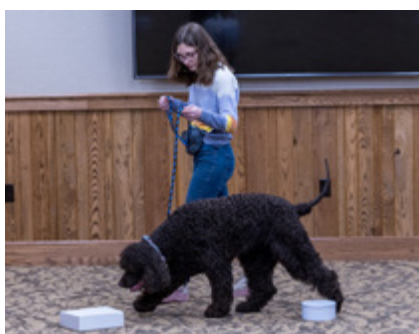
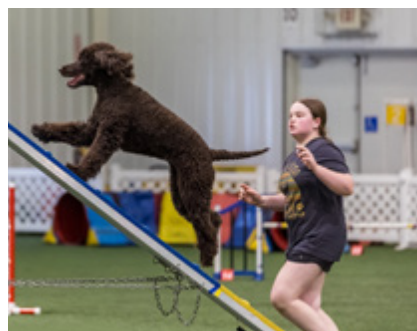
An all-breed agility trial was held in nearby Latrobe at the B&D Creekside Activity Center, supported by a more than capable entry of rat-tailed spaniels.

Agility continued on Tuesday, followed by a welcome party that night at Foggy Goggle, the resort’s nightclub. Guests enjoyed hors d’oeuvres and cocktails, and the more adventurous partiers participated in a series of digital axe-throwing competitions. (Everyone remained unscalped at the end of the night!)

Wednesday began with the obedience and rally trials in the Grand Ballroom, followed by scent work in the Hemlock Room. The club’s annual meeting was held that evening, with dinner served in the Matterhorn Room, where IWSCA members heard from the board and various committee heads on the state of the club and its ongoing projects.

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2026 IWSCA national specialty—Best of Breed winner; High Scoring in obedience; competing in agility; focused on scent work; dog-handler connection in rally; field participants meeting under the tent; specialty logo; tuned into each other in obedience; ready to go into action at waterside.

The Timberstone Room was again the location of a special gathering

on Thursday morning. The agenda for the Stud Dog Showcase included

two important topics: “Reproductive Health of Your Stud Dog,” presented

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by Hannah Loonsk, VMD; and “Selecting a Stud Dog,” given by Breeder Education Committee (BEC) co-chairs Greg Siner and Mindy Garbarino. Both presentations included interactive Q&A sessions, followed by a first-ever “Meet the Stud Dogs,” where individual dogs and their people enjoyed a moment in the spotlight. This unique event was commemorated with a colorful and informative catalog (featuring 53 potential stud dogs!) compiled by Hannah Loonsk.

Later that night, Puppy, Veteran, and Gun Dog sweepstakes were judged in the Grand Ballroom by Swedish breeder-judge Susanne Narfstrom.

Friday started with a Breed Standard Education and Conversation hosted by Judges Education Committee (JEC) co-chairs Stacy Duncan and Michelle Cummings. Although the specialty’s rather remote location likely discouraged judges from attending, the presentation went on as

scheduled and was well-attended by club members with a genuine interest in the AKC breed standard.

By midday, everyone gathered again in the Grand Ballroom for the main event: conformation. (The previous days’ rain had soaked the grounds and necessitated moving judging indoors.) Fifty-six IWS were entered under judge Polly Smith, who selected the Bred-by-Exhibitor Adult Bitch Poole’s Ide Tequila Mockingbird as her ultimate Best of Breed winner.

At dinner that evening, the judge shared a few words about her entry before Greg Siner took to the mic to raise money for the club through another rendition of his entertaining live auctions.

On Saturday, the Hospitality Room was transformed into an OFA Cardiac Clinic (by appointment only), while many people headed to the Jenner Rod and Gun Club in Friedens, Pennsylvania, to watch the IWS compete in the WC/WCX tests. Others brought

their dogs to visit with club member and CGC/Trick Dog judge April Barr for the chance to pick up a few AKC titles.

Later that night, the Alpine Room was the setting for the awards banquet as well as the freestyle entertainment which was provided by club members whose routines proved that the Irish Water Spaniel can indeed “do it all”!

Seven Springs certainly delivered as a unique dog show destination—and then some. Every morning, a delicious breakfast buffet was available in the Slopeside dining room, where guests enjoyed their choice of omelets and a wide variety of sweet and savory options to satisfy just about anyone’s dietary needs. And the bottomless cups of coffee certainly helped to fuel exhibitors throughout each day’s jam-packed schedule. Good food, great fun, and plenty of Irish antics combined to make this year’s IWSCA national specialty in Southwestern Pennsylvania

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a delightfully memorable experience.

—Dan Sayers, AKC Delegate; Ninodanny@aol.com

[Irish Water Spaniel Club of America](#)

Sussex Spaniels

JUNIOR SHOWMANSHIP

In Sussex Spaniels we have very few junior handlers. The principal outstanding one has “aged out,” and she is now gone on her way to being a professional. While we have some talented young ladies doing very well, we still need more.

Parents, I know how hard it is to keep children (even those who have grown up with parents who show) interested in showing dogs. There are so many other things that they can be interested in today. I had three children who showed dogs with me when they were young, and only one did Junior Showmanship and went on to be an assistant handler. None of them have any interest in showing now.



Life intervenes.

For a child to be a competitive junior, parents often home-school so that their children can participate at more shows. I think this is wonderful! Yea, parents! Also, several members of the Sussex Spaniel Club of America (SSCA), myself

included, have loaned dogs to young people to show. However, we still need more young people in our breed and in the ring. As in all breeds, the stalwarts are getting older, and for the future of the breed we need new young people coming up.

I am pleading for people

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not only in Sussex Spaniels, but in other breeds as well, whose children would like to show another breed to speak up. Contact the SSCA, and we will happily try to put you in touch with someone showing who will provide you with that chance.

Sussex personality

Sussex are funny dogs. They are convinced from the time they are puppies that their humans are great to have around, if said humans are properly trained!

That means that if you are watching TV, you can also hold a Sussex on your lap and rub its tummy. If one of your hands is holding a cup of coffee and a Sussex feels the need for your attention, they have no qualms about shoving that big muzzle under your arm and splashing that hot coffee out of the cup. They feel a cell phone properly held between your ear and shoulder is perfect for leaving both your hands available for scratching and petting. Or like children

yelling “Mom” when you are talking on the phone, they will howl or bark for your attention.

Sussex take over your life. I always tell new owners that they will never use the bathroom alone again. They carefully and matter-of-factly take over your household.

I also tell people that all the articles written about Sussex being slow and sedate and a couch potato are wrong. Watch a Sussex in the field, or in Fast CAT or lure coursing, and you will see a Sussex in action. If you want a couch potato dog, go buy a stuffed toy.

Hug that wonderful Sussex, and enjoy all the things you can do together!

—Marcia Deugan,

ZiyadahReg@aol.com

[Sussex Spaniel Club of America](#)

Welsh Springer Spaniels

THE WELSHIE TEMPERAMENT

The standard says the Welshie is “an active dog displaying a loyal and affectionate disposition.

Although reserved with strangers, he is not timid, shy, nor unfriendly. To this day he remains a devoted family member and hunting companion.” What does this mean for a first-time Welsh Springer family?

Let’s start with *active*. As with many breeds, this means a Welshie would love to have 30 to 60 minutes of vigorous playtime every day. He won’t care if it is raining or if he has to leap through snowdrifts to find the tennis ball you tossed for him. Welshies love exercise and may become bored and destructive without it.

A fenced yard is ideal; for those who cannot fence their yards, long walks on a lead that allows the dog plenty of mobility are a must.

The Welshie is a flushing spaniel, and he will “quarter” the ground ahead of you, hunting for a bird or squirrel to flush. Quartering is the habit of ranging back and forth in front of you, from the far right to the far left side of your path. The trait to do this has been

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Welsh Springer Spaniel Ch. Dein Glynis of Randhaven, 1959 (Evelyn Shafer photo)

bred into the breed for generations, and they will get frustrated if not allowed to do it.

Should you teach your dog to heel and move quietly at your side? Of course. But also allow him to “do what comes naturally” on your walks.

A loyal and affectionate disposition can mean many things. Many Welsh Springers will follow their owners from room to room in the house. They want to be with their family mem-

bers above anything else. Expect to have your dog draped across your lap as you watch television.

The Welsh Springer is typically reserved with people he doesn’t know, and this *can* lead to timidity if not recognized and dealt with when the puppy is young.

Take your puppy for walks in your neighborhood or town. Let people bend over him and play with him, as they will naturally want to do when they see how adorable he is.

Take care that he is not unduly frightened by children, who may not realize how easily they can scare a puppy with a friendly hug.

Getting your puppy out and about in new situations is essential when he is young so that he can build the confidence to accept new situations when he is older.

The fact that Welshies were bred to be hunting companions has a lot to do with your new puppy’s behavior. Squirrels beware! Most Welsh Springers will jealously protect their yard from encroachment by squirrels and other furry creatures.

A Welsh Springer is easily distracted by birds, but he may find any small creature equally appealing—especially while he is young. Bred to have a soft mouth, your puppy may surprise you by proudly coming to you with a live baby bird, squirrel, or turtle in his mouth. He will be very sad if you shriek in horror or display other agitated behavior. It’s hard sometimes, but

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when he brings you one of these unexpected gifts, it is always best to praise your puppy and encourage him to give it to you.

—Wendy J. Jordan

Welsh Springer Spaniel
Club of America

Vizslas

GOLDEN RUST:

UNDERSTANDING THE VIZSLA'S TRUE HUE

The debate over how to describe the proper color of the Hungarian Vizsla has simmered since the first breed standards were compiled. The original Hungarian terms historically translated to “yellow”—and indeed, the breed is still occasionally referred to as the “Yellow Pointer.” Yet “yellow” is a remarkably poor word for the rich, multi-dimensional coat of this ancient hunting dog.

Various described over the decades as *amber*, *brownish amber*, *the golden color of a bread crust* (or *sárga*), *russet gold*, *copper*, or *dark sandy gold*, the Vizsla's

coat is far more than a simple visual trait. It is the very signature of the breed.

The spectrum of golden rust

In the official AKC breed standard, the Vizsla's color is defined simply as “Golden rust in varying shades.” This allows for a beautiful spectrum of correct tones, from a warm, deep amber to a lighter, radiant sandy-gold. The key is uniformity over the body, though lighter shadings over the neck and shoulders give the appearance of a “saddle,” which is common and perfectly acceptable. (I wrote a previous article about the Esterhazy saddle, “All That Glitters Is Gold,” in the July 2023 issue.) The Vizsla is nearly the same color from nose to tip of tail. This coloration occurs in no other pointer breeds.

Conversely, the standard leaves no room for extremes: solid dark mahogany and pale yellow are explicit faults.

A self-colored masterpiece

The Vizsla is a uniquely

“self-colored” breed. This means the dog's external features must blend seamlessly with the shading of its coat. There should be an unbroken harmony from head to toe:

- Eyes and eye-rims: A warm, clear expression where the iris blends with the coat color. Black or yellow “bird-of-prey” eyes are incorrect.
- Nose, lips, and footpads: A flesh-toned or brownish hue that complements the fur. A black or grey nose is a major deviation from breed type.
- Toenails: Often overlooked by novices, the toenails must also blend with the coat, not stark black or white.

The rules of white markings

While a small white spot on the forechest (from the top of the sternum to a point between the elbows) and white on the toes are permissible, large patches are highly penalized. Solid white extending above the toes or anywhere else on the body is a disqualification.

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The Vizsla is a “self-colored” breed, nearly the same color from nose to tip of tail; the whitening muzzle of aging Vizslas are affectionately known by enthusiasts as a “sugar face”; Vizslas in the field; the standard calls for “golden rust in varying shades.”



The Stoic soul: a connection to Marcus Aurelius

To truly appreciate the Vizsla’s color, one can look to the words of the Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius: “The soul becomes dyed with the

color of its thoughts.”

There is a poetic parallel to be drawn between this ancient philosophy and the Hungarian pointer. If a soul takes on the color of its disposition, the Vizsla’s vibrant, golden-rust exterior is the

physical manifestation of its joyful, high-energy, and devoted internal spirit. It is a warm, radiant coat that perfectly mirrors a bright, affectionate, and fiercely loyal temperament.

Furthermore, Marcus

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PHOTOGRAPHY / KEVIN BILLY / SEBASTIAN
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Aurelius spent a massive portion of his reign living in harsh military camps along the Danube River—the very heart of historical Hungarian hunting grounds—weathering brutal campaigns and pandemics.

In this context, “Golden Rust” becomes a symbol of endurance.

While *gold* represents something precious, pure, and noble, *rust* represents time, weathering, and enduring the elements.

The Vizsla was bred as a robust, lightly built hunting dog meant to withstand field, forest, and water. The golden-rust coat symbolizes a noble essence, unafraid of work, getting dirty, and enduring hardships—the absolute definition of stoic resilience.

The dignity of age: the sugar face

As the Vizsla endures the march of time, that vibrant golden rust inevitably fades. The standard explicitly protects this natural progression, noting that “white

due to aging or scarring must not be faulted.”

The whitening muzzle of an aging Vizsla, affectionately known by enthusiasts as a “sugar face,” should be celebrated in the ring and at home. It is a visual testament to a life well-lived in the field and on the couch. The silvering face of a senior Vizsla does not detract from its beauty; rather, it shows that the dog’s noble soul has simply spent years being dyed by the brightest, most golden thoughts imaginable.

—Jamie Walton,

Jamie@professionaldesign.org

[Vizsla Club of America](#)

Weimaraners

JOGA’S STORY

One of the most influential stud dogs of our breed was Ch. Colsidex Standing Ovation, who produced over 169 champions. The story behind this amazing dog starts with his breeder, Judy Colan.

Judy’s first Weimaraner was a rescue whom, by

necessity, she took to obedience school. From there she entered a few obedience trials and started to watch the dogs at the all-breed shows.

For a year, she sat at ringside and watched and learned. She liked what Dot Remensnyder of Shadowmar Kennels was producing and purchased her foundation bitch, who was a daughter of the outstanding Ch. Shadowmar Barthaus Dorilio. Pixie ultimately produced 13 champions, including Joga, who came out of her first litter.

Judy was wise enough to know that no dog is perfect (Pixie came close) but was a little low in the tail set. With this in mind, she chose Ch. Seneca’s Medicine Man, who was prepotent for putting good tail sets on his progeny, for her first breeding.

The puppies arrived and flourished. As with most breeders, Judy spent hours watching the pups for that “perfect” one. Joga certainly was not it, as he would

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Weimaraner

just sit in the middle of the whelping box and watch his littermates play. This attitude did not bode well for a show dog.

A friend who had been married to Frank Sousa, owner of Ch. Doug's Dauntless von Dor, called and said she missed having

a Weim and just wanted a pet. Judy explained that this dog would not interact with his littermates and certainly was not going to make

DAVID WOO ©AKC

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anything but a great pet. Off he went with John and Gail. Hence the name.

A few months passed, and Gail called and said that Judy needed to come over and see the dog. What she saw bowled her over.

Judy convinced Gail to let her take Joga to the Providence County Dog Club match. This was back in the time when puppy matches were large and readily available. This one hosted 1,000 dogs—bigger than many shows today.

Now there were 100 steps up to the building, and Joga crawled up each and every one. Judy seriously questioned her decision to haul a totally untrained dog to a show. Maybe she was crazy!

As it turned out, she was not. The moment Joga walked into the ring, he became a different dog. This is what he was born for. Not only did he win the breed, he won the Sporting Group and went on to Best in Match.

The judge, Phil Marsman,

was later quoted as saying, “I discovered that dog!”

Judy started working for John and convinced him to let her enter a few shows. This young star finished quickly.

During this time, he was still living with John and Gail. Eventually, John said he couldn’t afford the entry fees, so he was giving him back to Judy. He said he knew that this dog was what she was breeding for, and he should be specialed, even though he was under 2 years old.

Judy and Joga hit the road for three years, and during that time he was #1 for two years and #2 for the third year. After retirement, Judy brought him back out as a veteran and won the national specialty twice, at the ages of 7½ and 10½.

Early in his show career, breeder, Norman LeBouf wanted to breed to the dog. The bitch was presented, and Joga had absolutely no interest in her. Judy worried the dog would not breed. She should not have

doubted him. When the bitch was actually ready, he did his job. He was superb at knowing when a bitch was ready to breed.

I was fairly new to the breed and was living in the Northeast at the time that Joga’s progeny were hitting the ring, and it was obvious, even to my untrained eye, which were his kids. His type was classic, with beautiful heads, great shoulders, proper angulation, and super toplines.

One of the most notable things about Joga was that he produced males who produced great progeny, and his son, Jack, went on to produce bitches who produced pups with great breed type. His get went on to win Futurities and Maturities and garner 69 Pewter Dogs for Judy.

Truly, those of us who competed with and against this dog were privileged to see greatness.

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

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Akitas

As I write the introduction to this month's article written by the chair of the Akita Club of America Judges Education Committee, I am thinking of the many phases of one's life journey with dogs. Like myself, I would guess that most people reading this began by owning a companion dog of either purebred or questionable heritage and at some point developed a love for a particular breed and moved into the world of breeding and exhibiting dogs they were particularly passionate about.

So, what might be the next step along this path? For a certain group, that step may be attaining one's AKC judging license. Since I am fairly new to judging and will have the extreme honor to be presiding over this year's Akita national specialty, I thought a review from an authority on our breed would be interesting to those considering a judging career, as well as good continuing education for



*The AKC standard for the Akita begins:
"Large, powerful, alert ..."*

those already approved to judge the Akita.

JUDGING THE AKITA

After walking the ring and deciding on my pattern for the day, I bring in the first class. Looking down the line, I take the opportunity to get an idea of size, proportions and balance, keeping in mind some of the key words from the standard: *alert, dignified, large* and *powerful*. I

then send the group around together, looking for a side gait that is powerful, brisk, and of moderate stride.

Once the first dog is set up, I can assess his general proportions. Akitas are longer than tall (as 10 is to 9 for dogs, 11 is to 9 for bitches), with a level topline and a tail curled over the back that will be in balance with the head. When approaching the dogs, it should be done with

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confidence, and it is also advisable to verbally greet the handler, when in actuality you are addressing the dog and letting him know your position.

As I view the head, I can take note of its shape as well as that of the ears, eyes, nose, and length of muzzle, while avoiding staring directly into his eyes.

The Akita head should be massive, yet in balance with the body, resemble a blunt triangle that is flat between the ears and free of wrinkle when at ease.

Eyes are triangular in shape, dark in color with tight black rims. Ears are also triangular, thick, well-furred with slightly rounded tips and carried slightly forward.

A snipey or narrow head should be faulted, and the breed's first disqualification is drop or broken ears.

The muzzle is broad and strong; the nose is black, and the distance from nose to stop as from stop to occiput is 2 to 3.

While a lighter-color nose

is allowed on white Akitas, a partial or total lack of pigmentation is the standard's second disqualification.

An examination of the bite, as shown preferably by the handler, should reveal a scissors bite, although a level bite is acceptable. Disqualification number three is noticeably overshot or undershot.

When examining the body, the words *strong* and *powerful* again come to mind. A thick and muscular neck blends smoothly into shoulders of moderate layback, then into a level topline. The tail is set high, curled over and touching the back in either a full, half or three-quarter curl with a sickle or uncurled tail being disqualification number four. The depth of chest should be one-half the height of the dog, with well-sprung ribs, and the loin firmly muscled with a moderate tuck-up.

The front legs are heavy-boned and straight, while the rear legs display well-developed muscling and

upper thighs, with moderately bent stifles and well-let-down hocks. Feet are well knuckled-up, with thick pads, resembling cat feet.

The Akita has a double coat with a harsh outer coat and soft, dense undercoat, which comes in a wide variety of colors and patterns and an emphasis on clear, brilliant color and balanced markings—the exception being our disqualification number five for the merle marking pattern and liver color.

Our disqualification number six is regarding size, with males measuring under 25 inches and bitches under 23 inches being a disqualification that is regardless of age. Since our standard is very specific in this regard, if you are questioning the size of an entry, please measure it!

When it is time to observe the exhibit's movement, the important words to remember are *brisk and powerful, yet moderate*. Rear legs move in line with the front legs, and while the Akita does not converge, the foot placement

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will tend toward the middle line as his gait increases in speed.

Now that I'm finished with the class, I'm ready to place them, keeping in mind the key points that sum up the essence of the Akita breed. I hope that this brief article will instill those important words: *large*, *powerful*, and even *awe-inspiring*. It's also important to mention that our breed is described as aloof and can be intolerant of other dogs, especially of the same sex. That being said, please remember to not pack a group of Akitas in a small space while you sort through your classes!

I challenge you to learn all that you can about this wonderful breed by talking to other judges, breeders, and exhibitors as well as attending seminars, and to enjoy your assignments. I know that I do! —Nancy Amburgey, Chair, Akita Club of America Judges Education Committee

—Kim Holmes,
akitacameo@aol.com
Akita Club of America

Anatolian Shepherd Dogs

A GOOD HOME IS HARD TO FIND

The cost of dog ownership is steep. Whether it's the show prospect that you buy from the breeder you've been talking to for the past year, a dog that follows you home from the cemetery after you bring it water and a pill pocket with a Capstar in it to combat the flea circus jumping through its coat, or the puppy that a breeder friend gives you, owning a dog is expensive in so many ways, and the purchase price is the cheapest part of dog ownership.

This is not news to most of us who have been in dogs for any length of time. When you acquire a dog, through whatever means, you are making a promise to the dog that you will be responsible for their care for the next 10-plus years, because that dog is going to stand by you the same whether you live in a castle or a mud hut. The dog doesn't care what your bank account looks like.

Anatolians have never been a popular dog breed, and for that we all should be thankful. In the breed registration rankings that have recently come out, Anatolians are sitting at 88 for the year 2025. They are up from 92 in 2015. This means that they're sitting somewhere around the middle of things. This is more popularity than I would like to see, and more movement upwards than I would like in a 10-year period, but at least they are not in the top 10.

But this only tells part of the story. This only gives the number of Anatolians that are registered with the AKC—not the actual number of dogs that are being produced. And this is where the problem lies, because if you visit any shelter in Texas, where I live, you will most likely see an Anatolian or Anatolian mix sitting in a run. Life is cheap here. I know from past visits to the breed-specific rescue that used to exist, that when I looked at the regional listings of dogs in need of

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rescue, Texas and the middle section of the country had more dogs in need of help than other regions did.

I am sure that this is not unique to Texas. It is probably common in any region of the country where there is enough acreage available for sale that someone can move in, get back to basics, and have a hobby farm where they come to the realization that predators still exist and their small hoofstock and fowl require protection. Once they realize the need for protection for their animals, they go online and begin the search for a dog.

If they're lucky, they run across a breeder who still puts in the time and effort to keep working traits in their dogs, and who makes their placement decisions appropriately, being completely honest with the buyer that Anatolians are not an easy breed—they bark, dig, they are in possession of an incredible intelligence coupled with strong independence and little regard for a human's desires, some



Anatolian Shepherd Dog

can be inveterate escape artists requiring far more management than the average livestock guarding dog, and, despite best efforts, some dogs just don't work out as LGD.

"But that's not my fault," I hear you say. "I sell my dogs on a contract, I require spay/neuter, I know where my pups have gone." "I register my dogs—the dogs in shelters are the result of the farm down the road that lets their dogs run loose."

Every single one of those

things is true. That said, virtually every breeder I know does their best to ensure the future of their pups. I cannot think of anyone who wants their dogs to end up in a shelter—and yet that is the fate of far too many dogs. It is the reason that our purebred rescues are so necessary, and why they are so often full to bursting.

I am not laying the blame for this with responsible breeders. I know that they are doing all that they can to make sure that the dogs

JOHN RICARD ©AKC

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they produce never become a burden on the rescue and rehoming system. I lay the blame on our American culture that has a Disneyfied idea about animals in general and dogs in particular, and with those breeders who do not act in a responsible manner when bringing litters into the world and when placing puppies.

I think the blame also lies with the breeders who are attempting to change the breed into family pets, the ones who are dumbing down the working traits of the breed and are selling more to suburban homes where they are lucky to have a house on a quarter-acre with a tiny backyard. The breeders who are selling the Disney version of the Anatolian as a “gentle giant” that is the perfect family guardian. This is not the ideal home for an Anatolian.

No matter how well intentioned, this is not a breed that was meant to guard a couch. Some of them do just fine in those homes, but the vast majority do not.

This is a breed that has been selected for thousands of years for a very particular home, one that requires very particular traits for a very particular job. Those homes are the ones most likely for the dogs to succeed in.

Please, breeders: Take a long, hard look at the homes your dogs are going to, and even if you are not registering your dogs and are only breeding working dogs, please pay attention to the homes you place dogs in. Out of sight should not equal out of mind—if you do not hear from a puppy buyer at least once a year, reach out to them on the litter’s birthdate, and ask them how the dog they bought is doing. Something as simple as a birthday greeting or holiday message to puppy buyers may bring you the reassurance you seek that all is well—or it may give you the knowledge that your help as a breeder is warranted.

Good homes are hard to find, and every Anatolian that we produce deserves the best home we can find

for it. We owe it to the breed and to the people who have been custodians of these dogs before us to be as responsible as possible.

—Jo Lynne York,
eboracumk9@yahoo.com
Anatolian Shepherd Dog
Club of America

Bernese Mountain Dogs

BERNERS AND NEW FRIENDS

Are you thinking about adding a cat to your household? In my experience, Berners love their housemates—whether human, canine, or feline.

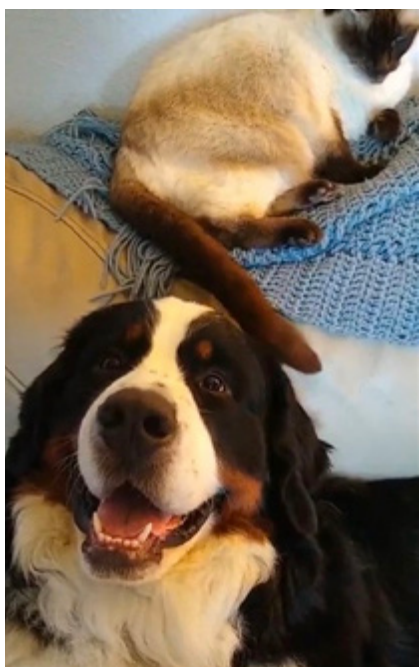
We have twice adopted cats as company for our Berners. Bringing adult animals together can have some challenges, but the companionship has been well worth the efforts.

Before you bring a new companion into the home, there are two behaviors that you should teach. Both are designed to help your dog resist temptations and to use self-control.

“Leave it” can save you money and heartache by

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Bernese Mountain Dogs with feline friends: left, Algrand Berni Bond James Bond (BG# 156081), with cat Ling; right, Deerpark Genesis (BG# 219950), with cat Candy.

preventing your dog from snatching that delicious chicken bone he found on the sidewalk. Start with dog on a leash, yummy high-value treats in your pocket, and treats in a covered bowl. Walk the dog past the dish. When the dog tries to get to the dish, say “leave it.” Hopefully the dog will look at you. If so, praise highly and treat and keep on walking. If the dog doesn’t respond to the happy voice, say “leave it” again, giving

tiny, light tugs on the leash to get their attention. When the dog reorients to you, praise highly and treat.

Rerun the scenario. The dog is learning that it pays well to ignore distractions.

The “Look at that” game (LAT) was developed by Leslie McDevitt, author of *Control Unleashed*. It is another useful resource. LAT is a pattern game that help dogs reorient to their human instead of the distraction. LAT teaches a dog to notice

the distraction (cat) and look back to your human.

In this training scenario, the dog is on leash and your pockets have yummy treats. Go for a walk. If your dog looks away to watch the motorcycle, say “Look at that.” As the dog’s attention returns to you, praise and treat.

When you bring a cat into the home, think out how to make the introductions. Taking things slowly is safer and calmer! It’s important to make sure your kitty meets your enthusiastic Berner gradually, and step by step.

The easiest way to protect the new cat is to give them their own private territory. Put the cat in their own room separated from the dog by a door. We use an office so we can get acquainted with the cat too. The door keeps everyone separated, and they can get acquainted with the scent without seeing them. Keep them separated for a few days.

Next phase is to put a pet gate in the open doorway.

COURTESY OWNERS

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With this they can get used to being around each other. Eventually the cat will start coming out when it is comfortable. If all goes well, the gate can come down eventually as peace is recalibrated.

Rewarding calmness is a wise training idea. Whenever your dog acts calmly by rewarding is a good choice. Likewise, reward your kitty with treats or a bit of stroking and praise whenever they have relaxed around the dog. Keep the rewards calm, to keep the relaxed atmosphere.

The “no chasing” is strict at the beginning, because the cat is so much smaller, and not a toy. After they have gotten acquainted, be aware of the cat starting to want to play. Cats are notorious for teasing dogs. Learning needs to be a two-way street. If kitty teases your pup, or asks for play, allow it. The dogs and cats communicate one another more than we can understand.

Both of your pets need their own food and water bowls. Keeping all cat

supplies up high simplifies the issue. Cat food is not good for dogs. If putting things out of reach is not possible, and dogs insist on stealing cat food or searching for “kitty cookies” in the kitty litter, put the pet gate back up. Or you can keep your dog leashed while reinforcing “leave it.”

Enjoy the process; the relaxing sound of a contented cat’s purring is worth it. And teaching “look at that” and “leave it” are useful whether you have a cat or not.

Here’s to a purrfect summer!

—Marjorie Geiger,
marggeiger@yahoo.com
[Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America](#)

Boerboels

HEALTH TESTING: WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT DILATED CARDIOMYOPATHY IN BOERBOELS

Many of the ideas for my articles come from conversations I have had with Boerboel breeders

and owners. In this case I was discussing health testing with some breeders who are planning to breed this summer and intend to have health testing done first.

Our American Boerboel Club (ABC) website (americanboerboelclub.org) maintains an excellent list of recommended health testing for our breed. However, there is one disorder for which testing (and the process used) is more urgent due to the health consequences for both individual affected dogs and potentially the breed. This is testing for cardiomyopathy!

What is cardiomyopathy?

Cardiomyopathy is a progressive, life-threatening disorder of the heart—a form of which occurs in humans—that has been shown to be passed on genetically in several breeds, including our Boerboels. Studies have found it to be the second-most common heart disease in large-breed dogs.

In the case of some

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breeds (for example the Doberman), a mutation to a specific gene has been found. However, thus far, a precise genetic marker has not yet been identified for the Boerboel—possibly because the Boerboel is still a rather rare breed in the U.S. and elsewhere, hence they are not often subjects of breed studies. (One implication is that Boerboel breeders and buyers should beware of companies that market genetic tests relevant to all breeds.)

What happens in DCM is that a ventricle—one of the two lower chambers of the heart, or both—dilates and thins. This greatly impairs the heart's ability to pump blood through the body and is progressive over time. Common symptoms observed by owners and breeders include:

- increasing difficulty breathing, heavy panting/ becoming extremely out of breath after mild exercise
- coughing
- weight loss
- passing out (syncope)



- a visibly growing amount of fluid in the abdomen
- loss of appetite
- anxiety
- (ultimately, heart failure)

When examined by vets, findings often include heart arrhythmias—particularly ventricular tachycardia—that worsen over time. In humans and dogs, ventricular tachycardia (V-tach or VT) is a serious, fast heart rhythm originating in the lower chambers (ventricles) of the heart, beating at a rate of over 100 beats per minute.

Implications for our Boerboel, a small population with a documented risk:

One of the concerns for Boerboel breeders and owners is that our breed (as we know it today) is a comparatively recent one, derived from a small “founder” group of 72 dogs. Without appropriate and thorough health testing and careful breeding, significant issues such as cardiomyopathy can rapidly increase its incidence, potentially devastating future Boerboel populations. This is a particular risk for our breed if highly sought-after show/ event-winning “popular sires” are affected.

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Advice for breeders: health testing for cardiomyopathy in Boerboels

Current advice by researchers is to ensure that all Boerboels intended for breeding are tested via an echocardiogram. This can detect structural or functional anomalies of the heart, and early-stage DCM. They recommend that, ideally, such screenings be periodically repeated.

Advice for Boerboel puppy buyers

- Prior to purchasing a puppy, ensure that both parents of your prospective puppy have had an echocardiogram, performed by a qualified veterinary cardiologist.

- Inquire about cardiac history within the breeder's lines. (You may not make yourself popular, but it is worth it.)

Most of us who love the Boerboel are committed to the breed's long-term success. Echocardiogram testing of dogs used in breeding programs (until

a genetic link is identified) and education of puppy buyers can help us ensure our breed's future.

References:

Tshwane University of Technology
Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine
—Karen Cornelius
[American Boerboel Club](#)

Bullmastiffs

Thanks to our Bullmastiff community and to our dog show family and friends, so many of whom have, over the last few years, during meals and meetings, on phone calls, and in messages and texts, posed the questions and wrestled with the answers that all of us in the sport of pure-bred dogs are facing about the future. We all know that the sport is dealing with some serious issues. All of us, young and old, novices and veterans, can identify the obstacles we need to address. Those of us who consider ourselves the stewards of our breeds and of the sport need to tackle these challenges we are facing.

A call to action!

Our sport has conquered a number of serious challenges in its more than 150 years, when it began as it continues, with fanciers showing their breeding stock to one another, competing to have their dogs judged as worthy animals in breeding programs. The issues that have arisen over the years continue to cause problems for everyone from AKC judges to show superintendents and including professional handlers, amateur exhibitors, and breeders.

When we add up the costs involved in breeding and showing our dogs, from the cost of a litter, genetic, health, and temperament testing, to training and show entries, not to mention the emotional costs, the price is very high—sometimes prohibitively so. There are also always questions regarding inequities in the show ring, where amateurs must compete against professionals, with this a concern now more than ever according to ringside conversations.

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Photo 1, Bullmastiffs Cheeky and Rooney; 2, senior Bullmastiffs Sonny and Harriett; 3, earning CD title; 4, Bullmastiffs with Vince; 5, 6, ring time and showsite get-together at Canfield, Ohio, dog show; 7, Vince and Lindy in the ring; 8, Vince and puppy Dandelion.

As we all know, this is the only sport where amateurs

compete against professionals. Add to that the questions

in the world around us, where conflict and war seem

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to threaten in every direction. While this is nothing new, it contributes to the stresses we all face.

We also have the confusion contributed by the “adopt don’t shop” movement when it comes to people choosing puppies and dogs—one that loses its impact when we note that many of the most active rescuers are breeders themselves. We could fill pages with the debate on this subject, but this is not the place. However, that does not lessen the impact of this movement, which creates in everyone the desire to rescue an animal.

Finally, we dealt with a pandemic a few years ago, one that threatened to shut down not only the sport but impacted nearly every aspect of our lives. Concerns about many factors involved in breeding and showing dogs are not new, but this time around, perhaps because we are in the middle of it, they feel more daunting, don’t they? That was perhaps the case for enthusiasts 50, 100,

or 150 years ago, too. The sport has survived, but it has suffered some real attrition and damage—not just in terms of lower show and trial entries, but in terms of the lower numbers of purebred dogs bred and registered.

All of these problems combine to take a toll, lessening the numbers of fanciers committed to the sport of purebred dogs. Luckily the sport is not for the faint of heart, and we know that we must rise, because challenges conquered allow change!

Ringside we ask, “What can we do?” as we face all of the usual issues, as well as some unique to this first quarter of the 21st century. It seems as though many people never completely recovered from the aftermath of COVID-19 and have opted not to participate in events, not to join clubs, and not to volunteer, and have decided to just stay home.

I think we are all singing in the same choir, but the tune needs to change.

Time for change

Are we going to keep asking questions and looking for answers in the same tired ways as we lose our sport? Now is the time to change what we do, and there are some signs that we are doing so. Certainly, reputable breeders are doing their best to breed better dogs, with genetic, health, and temperament testing all contributing to a next generation of dogs that can perhaps entice people to explore our sport.

Breeders have the very difficult and important job of finding homes for show prospects and companion puppies, and we need to do more to encourage anyone who owns a Bullmastiff to think about giving the show and trial scene a try. Not only is conformation an option, but so are agility, obedience, rally, tracking, and newer performance events such as Barn Hunt, dock diving, and lure coursing. There are many shows and trials within a reasonable distance in so many regions,

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and we know that attendance and participation improve the bonds between humans and dogs and can be an enriching family activity.

As well, the AKC has offered some tools for kennel clubs to employ in growing events, in the form of the 4–6 Months Beginner Puppy Competition, the Grand Champion title, and the National Owner-Handled Series, to name a few. Kennel clubs have come together and created clusters—long weekends on one site where several clubs host four, five, even six shows and multiple trials, in the interest of clubs sharing costs and of participants cutting their expenses.

There still seem to be fewer people joining the clubs, volunteering to work, and taking responsibility for the future of the fancy. Now is when we need to remind ourselves that obstacles overcome create opportunities.

This is a call to action! Anyone who has kept reading to this point, all of us, need to accept the challenges

and face the obstacles, to set aside the differences that divide us and focus on finding the common ground so we can build a future.

From the conversations mentioned earlier, we know that many of us want to solve this situation and ensure that the sport of purebred dogs thrives now and for future generations, and we can if we so choose. It is on us, but we need to come together, to reignite our passion and to focus on cooperation, as breeders, exhibitors, judges, as dog lovers.

Cooperation is the foundation of any plan, and mentorship must be the next priority for everyone wishing to breed, show or judge in the future, and it has to be a priority for everyone. Now.

Thirty years ago, on the basis of a phone call from a total stranger and his own obvious interest, our mentor in Bullmastiffs, who lives across the country, invited Vince, who was traveling for business, to dinner. This led to an evening looking at dogs, watching movies,

perusing pictures, and forming an enduring friendship that has been a guiding light in our life in dogs.

When was the last time you joined a new club, volunteered for a committee or a job in a club you belong to, approached a newcomer ringside, or invited a novice to a club event? We all have to step outside our usual habits in the dog world, to remember and to remind one another of the value of our lives in dogs as breeders, as owners, as handlers, as judges, in any and all of the ways we participate in bettering our breeds.

We need to move forward with purpose. Because, as we all know, as we remember in the whelping boxes, in the rings, on our couches, and in our backyards, this is our breed, our sport, our chosen avocation—and if we don't take ownership of what is happening, breathe new life into our sport, and ensure the future of our breed and its place in the world of purebred dogs, who will?

Who's in?

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—Lindy Whyte,
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Chinooks

A BREED IN GOOD HANDS: JULIA LOMBARD AND THE CHINOOK PART ONE

When Arthur Treadwell Walden sailed south with Admiral Richard Byrd's first Antarctic Expedition in 1927, he left behind more than a farmstead in New Hampshire. He left behind the future of the Chinook breed. The tawny sled dogs he had spent a decade shaping—sturdy, gentle, and deeply devoted to their people—would need a capable guardian while their creator faced the ice. That guardian was Julia Lombard, a neighbor whose quiet involvement with the Chinooks would, over the following decade, prove to be nothing short of the breed's salvation.

The breed that Walden built

The story of the Chinook begins, as so many great

American stories do, with a single remarkable individual. Walden—explorer, author, innkeeper, and sled dog driver—had spent years in the Yukon before settling in the quiet hamlet of Wonalancet, New Hampshire, nestled beneath the White Mountains. There, on January 17, 1917, a Greenland husky descended from Admiral Robert Peary's polar expedition dogs gave birth to a litter that included one exceptional pup. Walden named him Chinook, after a sled dog he had worked with while freighting supplies for gold miners in Alaska. That dog would become the foundation sire of a new American breed bearing his name.

Chinook was unlike anything Walden had seen before: a large, tawny animal with a blocky head and floppy ears who could haul freight loads with power and stamina while remaining endearingly gentle with children. Walden built an entire program around him, crossing Chinook

with Belgian Sheepdogs, German Shepherd Dogs, and Canadian Eskimo Dogs to develop a breed that combined freighting strength with racing speed and an even, cooperative temperament. He called his operation Chinook Kennels and used the dogs to help bring sled dog sports to New England, founding the New England Sled Dog Club in 1924—the oldest such club still in operation today.

The world took notice. In 1927, Walden and his 16 Chinooks were chosen as the dog transport backbone of Byrd's first Antarctic Expedition, with the Admiral later describing them as the backbone of the expedition's transport.

But Antarctica would exact its price. During supply hauling operations, the 12-year-old Chinook went missing on his birthday—January 17, 1929—and was presumed dead. News of the loss made headlines around the world. Walden was, by all accounts, shattered. At his

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request, Route 113A from Tamworth to Wonalancet was renamed the Chinook Trail—a name it bears to this day.

A neighbor who was already watching

Long before Walden left for Antarctica, Julia Lombard had been part of the Chinook story in a quiet but deliberate way. She was a neighbor of the Waldens on the road that would eventually bear their famous dog's name, and she had been captivated early on by the gentle, companion-oriented nature of the Chinook dogs. Walden, ever pragmatic about the vulnerability of his breeding program, had formed the habit of giving Lombard



Above: Julia Lombard with Chinooks; Wonalancet Kennels Chinook team; Wonalancet-Hubbard Kennels display at a 1930s trade show.

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a few choice puppies to raise—an informal insurance policy against the kind of distemper outbreak that had set his program back in 1922–1923. If disaster struck at the kennel, the breed could be reconstituted from the dogs in Lombard's hands.

That foresight would prove prophetic in ways Walden could not have anticipated. Prior to his departure for the Antarctic, he formalized the arrangement by giving Lombard three specific pups: a son of Chinook who carried 25 percent German Shepherd blood, and a son and daughter of Chinook who each carried 50 percent Belgian Shepherd lineage. From surviving pedigrees, these three dogs are identified as Jock, Hootchinoo 2, and Zembla. They are, in all likelihood, the genetic ancestors of every living Chinook today.

When Walden returned from Antarctica in 1930 to find his wife had slipped into possible senility, his farm in financial ruin

from the Depression, and his breeding partnership effectively dissolved, it was Lombard he turned to. He sold his remaining dogs to her and accepted the position of kennel director at the operation she was building. The Chinook breeding program, which had nearly been extinguished by circumstance and geography, now had a new home—and a new patron with the resources to sustain it.

Julia Lombard and the Hubbard connection

To understand what Lombard brought to the Chinook breed, it helps to understand who stood behind her.

The Hubbard family of Gloucester, Massachusetts, had been bakers since 1873, when A. Hubbard and Sons opened as a bakery supplying hardtack sea biscuits to the fishing fleets working the waters off Cape Ann. Gloucester was, and remains, one of the oldest fishing ports in America, and the Hubbards supplied

the nutritional staple of men who spent weeks at sea. The pivot to dog biscuits came, according to company tradition, when a sailor tossed one of those hardtack biscuits to his dog, who gobbled it up with evident enthusiasm. The Hubbards took note.

By 1926, the company had officially transitioned into the pet food market, incorporating as Old Mother Hubbard and beginning distribution of oven-baked dog biscuits throughout the Northeast.

The timing was propitious: The 1920s saw a dramatic rise in the keeping of dogs as household companions rather than purely working animals, and the market for commercially prepared dog food was just beginning to take shape. The Hubbards, with their half-century of baking experience and established distribution networks up and down the New England coast, were well-positioned to meet that demand.

Their product stood apart

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from other early commercial dog foods: oven-baked, made with real ingredients, and conceived with the same craft mindset that had sustained a family bakery for more than 50 years.

Julia Lombard's family connection to the Hubbards gave her access to both the financial backing and the commercial infrastructure of this growing regional enterprise. The Hubbards operated what was described at the time as a small pet food factory in Gloucester—a facility that, in the 1930s, was still in its early commercial phase but backed by decades of baking expertise and a well-established New England presence.

That association was no small thing. It meant that when Lombard took on the Chinook breeding program, she was not an isolated enthusiast operating on her own resources but rather a well-connected woman with corporate sponsorship and the means to promote the breed on a regional stage.

The kennel's name reflected the partnership directly. Lombard called her operation the Wonalancet-Hubbard Kennel, combining the name of the hamlet that had given the breed its roots with the name of the company that now provided its commercial foundation. For Old Mother Hubbard, sponsoring a competitive sled dog team that appeared at races and sportsmen's shows across New England was an astute form of marketing—the dogs were living proof that Old Mother Hubbard fed animals that performed. For Lombard, the Hubbard backing meant she could operate the kennel at a professional scale that few private breeders of the era could match.

The kennel in operation

The Wonalancet-Hubbard Kennel operated throughout the 1930s as a fully professional enterprise. The surviving letterhead from that period tells a concise story of the organization Lombard had assembled:

Julia P. Lombard, Breeder;
Arthur T. Walden, Director;
Edward L. Moody, Trainer.

Moody was no ordinary hire—he was a veteran musher who had driven dogs on Byrd's Second Antarctic Expedition, a man whose credentials in the sled dog world were impeccable. That Walden himself signed on as director speaks to his continued attachment to the breed and his confidence in Lombard's leadership. It also gave the kennel something rare: a direct institutional link to the explorer who had put Chinooks on the map of American imagination.

Under this team, the dogs were raced throughout New England under the Wonalancet-Hubbard banner. A young musher named Bob Payne, who joined the kennel in the summer of 1938, left behind detailed records of the competitive seasons that followed.

Running a team of seven Chinooks with a dog named Oomilik in the lone lead position, the kennel competed in five of the nine

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races organized by the New England Sled Dog Club during the 1938–39 season: fourth in Chester, Vermont; third in North Conway, New Hampshire; first in Camden, Maine; and second at the New England Championship in Jaffrey. This was not a ceremonial team—it was a genuinely competitive one, racing full distances against serious opposition.

Off the racecourse, the dogs were regular features at sportsmen's shows across the region. Surviving photographs document the 1937 Connecticut Sportsman Show, where Lombard's Old Mother Hubbard-sponsored Chinooks were displayed alongside Walden and Ed Moody—a tableau that combined adventure, commerce, and canine excellence in a single compelling package. These shows were the primary public venue through which the Chinook was kept alive in popular consciousness during the Depression years.

Lombard promoted the

Chinooks as recreational sled dogs and family companions in equal measure, maintaining the dual identity that Walden had established from the beginning. In doing so, she was not merely preserving a working breed—she was preserving an idea about what a dog could be: powerful enough to haul a sled, gentle enough to sit with a child, intelligent enough to respond to training, and agreeable enough to live harmoniously in a household. That idea is as central to the Chinook today as it was in Lombard's time.

Breeding philosophy: Fidelity to the original

While the competitive and promotional aspects of the kennel gave the Chinooks their public face, Lombard's most consequential work was done in the breeding program. The three foundation dogs Walden had entrusted to her—Jock, Hootchinoo, and Zembla—represented a narrow but carefully chosen genetic

base. Lombard's task was to expand from that base without diluting what made the breed worth preserving.

Her method was systematic. She began by crossing the three foundation dogs' bloodlines, then conducted selective inbreeding through the mid-1930s to consolidate the traits most characteristic of Walden's program: the tawny coat, the strong and balanced build, the calm temperament, the eagerness to work, and the willingness to be around people. The dogs that emerged from this process were what Lombard called her "pure-bred Chinooks"—animals that could consistently reproduce the standard Walden had established by instinct and experience over the previous two decades.

Throughout this process, Walden remained actively involved as kennel director. His presence ensured continuity: The standards he had applied at Chinook Kennels were the same

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standards being applied at Wonalancet-Hubbard.

Lombard was not reinventing the breed; she was preserving it with discipline and care during a period when the wider world had long since moved on from the expeditionary drama that had first made Chinooks famous. The Depression, the coming war, the rise of other breeds—all of it pressed against the Chinook's survival, and Lombard held the line.

Like Walden before her, Lombard also kept a tight grip on the breeding rights. The kennel sold only males or spayed females, a practice that prevented buyers from independently breeding Chinooks and potentially diluting the program's integrity. This policy, common among serious breeders of the era, would have long-term consequences for the breed's genetic resilience—but in the 1930s, it reflected a genuine commitment to quality and consistency.

To continue in the October 2026 issue.

—Kathleen Riley,
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[Chinook Club of America](#)

German Pinschers

EVERY DOG HAS HIS OR HER 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, 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

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German Pinscher

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 communi-

cation. They're quick and engaged, and 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 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

TO SIT OR NOT TO SIT? LEAVE NO QUESTION!

Most of us who own Giant Schnauzers admire the breed's versatility. We want to do it all—dog sports and conformation—showing off both brains and beauty! But too often someone gives us the discouraging advice: “Never teach your dog to sit! They will sit in the breed ring instead of standing for the judge.”

Does this mean we can't train for sports like obedience and rally? They involve heeling and lots of sits! And what if a dog is already working in such sports—is their conformation career doomed before it begins?

Not at all! Lots of Giant owners successfully show in both breed and obedience/

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Giant
Schnauzer



rally. Here are some tips to ensure that your puppy (or older dog) knows when to sit and when to not.

Tip #1: Teach your pup the three main position commands: *sit*, *stand*, and *down*. Do not favor one over another. Pay each generously as you teach it, and work until your pup is fluent in all three. The dog should be able to execute a string of several commands given in any order without getting confused. (Note: there are many methods of training; I don't intend to go into spe-

cifics here. I will just say that training of any sort should be undertaken cheerfully, with abundant rewards for the dog.)

Tip #2: Once your canine understands the positions, work on steadiness and duration. Teach him to maintain each position in place until the next command is given, or until you give a release command ("OK," "break," "free," or the like). This builds focus and patience. You should be able to walk a circle around the dog while he is in any

one of the three positions.

Tip #3: Be consistent in your commands. Dogs can easily learn 100 to 200 words if you use them consistently. A short, distinct command word is clearer and easier for a dog to learn. Think of your pup's confusion upon hearing "Just lie down!" or "Sit right here!" Don't have a discussion, just give a command.

Tip #4: Be clear in your expectations. When training, visualize exactly how the dog should perform each commanded action. Show him how to do it the same way every time. People will tell you that Giants get bored with repetition, so get excited and make Rover feel like a genius for each command response; throw a party after several reps and move to another exercise.

Once he fully understands, start to pay only when the action meets your expectations. For example, a slow, sloppy down can be met with "Ooops! Try again."

Tip #5: Use each command equally often in

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everyday life. You may have taught your pup to always sit when you put his leash on and open the door, or to sit to greet people instead of jumping up. This could inadvertently teach your dog that sit is “the best” command because it leads to fun. So change things up! Ask for a down at the door before being let out. Have the pup stand for greetings instead of sitting.

Now that you have a dog who knows the difference between sit and stand and doesn’t confuse them, think about how to make conformation gaiting distinct and different from heeling.

Tip #6: Pick different commands for different movement. In our house we use “go ahead” for gaiting and “hip” for heeling. We also have a general command for leash-walking, “Let’s go.” Even as a puppy, your dog can learn that there are these three basic things they might be asked to do when on leash! Like any commands, if used consistently the dog will

learn the difference.

Tip #7: Make gaiting and heeling look and feel different to the dog. To teach gaiting, encourage your dog to look straight forward and allow them to move with their head and withers ahead of you, and a foot or more out to the side. Rotate your left forearm out to hold the lead with light guiding tension directly over the dog’s neck.

For heeling, bait your dog to look upward and move with their right ear at your left pants seam, very close to your leg. Leave the leash slack and reward focus upward.

Tip #8: Teach different stops. In conformation, prepare the dog for stopping and standing by giving your stack command (e.g. “stand pretty”) a stride before you slow, then turn your body to face the dog as you swing your baiting (right) hand out in front of the dog in a sweeping motion.

For obedience halts you just stop in place, facing the same way you were going.

(In early heeling training you need to give a “sit” command at each halt to teach the dog an automatic sit.)

—Bonnie Postovit,

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Giant Schnauzer Club of America

Great Danes

HOW MUCH DAMAGE WILL A GREAT DANE DO TO MY BELONGINGS?

If you are to obtain a young puppy from a breeder (8+ weeks of age), *expect to start training the puppy as soon as possible!* This starts with the “proper” location for the dog to eat and leash training (usually short learning curves).

In all forms of training, it is imperative that all family members are 100-percent consistent, 100 percent of the time.

Our dogs want to please us. It is our job to make any training as simple as possible with persistent repetition.

Any puppy is simply too

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cute. However, it is advisable to get the necessary training completed long before the cute puppy grows to well over 100 pounds.

All puppies will chew and will usually find one's favorite pair of shoes as their toy-of-the-day. When one corrects their puppy, you should use a firm tone and not pat the dog once you have taken the toy from its mouth. All this is doing is to give the dog positive attention for negative behavior. Definitely not the desired lesson.

I once had four adult Great Danes in my home (I know!). If they were being bothersome to the family or

friends that might be visiting, I simply snapped my fingers and all four dogs laid down and would never think of getting up without my permission.

As much as you will love your Great Dane, think of how much more you and your family will enjoy the dog if he or she is *stable*. Mental stability is a basic problem with owners who have some form of behavior problem with their dog (any breed).

If available I would also suggest having your puppy go through basic obedience classes. These classes are available in many areas and are well worth the time for

both your dog and the additional bonding which you will grow to have with him.

—Bill Stebbins,
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Great Dane Club of
America

Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs

WHEN THE VILLAGE SUCCEEDS, AND WHEN IT STUMBLES: OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS MENTORS

A new owner posts a simple question online: “My 8-month-old Swissy is barely eating, skips meals, picks at food. The vet says he’s healthy. Any advice?”

Within hours, the responses flood in. Switch proteins. Add toppers. Never add toppers, you’ll create a picky eater. Try raw. Change kibble brands. More exercise. Less exercise. Someone questions the breeder. Someone else suggests the dog is manipulating the owner.

Then the original poster goes quiet. The Swissy waits, patient and observant, while

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Greater Swiss Mountain Dog at AKC Meet the Breeds

their person drowns in confident, contradictory advice.

This is often where displacement begins. Not with neglect or cruelty, but with a well-meaning community that overwhelms instead of supports.

The mentorship triangle

We've been introduced to the dog-owner-veterinarian triangle and the dog-owner-trainer triangle. Mentorship forms another critical point of trust.

When it works, experienced voices help new owners develop confidence, discernment, and the ability to read their own dogs.

When it fractures, new owners become paralyzed by opposing opinions delivered with equal certainty.

Some follow the loudest voice. Some stop asking questions altogether. Some quietly disappear, convinced they're failing.

Whether we intend it or not, all of us—breeders, exhibitors, and longtime club members—shape this dynamic. And that means we can also change the parts that don't work, and elevate the parts that do.

When owners feel defeated

When owners feel overwhelmed, Swissys typically

land in one of four places: back with their breeder, in breed rescue, given away, or (occasionally) in a shelter environment.

Responsible breeder returns remain an essential safety net, and many breeders honor that commitment fully. Others may underestimate how much guidance new owners still need after the puppy goes home.

Rescue volunteers sometimes see dogs who are healthy, stable, and deeply loved, with owners who didn't "fail," but who became lost in a maze of competing advice and expectations.

If we listen more closely to why owners feel they have no good options left, we can understand what's working, what isn't, and mentor very differently on the front end.

The weight of our words

After nearly three decades with this breed, I've learned that how we share knowledge matters as much as what we share. Offering advice without first asking

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questions assumes all situations are the same. They aren't.

Presenting one approach as the "right" way teaches compliance, not understanding. It encourages owners to defer to authority rather than develop the skill of observing and responding to their dog.

And when we turn a plea for help into a public debate, we forget the most important thing – the dog still needs to eat.

The strongest mentors begin with curiosity and respect for context. "What have you tried?" "What does your day look like?" "What worries you most right now?"

They share experience without insisting on supremacy. "This worked for me," leaves room for choice. "Others have succeeded differently," builds confidence rather than dependence.

They remember what it felt like to be new. Expertise doesn't lose value when paired with empathy, it gains it. And they keep the dog at

the center—not reputation, philosophy, or the need to be right.

Our responsibility

New owners will continue to find this breed. They'll keep asking questions.

They'll keep navigating the thousands of small decisions that shape life with a Swissy.

We can overwhelm them with competing certainties and unintended judgment. Or we can offer guidance generously, hold our opinions lightly, and trust that supported owners make thoughtful decisions.

This isn't about lowering standards. It's about recognizing that strong mentorship creates capable owners, and capable owners raise dogs who never need rescue, never return in crisis, and never lose their place in a family.

Our Swissys, vigilant as ever, are waiting to see which village we choose to build.

This column is the third in a three-part series appearing in the October 2025 AKC

GAZETTE, the April 2026 issue, and this 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.

—Tracey Brant

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

Komondorok

SIGNS OF LIFE: A KOMONDOR ENTRY!

In 2024 I wrote a column pointing out that our wonderful breed was disappearing and that the people who love our breed needed to breed their eligible (i.e. health-tested) bitches. Fortunately, I was not alone in that opinion.

This past March, in York, we drew majors in both sexes at our national specialty. Last week (late May) the Cincinnati Kennel Club entry for the weekend was 11, also drawing majors in both sexes. Mostly young dogs,

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Komondorok entry at the Cincinnati Kennel Club in late May—showing a full range of ages and coat lengths.

this is already a landmark year for our very rare breed and hopefully is a sign of continued good things to come. The Cincinnati entry is in the picture with this column. There is a full range of ages in this entry. Congratulations to the winners and to everyone who participated!

What if you are the judge of such an entry? For the past few years, the lion's share of Komondor entries was a lonely special or two, usually of good quality. While Komondor exhibitors are thankful for your appreciation of those exhibits, the task of sorting out a bunch

of puppies and awarding majors is quite different.

Here are some priorities to remember:

The Komondor is a working dog designed to excel in the task of being a flock guardian. His mental and physical attributes are ideally focused on this important job. To serve that purpose the Komondor is a rugged, muscular, slightly rectangular dog who can move with soundness and agility. His physical attributes are cloaked (to a degree according to age) in his heavy coat, but it is the dog under the coat which must be primarily judged, not the coat.

Let's put the coat aside by describing it:

1. It is white, with maybe some cream on puppy ears.

2. It starts off crimped or curly and tends to fall into cords.

3. The length of coat is purely a function of age. It grows 2–3 inches per year. Longer coat is not more typical, is not better, and should not win on that criterion.

4. Judges who arrange classes primarily in coat-length order do our breed a terrible disservice.

5. We have three coat-related disqualifications: failure to cord by the age of 2 (usually not a problem);

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not white (really not a problem); and not short and smooth coat on head and legs (this is not a grooming or coat-damage issue). This is the “not a Kuvasz” DQ.

6. All Komondors have a coat. Some of them may be stained or damaged by farm work.

To repeat the most important judging issue about coat: Coat length is a function of age, and that is not a rational judging criterion.

The Komondor’s important judging priorities are listed in this key phrase from our standard: “type, character, symmetry, movement and ruggedness are of the greatest importance.” This means more important than coat length, and more important than size. This is because along with our gait description “Light, leisurely and balanced. The Komondor takes long strides, is very agile and light on his feet” these features provide the Komondor with the traits which make him a great livestock guardian.

If a Komondor is not agile, he cannot do his athletic guarding job. If he does not have a good level and strong topline, good bone, nice size, good sound legs, nice dark eyes and pigment, a large head, and a good temperament, he is not just a Komondor of poor type, he is a poorly built dog and should not be rewarded.

The non-coat DQs in our standard are “blue eyes” (one blue eye is enough to disqualify), and “three or more missing teeth.” These are easy features, along with the coat DQs, for a judge to evaluate.

An excellent Illustrated Standard is available on our club website; it emphasizes and illustrates the messages outlined above. It also shows examples at various ages (coat lengths), which is a good study topic for you to review before judging a Komondor major entry.

—Eric Liebes,
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Komondor Club of
America

Kuvaszok

DOES SIZE MATTER?

With the AKC breed standard always as our reference, the Kuvasz is described as “a working dog of larger size, sturdily built.” The height parameters are stated as follows: “Dogs, 28 to 30 inches; Bitches, 26 to 28 inches.”

Although the words “ideal” and “preferred” are conspicuously absent from the standard’s language, one may reasonably presume that this range reflects what has historically been considered the proper, or at least typical, height range for the breed.

Our story does not end there, however, because there are a few interesting anomalies in the Kuvasz standard when it comes to the subject of height.

Over the prescribed height range

Let us begin with dogs and bitches that are over the stated height range. The breed standard is silent on how to evaluate Kuvaszok

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According to the standard, the Kuvasz is “a breed of medium bone” that “impresses the eye with strength and activity combined with light-footedness and moves freely on strong legs.”

that exceed the prescribed height. It is uncommon, but not rare, to see males above 30 inches; 31 to 32 inches is the tallest I have personally seen. It is also not uncommon to occasionally see bitches over the stated 28-inch maximum.

Are these dogs to be penalized? The standard does not say that dogs exceeding the stated height range are to be faulted. However,

when evaluating dogs larger than the prescribed range, we must always return to the breed’s purpose and function, and consider how size—whether excessive or insufficient—may affect the dog’s ability to do his work.

A larger Kuvasz should be evaluated in balance and in the totality of the dog’s overall virtues. We must remember other important language in the standard,

which states that the Kuvasz is “a breed of medium bone” that “impresses the eye with strength and activity combined with light-footedness and moves freely on strong legs.”

The Kuvasz is a lean, hard, athletic guardian, designed to cover varied terrain for many miles as it travels with its flock. A larger dog can certainly be agile, athletic, and capable of performing its historical function, but those traits must be present in the dog as a whole, and particularly in its movement.

When evaluating an oversized Kuvasz, judges should be alert for clumsiness, lack of light-footedness, heaviness, compromised agility, difficulty turning, or any indication that size has become an impediment rather than an attribute. Extra height alone should not be the determining factor. The question is whether the dog remains recognizably and functionally Kuvasz: strong, active, balanced, athletic, and capable of work.

COURTESY KCA

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Under the prescribed height range: an interesting gray area

The Kuvasz standard contains a mandatory minimum height requirement. Dogs smaller than 26 inches and bitches smaller than 24 inches are to be disqualified. There is no exception stated for puppies. As a practical matter, a 6-month-old Kuvasz under the minimum height requirement may ultimately mature into the standard range, as the Kuvasz is a slow-maturing breed, particularly in males, and many do not reach full growth until approximately two years of age.

The gray area in the Kuvasz standard exists in the two-inch variance between the stated height range and the disqualifying threshold. For dogs, that range is 26 to 27 inches. For bitches, it is 24 to 25 inches.

When taking size and sex characteristics into consideration, this means that a 24-inch bitch and a 30-inch male can both fall within the parameters of the standard

and should both be capable of performing the breed's historical function as a predator-control and family guardian, provided the other essential breed attributes are present. There is nothing in the standard to suggest that this six-inch variation in height alone should determine quality.

The Judge's Education Committee is often asked what considerations judges should take into account when presented with exhibits that fall into these outlying categories. In other words, should a 32-inch male be favored over a 26-inch male, or vice versa?

The official position of the Kuvasz Club of America Judge's Education Council is as follows:

"When judging dogs that fall above or below the ideal height guidelines, one must take into consideration the factors of the dog's quality when weighing the difference in height."

Those factors include, but are not limited to, overall balance, movement,

correct coat texture and distribution, proper bone, soundness, correct head-piece, proper ears, and the unmistakable impression of strength, activity, and light-footedness required of the breed.

In summary, does size matter? Yes, but only in proper context. Size matters because the Kuvasz is a large working guardian whose substance, strength, endurance, and presence are essential to breed type. But size should never be judged in isolation. A larger Kuvasz that loses athleticism, balance, or light-footed movement has not gained virtue merely by being tall. Likewise, a smaller Kuvasz that remains within the standard, possesses proper type, soundness, balance, and working ability should not be dismissed simply because it falls at the lower end of the acceptable range.

The best Kuvasz is not necessarily the tallest, the biggest, or the most imposing. The best Kuvasz is the one who most fully embod-

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ies the breed standard: a powerful yet agile guardian, medium in bone, free moving, balanced, functional, and unmistakably capable of doing the work for which the breed was created.

—Maria Arechaederra,
Kuvasz Club of America
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Leonbergers

JUST ADD WATER

Leonbergers are hairy. You have probably noticed that. They shed a lot. You have probably noticed that as well. What you may not know, if you have not lived with a Leonberger, is that they love water. Read that again, and imagine the word *love* in full caps, huge font, bright-red bold letters, and followed by about 14 exclamation points. From their water dish to mud puddles, to creeks, ponds, lakes, ocean waves, swimming pools, and just about any other body of water you can think of, bodies of

water seem to complete the Leonberger in his or her very soul!

There are, of course, other breeds that are also crazy about water, and some of them also have the general size and coat that Leonbergers have. But the affinity for water (and water-based messes such as mud puddles) combined with the joyful playful personality of the typical Leonberger, and combined with all that dog hair...? Well, it is important to understand that life with a Leonberger will entail a fair amount of time cleaning up after their joyous splash/swim/wallow sessions.

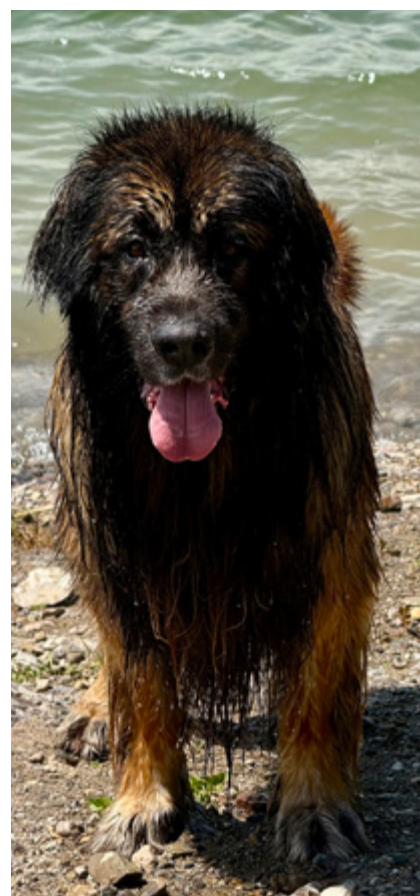
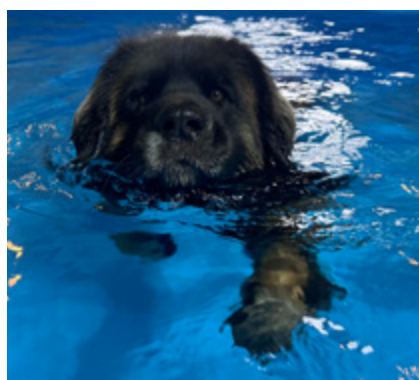
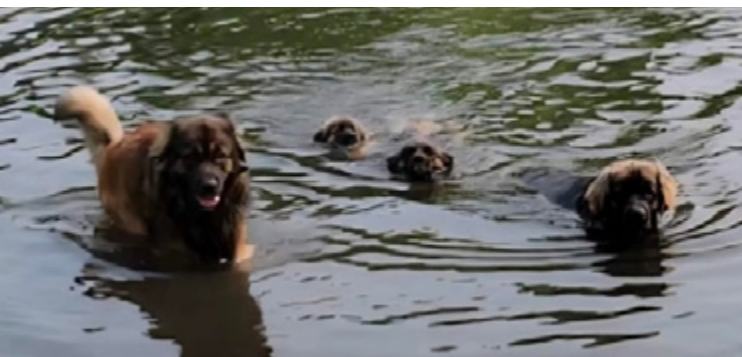
This water bond starts early. It is not unusual for Leonberger puppies to fall asleep with a paw or an ear or even their chin over the edge of their water bowl. My first Leonberger blew bubbles at the edge of her water bowl in her sleep when she first came home to live with me. My second Leonberger used to dig all the water out of his bowl and sprawl happily down for a snooze in

the resulting puddle on the floor. Eventually I switched to a stainless-steel bucket, setting that bucket on a boot tray, which minimized the puddle on the floor. Stainless steel is easy to clean, so after their digging escapades in mud in the backyard, that bucket could be easily cleaned out after they dunked their muddy faces in it.

I also had a livestock trough in the backyard, and big plastic baby pools for them to cool off in. I never left the dogs outside for long on very hot days, but I still had to clean up some muddy mess when they came back in the house. I used to put towels over the floor and had a door mat and area rug to help sop up the muddy damp paw prints and dripping undercarriage. For my backyard, that was enough. My trips to the dog-friendly beaches after moving out to Maryland's Eastern Shore typically just involved a quick hose-off and blasting with the dog dryer to minimize the

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Leonbergers love water ! Life with a Leo is likely to entail a fair amount of time cleaning up after their joyous splash/swim/wallow sessions.

amount of sand that came into the house.

However, some Leonberger people have

ponds, swimming pools, rivers, creeks, and even lakes on their properties. And it is a whole different situation

to keep up with that. Of course, it helps if you have a mud room or outdoor porch where the soggy Leonberger

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can shake and drip and chill before coming into the house. You can teach your dog to pause in the doorway to have their feet and undercarriage wiped down before coming into the house. But if said Leonbergers have been swimming/wallowing in mud or muddy ponds, lakes, and such, you may also have resulting “dog smell” along with duck weed or sand that may come home on their now-soggy coats as well.

This is not to say that every Leonberger will be a soggy, muddy mess on a regular basis. But it could be a regular occurrence, and being prepared for that will go a long way toward keeping everybody happy if you decide this is the breed for you.

—Shannon White,
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Leonberger Club of America

Mastiffs

The information presented in this article is provided courtesy of Patricia

Meiser, DVM. Dr. Meiser graduated from Iowa State University in 1997 and practices at Mill Creek Animal Hospital in Lexington, South Carolina. She is a small-animal general practitioner with a special interest in behavioral medicine and reproductive medicine. She breeds English Springer Spaniels on a very limited basis and actively competes in conformation, scent work, rally obedience, Fast CAT, and Barn Hunt. She is also active in rescue. This article is the result of information and articles that Dr. Meiser provided specifically on early spay/neuter. This article does not address the issue of overpopulation and animals that have no home or guardian or overall canine population control.

EARLY SPAY/NEUTER

Breeders spend many hours researching pedigrees and developing lines with the intent of bettering the breed. No matter how diligent breeders are in their programs, every breeding



“Mastiff on Steps,” by William Luker Sr. (1863)

is a roll of the genetic dice. Even in the best breeding programs, not all of the puppies will be shown/show quality. Ethically, non-breeding-quality animals should not be bred.

How does the ethical breeder determine the appropriate age and enforce limitations for neutering non-breeding-quality animals?

Breeders strive to produce healthy puppies that live long, good-quality lives, and they do not want pet-quality puppies to be bred. The AKC provides the

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option of providing full or limited registration, with limited registration restricting the buyer's ability to register any puppies that they might intentionally or accidentally produce from those dogs.

The first consideration in requiring spaying or neutering of offspring is how critical is the timing. Removal of reproductive organs eliminates secretion of hormones (progesterone and estrogen in females, testosterone in males), but how does that affect the adult animal?

In the 2008 article "An Evidence-Based Analysis," Margaret Root-Kustritz, DVM, Ph.D., notes that veterinarians have traditionally recommended spaying or neutering of puppies between 6 and 9 months of age, a concept based on post-WWII anesthesia technology. She states there are no long-term studies available that follow development of dogs that define what abnormalities develop relative to age at neutering.

With current technology, canines can safely undergo neutering as young as 6 to 8 weeks of age. The surgical complication rate does not vary when comparing neutering of very young puppies to those undergoing surgery at the more traditional age, with the overall postoperative complication rate reported as 6.1%.

Dr. Root-Kustritz concludes that based on multiple studies, spaying bitches when young greatly decreases their cancer risks of developing mammary neoplasia. The comparison of spayed bitches with bitches left intact shows that those spayed before puberty have a 0.5% risk, while those spayed after one estrous cycle have an 8.0% risk. After two estrous cycles, the risk jumps to 26.0%. Further, the benefit of spaying decreases with each estrous cycle.

She addresses some cancer risks as well. Osteosarcoma is a low-incidence (0.2%), highly malignant tumor of bone, reportedly more

common in large-breed dogs, although two studies document a 1.3 to 2.0 times increased incidence of osteosarcoma with neutering.

Mastiffs and large breeds in general are at increased risk for hemangiosarcoma, a malignant tumor of vascular tissue, including the heart, major blood vessels, and spleen. Two studies show increased incidence, from 2.2 to 5 times, in neutered males and females when compared to intact animals.

"Early Spay-Neuter Considerations for the Canine Athlete: One Veterinarian's Opinion," © 2005 by Chris Zink, DVM, Ph.D., DACVP (found at www.caninesports.com), agrees with Dr. Root-Kustritz's conclusions. Dr. Zink notes that a study of cardiac tumors in dogs shows a five times greater risk of hemangiosarcoma, one of the three most common cancers in dogs, in spayed bitches than intact bitches, and a 2.4 times greater risk of hemangiosarcoma in neutered dogs as

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compared to intact males.

Dr. Zink found that bitches and dogs spayed and neutered at less than a year of age were significantly taller than those spayed or neutered at more than a year of age. Root-Kustritz also notes that in canines, studies show that neutering before puberty slows closure of the growth plates, leading to a statistically significant obvious increase in height.

According to Zink's findings, sex hormones communicate with a number of growth-related hormones that promote the closure of the growth plates at puberty, so the bones of dogs or bitches neutered or spayed before puberty continue to grow. Dogs that are spayed or neutered well before puberty can frequently be identified by their longer limbs, lighter bone structure, narrow chests and narrow skulls. This abnormal growth frequently results in significant alterations in body proportions and the lengths and weights of certain bones, all of which

is undesirable in Mastiffs.

Large-breed dogs like Mastiffs are generally at greater risk of cranial cruciate ligament (CCL) tears or rupture. Overweight canines may be at increased risk. It has been demonstrated that CCL injury is more common in spayed or castrated animals than in intact animals.

Breeders normally use contracts when selling puppies, and most national breed clubs require members to use contracts when selling dogs. The information on the results of neutering points out that some balance is necessary in making and enforcing determinations on contractual requirements for timing the neutering of non-breeding animals to ensure their optimal health and longevity.

In Mastiffs, given the propensity to malformation of structure as a result of early neutering and the limited increase in other risks, waiting until joint plates close might be the better choice.

Breeders should know their lines and growth patterns, as well as the propensity of lines to develop various cancers, and consider these factors in establishing the timing for neutering when writing contracts.

As a final note, contract enforcement is always a concern. In most, if not all, states, animals are considered property, and states—and even municipalities within each state—have specific requirements as to what property rights are conveyed or can be enforced following an ownership transfer.

Because of the limited options for contract enforcement, breeders should consult an attorney or legal professional when developing agreements to determine what and how limitations can be enforced to ensure the best care and quality of life for the placement of their animals.

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Neapolitan Mastiffs

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NEAPOLITAN MASTIFF

Following are some common questions about the breed, and answers with discussion.

Is there such a thing as “too much” skin? If so, what is it?

The short answer is yes. The long answer is how much is “too much” depends on functionality and type.

With regard to the skin, there are two equally important aspects:

(1) The skin is supposed to be thick and loosely attached.

(2) The dog must be functional.

Properly thick skin feels thick. When you touch the dog, for example feeling behind the shoulders, you should feel heavy skin. The Bloodhound also has loose skin, but it is a thinner skin. The *Mastino*’s skin must not be thin like that of a Bloodhound. The *Mastino*’s wrinkles are thick folds of skin. If you see a crepe-y surface, it is because the skin

is too thin.

Typically the skin is moves and is loose over the whole dog, head and body. It may form folds on the torso—for example, wrinkles may appear behind the withers (formed by the dog lifting his head), and there may be a fold over the shoulder, or across the front, or along the flank. You should see some hanging skin below the abdomen. If the skin is correctly thick, however, you typically won’t see little crepe-y wrinkles all the way down the leg below the elbow.

The dog must be functional. He has to be able to move and to see. The standard says the eyes are “almost hidden beneath drooping upper lids.” *Almost* hidden; not completely hidden. And of course the eye itself, although almost hidden, must be normal, not scratched or cloudy, even though the standard doesn’t specify this, but certainly this must also be true for the *Mastino*, just as it is



Neapolitan Mastiff, June 2004
(Chet Jezierski art)

automatically true for all healthy dogs.

Even the skin across the muzzle forms thick wrinkles. Following the leadership of the Italian *Mastinari* (true breed fans), we don’t count how many wrinkles on the muzzle, nor do we count the wrinkles over the body, nor do we feel “the more, the better.” We do expect the wrinkles, but they appear naturally; we don’t reward quantity or require any specific measurement.

What is important is that the skin be thick and loosely attached, not thin or unattached!

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How much is too much dewlap?

Lots of breeds have dewlaps, but other breeds have much less of a dewlap than the Neapolitan Mastiff's, which is described as being "a voluminous dewlap" and as such is surely a feature of the breed.

If the skin is correctly thick and correctly attached to the dog, the length of the dewlap isn't particularly an issue. We don't really measure it, although it must be attached at the muzzle and the chest.

The dewlap is correct when it is "divided," which will happen quite naturally when it is correctly attached from the lower jaw to the lower neck. "Divided" references the two parallel sides to the dewlap, coming from each side of the muzzle. They hang down next to each other and then blend into the neck.

In some dogs, especially if the skin is thin and overall too loosely attached, you might see the dewlap hanging more straight down

under the jaw, instead of from both sides. If it's not correctly attached to the neck, the dewlap hangs as a flat "flap" in front of the chest, often swinging widely back and forth in front of the dog's chest as the dog moves. The problem in such a case is that the skin is thin and the dewlap isn't correctly attached, not that the dewlap is too long.

—Margaret R. (Peggy) Wolfe,

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United States Neapolitan Mastiff Club

Newfoundlands

BIG DOGS, LITTLE HANDLERS

Mackenzie Wagoner comes from a long, distinguished line of Newfoundland dog lovers. Her great grandmother owned Newfoundlands, bred Bernese Mountain Dogs, and was instrumental in getting Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs recognized by the AKC. Her grandmother, Tami Palomba, is a

part owner of Mooncusser Newfoundlands. The youngster, who used to re-enact dog shows with her stuffed animals, has a deep affinity for animals and intrinsically knows how to approach dogs.

Mackenzie entered her first conformation ring when she was only 3 years old. Handler Samantha Brainard was in the ring beside Mackenzie and a Newfoundland, using a double leash. Samantha says, "Mackenzie is a firecracker. She is totally comfortable around dogs and has a natural understanding of animals—a 4-year-old going on 14. At last year's national, she dressed for the ring every day. She helped watch the dogs in the ex-pens, held my bag at ringside and handed me supplies I needed, and gave out plenty of treats."

The young girl loves picking out her outfits for the shows: There must be a pocket where she can tuck in a drool rag behind her. She recently showed Mary

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Bylone's bitch Reba in the 4- to 6-Months puppy class and did so well in the ring that an observer asked Mackenzie if she could show her Springer Spaniel puppy! She also attended Westminster this past year and was mesmerized by the show, the dogs, the Big City, and the whole experience.

Mackenzie is looking forward to the upcoming Newfoundland national



Young Mackenzie Wagoner with a Newfoundland puppy; Mackenzie showing a Newf with a helping hand from handler Samantha Brainard; Mackenzie and Samantha

specialty, where she may show Oliver, her grandmother's very large, 2-year-old grand champion in the Pee Wee class.

Grandmother Tami adds, "The Pee Wee and Junior handling programs truly showcase what the sport should be all about: the sense of family and the pure joy of going into the ring."

Samantha adds, "At the end of the day, dog breeding and showing is a team sport. Breeding and showing builds family: Tami is



like a second mom to me, Mackenzie is like a niece. I've been so lucky to share all this with my own mother. My passion is encouraging the next generation to love this sport the way my family does. Sharing this love with Mackenzie is precious."

Jessica Thibault, also a third-generation Newfoundland fan, echoes these sentiments. Her grandmother started Nashua-Auke Kennels and bred national-specialty and Best in Show winners, her mother Donna

COURTESY TAMI PALOMBA

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judges NCA draft and water rescue, and her sister is also a professional handler. Jessica has bred winning Newfoundlands, developed countless Versatile Newfs, and teaches high school animal science and veterinary science.

Jessica notes, “The Pee Wee events are an excellent way to get young kids involved in an incredibly supportive environment. At every Pee Wee competition, every spectator is clapping, smiling, and encouraging. This enthusiastic support tends to fade as the level of competition (and age of competitors) increases. Our Newfoundland community is especially supportive of the Pee Wee events, coming out to encourage and support them anytime the opportunity arises. I hope every child can have the opportunity to see the smiles, hear the applause, and be excited to participate in showing.”

Jessica adds, “We currently have between 5–10 Junior Showmanship participants

in Newfoundland confirmation and performance events. Perhaps we could integrate something similar into our working events. I remember being too young for Junior Showmanship and wanting so badly to be part of the water training and draft training group sessions every weekend at the kennel. I was so excited to walk/guide our trained dogs in their carts on a freight haul and work on VNs. How great would it be if at the national we did a Pee Wee draft where some of our most skilled working dog trainers could work with their dogs alongside the kids, letting them lead?”

—Katie Dolan,
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Newfoundland Club of America

Portuguese Water Dogs FROM FOUNDATION TO FUTURE

The Portuguese Water Dog was introduced to the United States by a devoted foundation breeder

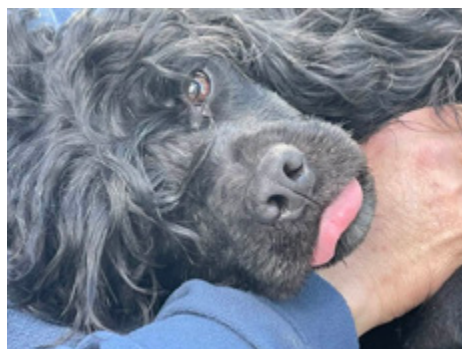
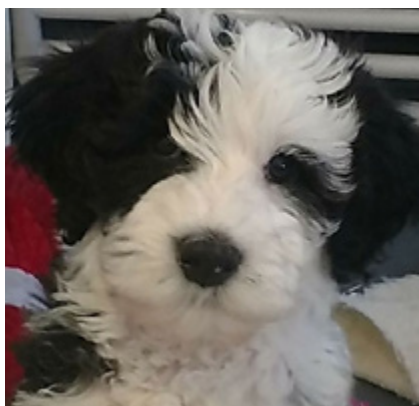
who waited years for the right puppy and made a lasting commitment to establishing the breed here. In those early days, the people involved were deeply dedicated. They worked together to protect the breed, preserve the standard, and carefully manage and improve health. There was a shared sense of purpose. People collaborated to reach health goals and welcomed others who believed in the same mission as the original foundation group.

As interest in the breed increased, more people became involved. Some breeders chose to sell puppies with full rights to show and breed. From those decisions, new and competitive kennels were formed.

As the breed grew in popularity, it also began attracting individuals who were more interested in profit than preservation. That shift created new challenges and made it even more important to stay focused on protecting the integrity of the breed.

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Portuguese Water Dogs: Dog breeds exist and thrive because of the shared sense of purpose of preservation breeders who work together to protect the breed, preserve the standard, and carefully manage and improve health.

Today, one of the hardest parts of purchasing a dog is finding a responsible breeder who does not always have a puppy available or a litter on the way. The wait can feel discouraging, but it is often a sign of careful, thoughtful breeding. We often hear the phrase “Adopt, don’t shop,”

but many of us believe just as strongly in being transparent and proud preservation breeders who stand behind our dogs and our bloodlines.

We live in a society that values immediate gratification and trends. “Designer dogs” such as the golden-doodle, Bernedoodle, and Labradoodle, along with countless other mixes, have become extremely popular. Social media and polished websites are filled with adorable puppy photos, and many buyers do not realize that some of those images are reused, altered, or even stolen. Many of these sites always seem to have a puppy available. That alone should encourage buyers to slow down and ask more questions.

There are also websites and Facebook kennel ads promoting puppies for rehoming or rescue. It is important to ask whether these groups are in fact rehoming parent dogs from irresponsible high-volume operations or if they are connected to the operations

themselves.

A member who lives near one of the largest operations of this kind reports that when they are finished with a breeding dog and cannot place it, the dog is often euthanized. High-volume breeders and backyard breeders will sell to anyone. When people are not prepared for the intelligence and energy level of certain breeds, those dogs frequently end up in rescue. Much of our rescue funding goes toward helping dogs that came from these large-scale operations. There are also dog auctions where these operators purchase breeding stock.

It is time for purebred breeders to stand together. High-volume breeders should not claim purebred club affiliation simply to promote themselves. That membership should represent real dedication to the breed. We must take pride in our efforts, in our transparency, and in the lives of the dogs we raise. By educating our puppy buyers

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and supporting one another, national clubs can work together to promote responsible purebred breeders and protect the future of our breeds.

—Angela Kalmanash
[Portuguese Water Dog Club of America](#)

Siberian Huskies

A TIGHTROPE WALK: EDUCATING POTENTIAL OWNERS WITHOUT PUSHING THEM AWAY

You've got four or five 8-week-old little monsters (that were so very recently adorable, cuddly, harmless bundles of fur) running around your house. You know which one is staying home; you have a couple of show homes lined up for those future stars you're not keeping, and you're now looking for that perfect companion home that wants nothing more than a family pet to love.

You receive a text, and—deep joy!—it's someone looking for a pet. You arrange the phone call and

subsequent Zoom visit with the pups. They're delighted with the pups you have available and crazy about the idea of bringing one home. And you're enjoying watching them enjoy the puppies and their antics.

That's all wonderful, but there's work to do now. So, you take in a deep breath, let it out, and ask The Question.

"Are you familiar with the breed?"

There's a pause, perhaps an "umm ...," followed by:

"We haven't really read up on them or anything. We just love the way they look; they're simply beautiful."

Palm-to-face time. Another deep breath, and then you begin the tightrope walk.

How do you properly educate and prepare a potential puppy buyer who has no prior knowledge of or experience with the breed—without scaring them away from the breed? Without forcing them to resort to a less-than-reputable breeder who'll take their money without asking any of those pesky questions, and booming

those dire warnings over the phone like Moses issuing the Ten Commandments?

I bred my first litter almost 20 years ago now, and there are times I get it wrong. In fact, I was talking to a couple about placing an adult male with them a few years ago. They already had an adult male, and I wanted to make doubly sure they understood that, though I thought this male would be fine with their dog, I couldn't guarantee it, and that they would need to be careful—that is, not just place the two dogs out in the yard and see what happened.

They hung up and called the breeder who referred them to me and told her I'd basically talked them out of the dog.

I wanted to be honest with them—it truly was a question mark and a legitimate concern. But ...

Sometimes you fall off the tightrope.

Placing a puppy (or adult, for that matter) in a home that's unprepared for a breed's specific characteristics is a huge risk; it can

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Siberian Husky

mean disaster for both pup and its potential family. On the other hand, you don't want to fall into the role of grand inquisitor and harbinger of doom.

Not to mention the fact that any future home may one day discover that "showing thing you do" might be fun. And we certainly want to avoid driving potential new exhibitors away from the fancy.

How do we walk that tight-rope? What does the balance pole look like?

First, in my opinion, it involves support; the future owner should know right off the bat that you'll be there to answer any and all questions

and help solve all problems. Let them know they won't be alone, and that they'll have the cushion of your experience and knowledge to fall back on. And goes without saying: They need to know that you'll take the puppy back if insurmountable problems crop up.

Another important principle: empowerment in addition to warning. Yes, tell them that Siberians shed and blow coat twice a year; also tell them how weekly bathing and using a forced-air dryer and a brush will help maintain a shedding coat, bring the coat back in more quickly, and keep the mess to a minimum.

Yes, tell them Siberians can and do escape. Also suggest patio blocks or concrete along the bottom of the fence to prevent digging, electrical wire or "coyote rollers" along the top of the fence to prevent climbing, and the importance of microchipping. Even tell them about GPS trackers.

Don't just tell them that Siberians need a lot of exercise and "busy work"; tell them about all the things you can do with a Siberian, and help them find classes for rally, obedience, Barn Hunt, or scent work in their area.

In short, don't just list "drawbacks," or reasons only a chosen few homes are adequate to own Siberians (or any other breed). Tell them how they can become one of those successful owners.

Point them to resources. Tell them about literature and information available to them. Point them to the Siberian Husky Club of America website. Help them find trainers and classes in their area.

Forego the horror stories.

COURTESY KATHLEEN RILEY

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Yes, if you're a longtime breeder, you have experienced or have heard of incidents of dogs escaping and getting hurt or lost forever, or of those two males who didn't get along and ended up fighting, and the resulting emergency vet visit. If you've been in dogs long enough, you've either experienced or heard about things that would cause the less hardened to swoon.

The potential puppy owner needs to know the possibilities, but you don't have to be the Stephen King of the Siberian world.

And, as a potential owner, you also have a role in this balancing act. First and foremost, before you even talk to a breeder, do some research.

As with any other topic, there's an overabundance of information out there. Go into that initial call armed with some knowledge, particularly the knowledge that you do indeed want this particular breed, with all that can entail.

And, especially if you're talking to an AKC breeder-

exhibitor who's dealt with the breed for years or even decades, listen to them. If they tell you it's a good idea to read such-and-such publication or website, read it. If they tell you that getting into rally or scent work is a good idea, it's because they know that firsthand. Listen to them, and find a class once the puppy's old enough.

And be honest. If they ask you about your fencing situation or your home, answer honestly. Be truthful with them about your current dog, if you have one. If they ask about your lifestyle, activity level, and hobbies, be truthful. It's not an inquiry; it's to ensure you get the right puppy for you and live a long, harmonious life with that dog.

—Karla Wall,

[Siberian Husky Club of America](#)

Standard Schnauzers

2026 NATIONAL SPECIALTY

The Standard Schnauzer Club of America held its 2026 National

Specialty Week (May 5–11) in conjunction with the High Desert Cluster in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Ron and I always enter the High Desert Cluster shows with whomever we're showing because Albuquerque is our closest show. Dog shows here in the Rocky Mountain West are often hundreds of miles apart, and rarely with majors in Standard Schnauzers! Usually we have to drive at least halfway across America to get to our national specialty. But not this year—the 2026 national specialty showgrounds are a mere two-hour drive from our house. Amazing!

Even more amazing is that there is no regional Standard Schnauzer club in New Mexico to host national specialty festivities. Instead, the specialty show and associated events were brilliantly handled by Chairwoman Mary Ellen Ferguson and her able committee at locales selected to show off New Mexico and its culture of *tres gente* (“three peoples”—Anglo,

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Hispanic, and Indian).

Held at beautiful Expo New Mexico, AKA the New Mexico State Fairgrounds, with grass and plenty of shade from majestic old cottonless cottonwoods, the High Desert Cluster encompassed four days of all-breed shows—two each for Rio Grande Kennel Club and Coronado Kennel Club of New Mexico. Large, reserved grooming spaces were in the Manuel Lujan Jr. Exhibition Complex, and spacious rings were in the Creative Arts Center across the street. In both buildings, air conditioning was almost overkill for Albuquerque's mild May temperatures.

Even with four other clubs holding specialty events that week, there was plenty of parking for cars and RVs. In addition to the enormous main parking lot, several lots with handicap access are scattered through the grounds, some with water and electric hookups and some with access to nearby water.

The Lujan Complex had ample reserved grooming



Standard Schnauzer

space, rings for smaller breeds, trophy table, and so on, plus vendors for shopping and food vendors. The Creative Arts Center held three spacious

additional rings.

On Saturday, the specialty entry was smaller than the sizable Standard Schnauzer national specialty entries we see on each coast—partly

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attributable to the price of gasoline, and partly to school having not yet ended for the summer in many parts of the country.

Bergit Coady-Kabel judged the Sweepstakes, with 13 Sweepstakes entries and 5 Veteran Sweepstakes entries. Joan Luna Liebes judged (8-15-19-20) in the regular classes, 1 Veteran Dog, 2 Stud Dogs, and 1 Brood Bitch. *Pepper 'n Salt* will have photos and a complete rundown of the results.

The awards banquet, raffle and auction were held at the Nativo Lodge, whose rooms are painted colorfully by native artists. The hotel is about five miles from the fairgrounds, and about 13 miles from the Sunport, Albuquerque's international airport, two miles from the Gruet Winery, and a 10-minute drive from the Anderson Abruzzo International Balloon Fiesta Museum. Garduños restaurant is on site, with other restaurants within easy driving distance.

We missed the Saturday evening festivities because

I spent the evening in the emergency room of Presbyterian Hospital with three cracked ribs sustained from overturning my scooter on the hairpin turn from the sidewalk to the handicap ramp at the Creative Arts Center.

I am especially sorry to have missed the auction, and I suspect SSCA is sorry I missed it, too. Through my years "in dogs," I've found the best dog-related gewgaws at dog shows, and the best Standard Schnauzer bric-a-brac at SSCA specialty auctions. SSCA's treasury is a bit lighter because I missed this year's auction—I usually spend several hundred dollars at the SSCA auctions buying one-of-a-kind knickknacks.

A highlight of the week was the Educational Seminar on Wednesday—a hand-strip-ping demonstration by Bergit Coady-Kabel, renowned professional handler and judge of terrier breeds.

Bergit had wowed onlookers with a similar demonstration at a previous SSCA national. At this year's national, she

had the audience hanging onto her every word as she demonstrated stripping and grooming techniques on SSCA members' own dogs, graciously answering questions and dispensing grooming tips and secrets for getting the most from a show dog with grooming.

Bergit was scheduled for hourlong private grooming lessons on Thursday, but the scheduled sessions were canceled by the AKC representative at the show because Bergit was judging sweepstakes on Friday. None of the people who signed up for the private sessions were showing a dog in the sweepstakes, and there was some grumbling about oversight overkill. No one would sign up for a private grooming session with Bergit and then show the spiffed-up dog to her the next day—that of course wouldn't be ethical or sportsmanlike.

—Suzanne T. Smith, Los Alamos, N.M.; Wüstefuchs Standard Schnauzers
WustefuchsSS@aol.com
[Standard Schnauzer Club of America](#)

MISSION STATEMENT The American Kennel Club is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function.

Founded in 1884, the AKC and its affiliated organizations advocate for the purebred dog as a family companion, advance canine health and well-being, work to protect the rights of all dog owners and promote responsible dog ownership.

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ATTENTION DELEGATES NOTICE OF MEETING

The next meeting of the Delegates will be held at the Doubletree Newark Airport Hotel on **Tuesday, September 15, 2026**. For the sole purpose of conducting the vote for the Delegate Standing Committees, the meeting will be called to order at 9:30 a.m. After those present at that time have voted, the Delegate Meeting will recess to begin the Forum (approximately 1 hour in duration). The Delegate Meeting will reconvene following the conclusion of the Forum at which time anyone who had not yet voted will have the opportunity to do so, then the polls will be closed.

DELEGATE CREDENTIALS

Rylee Carlon, Richland, WA,
Richland Kennel Club

Dr. Lisa A. Connor, Saint Helena
Island, SC, Great Pyrenees Club
of America

Anna K. Gracie, Ocean, NJ,
Petit Basset Griffon Vendeen Club
of America

Spencer Guynup, Puyallup, WA,
Puyallup Valley Dog Fanciers

Laurie Isaacson, Castro Valley, CA,
Santa Clara Dog Training Club



gazette

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July 2026 issue!

Debra Lindsay, Shelton, CT,
Trap Falls Kennel Club

Ashley Maas, Ankeny, IA,
Central Iowa Kennel Club

Walter Sommerfelt, Lenoir City, TN,
Tennessee Valley Kennel Club

Sebastian Steele, Des Moines, IA,
Des Moines Kennel Club

Susan Swords, Scott Depot, WV,
Magic Valley Kennel Club

Lauren Westover, Cameron, NC,
Fayetteville Kennel Club

Tina Winston, Philpot, KY,
Miniature American Shepherd Club
of the USA

Katherine A. Wright, New York, NY,
Montgomery County Kennel Club

REPRIMANDS AND FINES

NOTICE

As a result of an Event Committee determination the following individuals 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:

Ms. Kathy Doehler (Pueblo, CO)

Ms. Jeanene Hayes (Sidney, OH)

Ms. Michelle Jacobson (Strathmore, CA)

Ms. Gina Massolo (Cottonwood, CA)

Ms. Deena Mathog (Rochester, MI)

NOTICE

Mr. George Chandler (Clovis, CA). Action was taken by the NorCal Golden Retriever Club for conduct at its March 15, 2026 event. Mr. Chandler was charged with violation of AKC Rules & Regulations or Club Regulations and improper treatment in connection with an event. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the combined penalty as a three-month suspension of all AKC privileges and imposed a \$300 fine, effective April 27, 2026. (Labrador Retrievers)

NOTICE

Ms. Julie Covert (Mary Esther, FL). Action was taken by the Meri-Miss Kennel Club for conduct at its March 26, 2026 event. Ms. Covert was charged with failure to properly control a dog at an event. 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 March 27, 2026. (American Staffordshire Terriers)

NOTICE

Ms. Tiffany Dennis (Citrus Heights, CA). Action was taken by the Golden Gate Pembroke Welsh Corgi Fanciers

for conduct at its March 8, 2026 event. Ms. Dennis was charged with inappropriate, abusive, or foul language. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the penalty as a reprimand and imposed a \$100 fine, effective March 8, 2026. (Belgian Malinois)

NOTICE

Ms. Carol Fellbaum (Houston, TX). Action was taken by the Bayou Kennel Association for conduct at its April 17, 2026 event. Ms. Fellbaum was charged with unsportsmanlike conduct during an event. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the penalty as a one-month event suspension and imposed a \$100 fine, effective April 18, 2026. (Bichon Frises)

NOTICE

Mr. William Salazar (Boulder City, NV). Action was taken by the Apple Valley Kennel Club for conduct at its April 25, 2026 event. Mr. Salazar was charged with harassment, written or verbal and disruptive behavior at an event. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the penalty as a one year suspension of all AKC privileges and imposed a \$1,000 fine, effective May 4, 2026. (Border Terrier)

NOTICE

Mr. Mike Thomas (Reno, NV). Action

was taken by the Oakland Kennel Club for conduct at its March 22, 2026 event. Mr. Thomas was charged with inappropriate, abusive, or foul language. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the penalty as a one-month event suspension and imposed a \$500 fine, effective May 4, 2026. (Flat-Coated Retriever)

NOTICE

Mr. Richard Wiest (Rodman, NY). Action was taken by the Baltimore County Kennel Club for conduct at its April 17, 2026 event. Mr. Wiest was charged with failure to properly control a dog at an event. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the penalty as a reprimand and imposed a \$200 fine. (Pointer)

NOTICE

On March 23, 2026, the Trial Board (Robert Newman, Esq., Chair, Betty-Anne Stenmark, Michele Wrath) of The American Kennel Club heard charges against Mr. Phillip Lanier, (Stafford, VA) for violating AKC's Personal Conduct Policy. The Trial Board sustained the charges and suspended Mr. Lanier from all AKC privileges for six months, and imposed a \$500 fine, effective May 9, 2026. (Basset Hounds)

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 May 26, 2026:

Ms. Peggy Arnold (Trenton, GA)
Chow Chows

Ms. Georgia Derleth (Pleasant Hill, MO)
German Shepherd Dogs

Ms. Kimberly Foster (Viola, IL)
Labrador Retrievers

Mr. Alfonso Lomeli (Chicago, IL)
French Bulldogs

Ms. Nancy Perkins (Roy, WA)
Miniature Schnauzers

Mr. Travis Scott (Trenton, GA)
Golden Retrievers

Ms. Jean Simmons (Leesburg, FL)
Shi Tzus

NOTICE

The AKC's Management Disciplinary Committee has suspended Ms. Marie Dorris (Woodward, OK) from registration privileges for three months and imposed a \$500 fine, effective May 26, 2026, for submitting an online application without written permission from the co-owner or co-litter owner. (Multiple Breeds)

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CHARTER AND BYLAWS OF THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB, INC. – ARTICLE XIV, SECTION 1

The AKC Board does not endorse the following amendment to **Article XIV, Section 1** of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club, Inc.*, proposed by the Delegate Bylaws Committee. Pursuant to **Article XX, Section 3** of the **AKC Bylaws**, the Bylaws Committee demanded that it be brought forward to the Delegates. This will be voted on at the September 15, 2026 Delegate Meeting.

ARTICLE XIV SECTION 1

The Event Committee of a club or association shall have the right and responsibility to suspend any person from AKC privileges for conduct prejudicial to the best interest of purebred dogs, purebred dog events, or the AKC, alleged to have occurred in connection with or during the progress of its event, after the alleged offender has been given the opportunity to be heard.

When the penalty for the offense as set forth in the guidelines authorized by the Board of Directors provides for a reprimand in certain instances, the Event Committee shall have the authority to stay the suspension pending a final determination by the AKC.

The complaint shall be verified by the complainant stating that the complainant has read the complaint, has knowledge of the facts stated in the complaint, and affirms and verifies under penalty of perjury that the complaint is true and correct. The Complainant shall furnish a deposit, the amount to be established by the AKC Board of Directors. The deposit shall become the property of the Club.

If the Event Committee finds merit in the complaint and exercises jurisdiction in the matter, the deposit shall be returned to the Complainant. If the Event Committee finds no merit in the complaint, the deposit shall be kept by the Event giving Club.

Notice in writing must be sent promptly by certified and by first class mail by the Event Committee to the person suspended and a duplicate notice giving the name and address of the person suspended and full details as to the reasons for the suspension and if applicable, the reasons for the stay of suspension must be forwarded to the AKC (ATTENTION: Executive Secretary) within five days.

An appeal may be taken from a decision of an Event Committee and any subsequent disciplinary action applied by the AKC. Notice in writing claiming such appeal together with a deposit, at an amount established by the AKC Board of Directors, must be sent to the AKC (ATTENTION: Executive Secretary) within thirty

days after the date of the suspension. The appeal shall be determined by a Trial Board whose decision is final. The deposit shall become the property of the AKC if the decision is upheld in whole or in part or shall be returned to the appellant if the decision is not upheld in whole or in part.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE RULES APPLYING TO DOG SHOWS – CHAPTER 11, SECTION 8

The AKC Board has endorsed the following amendment to **Chapter 11, Section 8** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*, proposed by the Dog Show Rules Committee. This will be voted on at the September 15, 2026 Delegate Meeting.

CHAPTER 11 DOG SHOW ENTRIES, CONDITIONS OF DOGS AFFECTING ELIGIBILITY SECTION 8

A dog which is blind (without useful vision), deaf, castrated, spayed, ~~or which has been changed in appearance by artificial means except as specified in the standard for its breed~~, or a male which does not have two normal testicles normally located in the scrotum, may not compete at any conformation show and will be disqualified except that:

- a castrated male may be entered as Stud Dog in the Stud Dog Class.
- a spayed bitch may be entered as Brood Bitch in the Brood Bitch Class.

- ~~A dog will not be considered to have been changed by artificial means because of removal of dewclaws or docking of tail if it is of a breed in which such removal or docking is a regularly approved practice which is not contrary to the standard~~
- ~~neutered dogs and spayed bitches would be allowed to compete in Veterans and all other single entry non-regular classes only at independent specialties and/or those all-breed shows which do not offer any competitive classes beyond Best of Breed.~~

When a conformation judge finds any of these conditions in any dog he/she is judging, he/she shall disqualify the dog marking his book "Disqualified" and stating state the reason. The judge He shall not obtain the opinion of the show veterinarian.

When a dog has been disqualified at a conformation show as being blind, deaf, castrated, or spayed ~~or changed in appearance by artificial means except as specified in the standard for its breed,~~ any awards taken by such dog at that show shall be canceled by The American Kennel Club and the dog may not again compete in conformation unless and until, following application by the owner to The American Kennel Club, that owner has received official notification from The American Kennel Club that the dog's

show eligibility has been reinstated.

When a dog has been disqualified under the standard for its breed, or when a male has been disqualified as not having two normal testicles normally located in the scrotum on three separate occasions, by three different judges, such dog may not again be shown in conformation. When a dog has been so disqualified at a conformation show, any awards taken by the dog at that show shall be canceled by The American Kennel Club.

When the judge of a sweepstakes or futurity finds that a dog is ineligible to compete under this section, the dog should be excused, but not disqualified. A dog may only be disqualified in a sweepstakes or futurity under the provisions of Chapter 11, Section 8-A.

~~A dog is considered changed in appearance by artificial means if it has been subjected to any type of procedure, substance or drugs that have the effect of obscuring, disguising or eliminating any congenital or hereditary abnormality or any undesirable characteristic, or that does anything to improve a dog's natural appearance, temperament, bite or gait.~~

~~A dog will not be considered to have been changed by artificial means because of removal of dewclaws or docking of tail or cropping of ears if it is of a breed in which such removal or docking/cropping is a~~

regularly approved practice which is not contrary to the standard.

Even procedures, substances and drugs which are absolutely necessary to the health and comfort of a dog shall disqualify that dog from competition if the former had the incidental effect of changing or even improving the dog's appearance, temperament, bite, or gait.

There may be cases in which a veterinarian has prescribed some drug as being necessary for the health of a dog. In such cases, the veterinarian's advice should be followed, but the dog should be withheld from competition in dog shows until all possible effects of the drug have worn off.

Procedures that would in and of themselves be considered a change in appearance by artificial means and make a dog ineligible for shows include, but are not limited to:

1. *The correction of entropion, ectropion, trichiasis or distichiasis.*
2. *Trimming, removing, or tattooing of the third eyelid (nictitating membrane)*
3. *The insertion of an eye prosthesis*
4. *Correction of harelip, cleft palate, stenotic nares, or an elongated soft palate resection*
5. *Any procedure to change ear set or carriage other than permitted by the breed standard*
6. *Restorative dental procedures, the use of bands or braces on teeth, or any*

alteration of the dental arcade

7. *The removal of excess skin folds or the removal of skin patches to alter markings*
8. *Correction of inguinal, scrotal, or perineal hernias*
9. *Surgery for hip dysplasia, O.C.D., patellar luxation and femoral head restriction*
10. *Alteration of the location of the testes or the insertion of an artificial testicle*
11. *Altering the set or carriage of the tail*
12. *The insertion of a pacemaker due to congenital or hereditary abnormality*

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE RULES APPLYING TO DOG SHOWS – CHAPTER 11, SECTION 8-D

The AKC Board has endorsed the following amendment to **Chapter 11, Section 8** of the *Rules Applying to Dogs Shows*, proposed by the Dog Show Rules Committee. This will be voted on at the September 15, 2026 Delegate Meeting.

CHAPTER 11 DOG SHOW ENTRIES, CONDITIONS OF DOGS AFFECTING ELIGIBILITY SECTION 8-D

A dog which has been changed in appearance by artificial means except as specified in the standard for its breed, may not compete at any conformation show and will be disqualified.

When a judge determines a dog has been changed in appearance, he/she shall mark

his/her book "Disqualified" and stating the reason. The judge shall not obtain the opinion of the show veterinarian.

When the judge of a sweepstakes or futurity finds that a dog is ineligible to compete under this section, the dog should be excused, but not disqualified. A dog may only be disqualified in a sweepstakes or futurity under the provisions of Chapter 11, Section 8-A.

A dog is considered changed in appearance by artificial means if it has been subjected to any type of procedure, substance or drugs that have the effect of obscuring, disguising or eliminating any congenital or hereditary abnormality or any undesirable characteristic, or that does anything to improve a dog's natural appearance, temperament, bite or gait.

A dog will not be considered to have been changed by artificial means because of removal of dewclaws, docking of tail, or cropping of ears if it is of a breed in which such removal or docking/cropping is a regularly approved practice which is not contrary to the standard.

Any dog whose ears and/or tail have been cropped, docked, or cut in any way shall be ineligible to compete at any show in any state where the laws prohibit the same except subject to the provisions of such laws.

Even procedures, substances and drugs which are absolutely necessary to the health and comfort of a dog shall disqualify that dog from conformation competition if the former had the incidental effect of changing or even improving the dog's appearance, temperament, bite, or gait.

There may be cases in which a veterinarian has prescribed some drug as being necessary for the health of a dog. In such cases, the veterinarian's advice should be followed, but the dog should be withheld from competition in dog shows until all possible effects of the drug have worn off.

Procedures that would in and of themselves be considered a change in appearance by artificial means and make a dog ineligible for shows include, but are not limited to:

- 1. The correction of entropion, ectropion, trichiasis or distichiasis.*
- 2. Trimming, removing, or tattooing of the third eyelid (nictitating membrane)*
- 3. The insertion of an eye prosthesis*
- 4. Correction of harelip, cleft palate, stenotic nares, or an elongated soft palate resection*
- 5. Any procedure to change ear set or carriage other than permitted by the breed standard*
- 6. Restorative dental procedures, the use of bands or braces on teeth, or any alteration of the dental arcade*
- 7. The removal of excess skin folds or the*

removal of skin patches to alter markings

8. Correction of inguinal, scrotal, or perineal hernias
9. Surgery for hip dysplasia, O.C.D., patellar luxation and femoral head restriction
10. Alteration of the location of the testes or the insertion of an artificial testicle
11. Altering the set or carriage of the tail.
12. The insertion of a pacemaker due to congenital or hereditary abnormality.

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

Tracy Doty (115565) NC

(703) 296-0070

tracylynndoty@gmail.com

Tibetan Terriers

Kathy Nusz (118883) OK

(405) 350-0109

showdogkn@gmail.com

Chinese Cresteds

Elizabeth Summa (118059) NM

(509) 627-9550

info@polarstarsamoyeds.com

Samoyeds

Alexis Weber (Alex) (118897) IL

(309) 945-7072

aussbern88@gmail.com

Australian Shepherds, JS

Ms. Emily White (118935) CA

whiteemily250@gmail.com

Italian Greyhounds

ADDITIONAL BREED JUDGING APPLICANTS

Mrs. Leonore Abordo (93981) NM

(505) 301-7138

oxota@yahoo.com

Rhodesian Ridgebacks

Dr. Johan Becerra-Hernandez (111406) FL

(689) 808-0858

johanbeclove@hotmail.com

Balance of Non-Sporting Group

(American Eskimo Dogs, Bichons Frises,

Chinese Shar-Pei, Cotons de Tulear, Finnish Spitz, Keeshonden, Lowchen, Norwegian Lundehunds, Schipperkes, Shiba Inu, Tibetan Terriers, Xoloitzcuintlin)

Mrs. Donna Bennett (99281) OK

(918) 671-7133

donna@libertyakitas.com

Basenjis, Rhodesian Ridgebacks, Salukis, Kuvaszok

Mr. Mike Bennett (112839) OK

(918) 760-6456

darlinmikey@libertyakitas.com

Dachshunds, Boxers, Kuvaszok

Mrs. Debarah Billings (116031) TN

(423) 483-9242

debarah@gmail.com

Maltese, Pekingese, Russian Toys, Russian Tsvetnaya Bolonki, Silky Terriers, Yorkshire Terriers

Mrs. Tami Rose Bradford (110125) TN

(865) 680-8264

sibemom2002@gmail.com

Danish-Swedish Farmdogs, Doberman Pinschers, Dalmatians

Dr. Jennie Chen (114233) MN

(512) 659-9190

jennie@romanreign.com

Norwegian Elkhounds, Portuguese Water Dogs, Rottweilers, Saint Bernards

Mr. John Constantine (26418) FL

(215) 527-0056

john@adamis.org

Nederlandse Kooikerhondjes, Pointers,
German Shorthaired Pointers, English
Setters, Irish Red and White Setters

Mr. David Fitzpatrick (27307) PA

(717) 586-0961

dcfitz7@aol.com

Airedale Terriers, American Hairless
Terriers, Australian Terriers, Smooth Fox
Terriers, Kerry Blue Terriers, Lakeland
Terriers, Miniature Bull Terriers, Rat
Terriers

Ms. Jane M. Gentzen (90165) AZ

(928) 910-3866

janegentzen@msn.com

Borzois, Greyhounds, Portuguese
Podengo Pequenos

Mrs. Sally George (82793) CA

sg.gypsy@gmail.com

Belgian Laekenois, Belgian Tervuren,
Berger Picards, Border Collies, Cardigan
Welsh Corgis, Collies, German Shepherd
Dogs, Miniature American Shepherds,
Pulik, Shetland Sheepdogs

**Mrs. Honey Anne Glendinning (6773)
CN**

(604) 943-4313

honeyanneg@icloud.com

Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, Chi-
huahuas, Chinese Cresteds, Havanese,
Italian Greyhounds, Papillons, Pugs,
Silky Terriers, Yorkshire Terriers

Mr. Neal Goodwin (45218) CT

(626) 327-2311

doggone1@mindspring.com

Berger Picards, Cardigan Welsh Corgis,
Finnish Lapphunds, Pumik

Mrs. Nancy Griego (90264) NM

(505) 681-8020

nrgakc@spinn.net

Chow Chows, Cotons de Tulear,
Keeshonden, Norwegian Lundehunds,
Shiba Inu, Tibetan Spaniels

**Mr. Charles P. (Skip) Herendeen (7453)
NV**

(702) 445-0050

herendeen2@aol.com

Balance of Hound Group (Azawakhs,
Grand Basset Griffon Vendeens)

Mr. Bill Lee (18750) CO

(720) 385-5753

plee685891@aol.com

Doberman Pinschers, Samoyeds, Austra-
lian Shepherds

Ms. Patrice Loves (102871) PA

(717) 343-8619

lovesgold@comcast.net

English Cocker Spaniels, Welsh Springer
Spaniels

Mrs. Janice McClary (4812) CA

(562) 665-2017

rjmccclary@gmail.com

Akitas, Alaskan Malamutes, Great Pyre-
nees, Newfoundlands, Saint Bernards

Ms. Sylvie McGee (95341) WA

(360) 704-8473

sylvie@sylviemcgee.net

Leonbergers, Mastiffs, Rottweilers

Mrs. Cindy Meyer (15141) IL

(815) 985-4707

bckennel@aol.com

Barbets, Nederlandse Kooikerhondjes, Chesapeake Bay Retrievers, Curly-Coated Retrievers, Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers, Gordon Setters, Irish Setters, Irish Red and White Setters

Sarah Murphy (107979) FL

abbaioibizans@gmail.com

Afghan Hounds, Azawakhs, Black and Tan Coonhounds, Bluetick Coonhounds, Greyhounds, Pharaoh Hounds, Plott Hounds, Redbone Coonhounds, Rhodesian Ridgebacks, Treeing Walker Coonhounds, Whippets, Sealyham Terriers, JS-Limited

Dr. Tracy Powell (101481) CT

(203) 631-7110

dulcedanes@yahoo.com

Balance of Hound Group (Basenjis, Basset Fauve de Bretagnes, Bloodhounds, Borzois, Grand Basset Griffon Vendeens, Greyhounds, Irish Wolfhounds, Pharaoh Hounds, Salukis, Scottish Deerhounds)

Ms. Karen R. Scheiner (103945) NJ

(609) 417-0200

Borzois, Pharaoh Hounds, Pekingese, Tibetan Terriers

Ms. Joyce Siddall (98695) CO

(303) 548-1125

catalinakennels@yahoo.com

Balance of Herding Group (Bergamasco Sheepdogs, Pyrenean Shepherds)

Rhonda Silveira (100061) OR

(503) 428-2021

rsilveira.akcjudge@outlook.com

Bullmastiffs, Dogo Argentinos, Giant Schnauzers, Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs, Leonbergers, Mastiffs, Newfoundlands, Tibetan Mastiffs

Ms. Amy Sorbie (36968) CO

(720) 245-5781

amy@kyrov.net

Balance of Herding Group (Bergamasco Sheepdogs, Berger Picards, Entlebucher Mountain Dogs, German Shepherd Dogs, Polish Lowland Sheepdogs, Pyrenean Shepherds)

Angela Stevanus (112189) CA

(951) 640-6819

angeldotz@yahoo.com

Bulldogs, Poodles

Ms. Jeanne E. Stiner (103999) PA

(814) 602-5917

busystar@aol.com

Samoyeds

Mrs. Sherri L. Swabb (111865) OH

(937) 620-0281

sllswabb@gmail.com

Samoyeds, Berger Picards, Briards, Shetland Sheepdogs

Ms. Nancy Talbott (5898) PA

(661) 547-9985

belgoldnt@gmail.com

Petits Bassets Griffons Vendeens,
Portuguese Podengo Pequenos, Poodles,
Australian Shepherds, Belgian Tervuren,
Icelandic Sheepdogs, Lancashire Heel-
ers, Mudik, Norwegian Buhunds, Pumik

Bella Thompson Corwin (107246) OH

(937) 844-3557
Home@belmark.us
Collies

Dr. Oleg Voloshin (101869) MD

(301) 379-8847
voloshino@yahoo.com
Labrador Retrievers, Manchester Terri-
ers

Ms. Lisa Waldo (110998) AL

(978) 870-8932
kensingtonkennels@msn.com
Pembroke Welsh Corgis, Shetland
Sheepdogs

Erika Wyatt (107433) IL

(708) 612-3647
erika@sloughi.us
Bracchi Italiani, Belgian Laekenois,
Belgian Malinois, Belgian Tervuren,
Berger Picards, Lancashire Heelers,
Pyrenean Shepherds

**JUNIOR SHOWMANSHIP JUDGING
APPLICANTS**

Mrs. Elizabeth Crisp Blake (109212) CA

(530) 400-9322
ranthombts1970@gmail.com

Ms. Renee-Lynn Kovash (118995) PA

(421) 251-6613
rkovash420@yahoo.com

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.

NEW BREED PERMIT JUDGES

Mrs. Jeanne Bertsch (117473) WA

(206) 295-8664
dbertsch51@comcast.net
Boston Terriers

Ms. Heather Donnelly (117537) MA

(508) 923-1109
karen.arbuthnot@gmail.com
Golden Retrievers, JS

**Ms. Christiana (Chris) Gaburri
(112608) PA**

(412) 559-9536
k9brusher@gmail.com
Old English Sheepdogs

Mr. Charles "Cody" Mason (118313) IA

(319) 512-9766
aliasbugmaniowa@yahoo.com
Bulldogs

Ms. K. Suzanne Stephens (118473) CA

(720) 987-8444
kimzachi@gmail.com

Chihuahuas, Bulldogs, JS-Limited

Ms. Diana Terry (118495) OR

(253) 203-8874

dterry5858@gmail.com

Boston Terriers

Dr. Travis Wright (118645) WI

(202) 210-5124

traviswright@yahoo.com

Dachshunds, JS-Limited

ADDITIONAL BREED PERMIT JUDGES

Mr. Larry C. Abbott (20217) TX

(972) 740-4881

larry@abbottusa.com

Afghan Hounds, American English
Coonhounds, Basset Fauve de Bretagnes,
Basset Hounds, Black and Tan Coon-
hounds, Bloodhounds, Bluetick Coon-
hounds, English Foxhounds, Harriers,
Plott Hounds, Redbone Coonhounds,
Treeing Walker Coonhounds

Ms. Kimberly Cardona (110939) FL

(407) 460-0089

vomdrakkenfels@gmail.com

Alaskan Malamutes, Bernese Mountain
Dogs, Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs,
Saint Bernards, Samoyeds

Mr. Cesar Cortes (110553) NY

(917) 635-7128

cecordog@hotmail.com

Biewer Terriers, Chinese Cresteds,
Japanese Chins, Manchester Terriers,
Poodles, Pugs, Yorkshire Terriers

Mrs. Sara Dellorto (117193) FL

(863) 816-2080

sardione@aol.com

Dogo Argentinos, Great Pyrenees, Rott-
weilers, Lhasa Apsos, Lowchen, Tibetan
Terriers

Ms. Elaine Demopoulos (108485) FL

(321) 948-2285

elainedemop@comcast.net

Nederlandse Kooikerhondjes, American
Foxhounds, Petits Bassets Griffons
Vendeens, Whippets

Mrs. Terry Dennison (47424) AK

(907) 775-2913

katagnik@yahoo.com

Boxers, Great Pyrenees, Newfoundlands

Mr. John Dewing (114115) WA

(206) 371-9742

john_dewing@hotmail.com

Chinooks, Great Pyrenees, Newfound-
lands, Portuguese Water Dogs, Saint
Bernards, Siberian Huskies

Mr. Edward A. Fojtik (104757) IL

(847) 254-6166

efojtik@aol.com

Bedlington Terriers, Norfolk Terriers,
Norwich Terriers, Parson Russell Terri-
ers, Welsh Terriers

**Mrs. Katherine Halton Berns (115217)
TN**

(217) 417-4212

khaltonberns@gmail.com

Kerry Blue Terriers, Chow Chows, Car-

digan Welsh Corgis, Lancashire Heelers,
Mudik, Pulik, Pumik

Mr. Ryan Lee Horvath (50283) CA

(415) 305-5478

homardachs@gmail.com

Balance of Hound Group (American
English Coonhounds, American
Foxhounds, Basset Fauve de Bretagnes,
Bluetick Coonhounds, Borzois, English
Foxhounds, Peruvian Inca Orchids,
Plott Hounds, Redbone Coonhounds,
Scottish Deerhounds, Treeing Walker
Coonhounds)

Mr. Dominic Koon (115351) GA

(865) 582-1023

dominic.koon@gmail.com

Bichons Frises, Chow Chows, Lhasa
Apsos, Poodles

Mrs. Jodi Koon (115353) GA

(865) 582-1023

jodi.l.koon@gmail.com

Bichons Frises, Chow Chows, Lhasa
Apsos, Poodles

**Mrs. Martha C. Lageschulte (106091)
CO**

(303) 929-9064

starqst.mcl@gmail.com

Akitas, Portuguese Water Dogs

Jessica Lewellen (106151) WA

(360) 390-8141

jessicalewellen@me.com

Boxers, Doberman Pinschers

Ms. Tracey Luty (105151) CO

(720) 233-8632

taluty@gmail.com

Greyhounds, Rhodesian Ridgebacks,
Whippets

Robin MacFarlane (95827) FL

(856) 630-5590

armor16@aol.com

Barbets, Pointers, Nova Scotia Duck
Tolling Retrievers, Field Spaniels, Welsh
Springer Spaniels, Schipperkes

Mr. Joao Machado (110191) TX

(832) 345-2100

joao.machadotx@gmail.com

Doberman Pinschers, Boston Terriers

Mr. Dale A. Meyer (6655) WI

(715) 316-1677

meyerd@tds.net

American English Coonhounds,
American Foxhounds, Basset Fauve
de Bretagnes, Redbone Coonhounds,
Salukis

Ms. Qingyu (Sanny) Pan (116125) CA

(626) 688-9902

fairylandborzoi@gmail.com

Afghan Hounds, Azawakhs, Dachshunds,
Greyhounds, Ibizan Hounds, Rhodesian
Ridgebacks, Salukis, Whippets

Mrs. Barbara Pessina (7372) NY

(845) 519-0425

moonshadowpuilk@aol.com

Bernese Mountain Dogs, Great Danes,
Komondorok, Leonbergers, Newfound-

lands, Saint Bernards, Samoyeds

Diane L. Price (18148) AL

(256) 601-1847

kingsfieldkennels@yahoo.com

Basset Fauve de Bretagnes, English
Foxhounds, Harriers, Petits Bassets
Griffons Vendeens, Schipperkes

Mr. John C. Ramirez (1814) CA

(310) 991-0241

jrami68620@aol.com

Borzois, Bearded Collies, Belgian Tervu-
ren, Briards

Dr. Valeria Rickard (92450) VA

(703) 919-8753

vrickard@jovalairedales.com

Akitas, Black Russian Terriers, Bull-
mastiffs, Danish-Swedish Farmdogs,
Dogues de Bordeaux, Komondorok,
Kuvaszok, Mastiffs, Neapolitan Mastiffs,
Portuguese Water Dogs, Saint Bernards,
Tibetan Mastiffs

Dr. Judi M. Roller (102261) WI

(608) 370-2679

judir7024@gmail.com

Beaucerons, Belgian Tervuren

Mrs. Vicki Roye Bemont (3251) GA

(901) 299-9458

bemontvicki@gmail.com

Australian Shepherds, Border Collies,
Pembroke Welsh Corgis, Swedish Vallhunds

Ms. Jan C. Sigler (7526) KS

(816) 507-5282

kaleasibes@mac.com

Balance of Hound Group (Basset Fauve
de Bretagnes, Ibizan Hounds, Peruvian
Inca Orchids, Portuguese Podengo
Pequenos, Sloughis)

Mrs. Denise Simenauer (90287) FL

(269) 352-4011

diorbriards@gmail.com

Poodles, Bearded Collies, Berger Picards,
Old English Sheepdogs, Pulik, Pumik

Mr. Steve Terry (76004) NM

(702) 475-0071

heritagepurebred@gmail.com

Poodles, Tibetan Terriers

Ms. Anna M. Vaughn (102565) OK

(918) 906-3776

anna@cme-usa.com

American Water Spaniels, Boykin
Spaniels, Field Spaniels, Welsh Springer
Spaniels

Mrs. Gwendolyn Wells (111049) NC

(336) 207-8391

wellsworth3417@gmail.com

Chihuahuas, Poodles, Pugs, Yorkshire
Terriers

Mrs. Lisa Young (43070) AZ

(605) 390-1135

youngsongbeagles@gmail.com

Pointers, German Shorthaired Pointers,
German Wirehaired Pointers, Cocker
Spaniels, English Cocker Spaniels, Sussex
Spaniels, Wirehaired Pointing Griffons

JUNIOR SHOWMANSHIP PERMIT JUDGES

Mrs. Emelise Baughman (118629) NE

(308) 380-1925
emeliseb@yahoo.com
JS

Mr. Michael R. Deer (112419) TX

(847) 910-9905
privacylawyer@hotmail.com
JS-Limited

Lalaine Policar (113283) CA

(760) 686-7232
lalainepolicar@yahoo.com
JS-Limited

BEST IN SHOW

The following person, has successfully **completed** the required Group Assignments in the first Variety Group for which they were **approved**, and has been added to the list of judges eligible for approval to judge Best In Show.

Mrs. Diane Collings (94897) CA

(415) 990-3317
dianecollings@verizon.com

Mary Lynne Elliott (100062) CO

(720) 289-2517
ml@vedauwoorr.com

CONFORMATION JUDGE: RESIGNED BREED OR JUNIOR SHOWMANSHIP

The judge below has informed AKC they wish to resign their judging privileges for the following:

Minna-Liisa Koltes
Junior Showmanship

RESIGNED CONFORMATION JUDGE

Debra A. Guerrero

EMERITUS CONFORMATION JUDGE

Ms. Leigh Ann Yandle

DECEASED CONFORMATION JUDGES

Frank Fasano
Kim Griffith

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.

Carolee Boyles (105173) FL

813-431-4304
carolee@caroleeboylesmediagroup.com
Regular Rally

Debra Keith (114919) NY

607-423-1010
crazyboutdogs1@gmail.com
Regular Rally

Pamela Thornburg (97843) IL

217-787-6429

tompam@mwii.net

Regular VST

Lisa Klein (111467) WA

360-798-7079

bignlildogs@gmail.com

Tracking Regular VST

Maria Murphy (110906)

925-788-9749

bignlildogs@gmail.com

Tracking Regular VST

Reegan Ray (102663) CA

619-855-7387

rreegan@aol.com

Tracking Regular VST

**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.***

David Warner (118563) NY

518-755-6819

davidwarner@fairpoint.net

Provisional Rally

Jennifer Evans (116517) NJ

732-616-8265

willryan@optonline.net

Provisional Obedience Open

Philip Mannino (118148) MI

517-819-1896

pmannino@gmail.com

Provisional Tracking TD/TDU

**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:

ARGYLL – Golden Retrievers –
Sue Anne H. Campbell

BOURBON COUNTRY – Labrador
Retrievers – Phillip L. Williams II &
Jackie Williams

CASTLE KC – Cardigan Welsh Corgis –
Katie E. Michenko

DAISY LYNN – Coton de Tulear –
Janet L. Suglo

KIPLING – Papillon – Nili Young

MILESTONE – Golden Retrievers –
Pate C. Thomerson

SNOWSPIRIT – Samoyeds –
Cynthia Bates

SPRYFEAT – Borzoi – Frank J. Erdman
& Wendy E. Erdman

TOPPER – Golden Retrievers –
Amy E. Yates

VOM HAEFNER – German Shepherd

Dogs – Christa Petrillo Haefner

VOM NORDWALD – German Shepherd

Dogs – Tracy D. Cooper

REGISTERED NAME PREFIXES GRANTED

The following applications for a
breed-specific Registered Name Prefix
have been granted

D'AWSOME – Biewer Terriers –

David H. Graber & Delores Ann Graber

FILUCY BAY – Bernese Mountain Dogs

– W. Clark Powell & Margaret Heidal

FLY HIGH -Boykin Spaniels –

Aaron Wilkinson

HAYSTAC'S – Old English Sheepdogs –

Madeline J. Erickson

HEARTLINE's – Giant Schnauzers –

Danny M. Adams

REOLEG – German Shorthaired Pointers

– Blake Daniel

SOLEIL – Norwich Terriers –

Janet Christoff

VIZ WHIZZ – Vizsla – Pamela J. Shearer



QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE DELEGATES

OF

THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

JUNE 9, 2026

Gina M. DiNardo, President

PRESENT 228

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 Bloodhound Club—*Mary Lou Olszewski*

American Brittany Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Terry Hilliard*

American Cesky Terrier Fanciers Association, Inc.—*Michael Zywicki*

American Chesapeake Club—*Heidi Henningson*

American Chinese Crested Club, Inc.—*Neil Butterklee*

American Foxhound Club, Inc.—*Harry Miller*

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 Spaniel Club, Inc.—*Dr. James R. Davis*

American Toy Fox Terrier Club—*Laura Johnson*

American Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Association—*Kate DeSanto*

Anderson Kennel Club—*Laura A. Rockwell*

Anderson Obedience Training Club, Inc.—*Ms. Patricia A. Sample*

Atlanta Kennel Club, Inc.—*Ann Wallin*

Atlanta Obedience Club, Inc.—*Gail A. LaBerge*

Augusta Kennel Club, Inc.—*Catherine Iacopelli*

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

Bearded Collie Club of America, Inc.—
Mr. Robert M. Lamm

Bedlington Terrier Club of America—
Howard Solomon

Bell Vernon Kennel Association, Inc.—
Mike Kriegel

Berger Picard Club of America—
Jacqueline Carswell

Biewer Terrier Club of America—*Debarah*
Billings

Boca Raton Dog Club Inc—*James Conroy*

Border Collie Society of America—*Lisa*
M. Pruka

Border Terrier Club of America, Inc.—
Mrs. Barbara S. Dalane

Boston Terrier Club of America, Inc.—
Mrs. Sandie Friend

Briard Club of America, Inc.—*Diane Reid*

Bronx County Kennel Club—*Alexa*
Samarotto

Brookhaven Kennel Club, Inc.—*Marie A.*
Fiore

Bull Terrier Club of America—*Jane*
Messineo Lindquist

Burlington County Kennel Club, Inc.—
Mr. Daniel J. Smyth, Esq.

Butler County Kennel Club, Inc.—
Barbara Ioia

Cairn Terrier Club of America—*Wayne*
Gilpin

Canaan Dog Club of America—*Pamela S.*
Rosman

Canada Del Oro Kennel Club—*Dr. Sophia*
Kaluzniacki

Cardigan Welsh Corgi Club of America,
Inc.—*David McDonald*

Carroll Kennel Club—*Mrs. Rachann E.*
Mayer

Catoctin Kennel Club—*Joseph Fitzgerald*

Chain O'Lakes Kennel Club—*Jason Hoke*

Chicago Bulldog Club, Inc.—*Cathy Eke*

Chinese Shar-Pei Club of America, Inc.—
Marge B. Calltharp

Chow Chow Club, Inc.—*Margaret*
DiCorleto

Clarksville Kennel Club—*Sylvia*
Arrowwood

Clermont County Kennel Club, Inc.—
Sharon Levan

Clumber Spaniel Club of America, Inc.—
Kelly E. Lease

Collie Club of America, Inc.—*Isabel Ososki*

Colorado Kennel Club—*Mrs. Louise Leone*

Columbia Terrier Association of
Maryland—*Leslie A. Jaseph*

Conyers Kennel Club of Georgia—*Dr.
Yves Belmont*

Curly-Coated Retriever Club of
America—*Leslie Puppo-Rogers*

Dalmatian Club of America, Inc.—*Dr.
Charles Garvin*

Dayton Kennel Club, Inc.—*Leah H.
Schiller*

Del-Otse-Nango Kennel Club—*Stephanie
A. Crawford*

Delaware County Kennel Club, Inc.—
Mark Brandsema

Detroit Kennel Club—*Lawrence A. Letsche,
D.V.M.*

Dog Fanciers Association of Oregon,
Inc.—*Patti L. Strand*

Dog Obedience Club of Hollywood,
Inc.—*Alyson Casper*

Durham Kennel Club Inc—*Linda C.
Wozniak*

Eastern Dog Club—*Frederick R. Vogel*

Eastern German Shorthaired Pointer
Club, Inc.—*Robert Rynkiewicz*

English Setter Association of America,
Inc.—*Dr. Brenda J. Parsons, D.V.M.*

English Springer Spaniel Field Trial
Association, Inc.—*Cristy K. Jory*

Farmington Valley Kennel Club, Inc.—
Terrie Breen

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 Worth Kennel Club—*Harold Tatro III*

French Bull Dog Club of America—*Robin
Stansell*

Garden State All Terrier Club, Inc.—*Mr.
Richard L. Reynolds*

Genesee Valley Kennel Club, Inc.—
Virginia Denninger

German Shepherd Dog Club of
America—*Dr. Carmen L. Battaglia*

Giant Schnauzer Club of America, Inc.—
Steven A. Sansone

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 Barrington Kennel Club, Inc.—*Dr.
Ellen C. Shanahan*

Great Dane Club of America, Inc.—*Ms. Dale Suzanne Tarbox*

Greater Clark County Kennel Club Inc.—*Ms. Karen J. Burgess*

Greater Lowell Kennel Club, Inc.—*Susan Patterson*

Greater Murfreesboro Kennel Club, Inc.—*Gloria Askins*

Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of America, Inc.—*Joanne Schottinger*

Greenwich Kennel Club—*Donna Gilbert*

Harrisburg Kennel Club, Inc.—*Sandra L. Rolenaitis*

Hatboro Dog Club, Inc.—*Sally L. Fineburg*

Heart of the Plains Kennel Club—*Patricia M. Cruz*

Hockamock Kennel Club, Inc.—*Nancy Fisk*

Holyoke Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jane Wilkinson*

Hungarian Pumi Club of America —*Nancy Nelson*

Huntingdon Valley Kennel Club, Inc.—*Susan Ratz*

Huntington Kennel Club, Inc.—*Ms. Marile A. Waterstraat*

Irish Red and White Setter Association of America—*Christopher M. Orcutt*

Irish Setter Club of America, Inc.—*Ms. Karolynne M. McAteer*

Irish Water Spaniel Club of America—*Dan Sayers*

Irish Wolfhound Club of America—*Eugenia Hunter*

Italian Greyhound Club of America, Inc.—*Jennifer Graves*

Jacksonville Dog Fanciers' Association—*Victoria A. Marks*

Japanese Chin Club of America—*Ms. Cecilia Resnick*

K-9 Obedience Training Club of Essex County, NJ, Inc.—*Dave Morgan*

Keeshond Club of America, Inc.—*Richard Su*

Kenilworth Kennel Club of Connecticut, Inc.—*Doreen Weintraub*

Kennel Club of Beverly Hills—*Mr. Thomas S. Powers*

Kennel Club of Buffalo, Inc.—*Margaret Doster*

Kennel Club of Philadelphia, Inc.—*Alan E. Welch*

Kettle Moraine Kennel Club, Inc.—*Rob Barkhaus*

Lackawanna Kennel Club, Inc.—*Steve Ostrander*

Ladies' Dog Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Arna B. Margolies*

Lake Shore Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Diana L. Skibinski*

Lakes Region Kennel Club, Inc.—*Deborah L. Kreider*

Lancaster Kennel Club, Inc.—*Carolyn M. Vack*

Land O'Lakes Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jan Croft*

Lawrenceville Kennel Club, Inc.—*Robert N. LaBerge*

Leonberger Club of America—*Don James*

Los Encinos Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mr. Desmond J. Murphy*

Louisville Kennel Club, Inc.—*Debra H. Owen*

Mahoning-Shenango Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jessica Ricker*

Manatee Kennel Club—*Judy Seltrecht*

Maryland Kennel Club—*Gary Sarvinas*

Misphillion Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mr. Todd Clyde*

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*

Mt. Baker Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jane F. Ruthford*

Myrtle Beach Kennel Club—*Erin M. Keen*

National Capital Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mr. Alfred J. Ferruggiaro*

National Shiba Club of America—*Maggi Strouse*

Naugatuck Valley Kennel Club—*Kathy Kirk*

New England Dog Training Club, Inc.—*Lucy Grant-Ruane*

Newfoundland Club of America, Inc.—*Julie Poulin Siefert*

Newton Kennel Club—*Cathy Murch*

Northeastern Maryland Kennel Club—*Ann M. Schultz*

Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever Club (USA)—*Brenda W. Dorman*

Oakland Dog Training Club, Inc.—*Joao Machado*

Obedience Training Club of Hawaii, Inc.—*Beverly H. Conroy*

Old English Sheepdog Club of America, Inc.—*Wendi Freedman*

Otterhound Club of America—*Joellen Gregory, D.V.M.*

Ozarks Kennel Club, Inc.—*Frank Lavoie*

Parson Russell Terrier Association of America—*Janine Rose*

Pasanita Obedience Club Inc.—*Mrs. Betty M. Winthers*

Pekingese Club of America—*Steven Hamblin*

Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America,
Inc.—*Ms. Sally N. Wynn*

Peninsula Dog Fanciers Club, Inc.—
Wayne Bond

Penn Treaty Kennel Club, Inc.—*Bettina
M. Sterling*

Pharaoh Hound Club of America—
Dominic P. Carota

Philadelphia Dog Training Club, Inc.—
Larry Wilson

Piedmont Kennel Club, Inc.—*Dean
Burwell*

Pioneer Valley Kennel Club, Inc.—*Ms.
Linda Gagnon*

Plainfield Kennel Club—*Sheila Gallizzo*

Plum Creek Kennel Club of Colorado—
Marlene Groves

Port Chester Obedience Training Club,
Inc.—*Kathy Gregory*

Portuguese Water Dog Club of America,
Inc.—*Janet L. Boyd*

Reno Kennel Club—*Jacquelyn Fogel*

Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United
States, Inc.—*Mary L. Elliott*

Richmond Dog Fanciers Club, Inc.—
Debra Ferguson-Jones

Rockford-Freeport Illinois Kennel Club—
Barbara L. Burns

Rubber City Kennel Club—*Cathy Gaidos*

Salisbury Maryland Kennel Club—*Karen
Cottingham*

Saluki Club of America—*Monica H. Stoner*

Sammamish Kennel Club—*Cyndi Skinner*

Samoyed Club of America, Inc.—*Gary
Griffin*

San Mateo Kennel Club, Inc.—*Harvey M.
Wooding*

Saratoga New York Kennel Club—
MaryLou Cuddy

Saw Mill River Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mimi
Winkler*

Schipperke Club of America, Inc.—*Lee A.
Stusnick*

Scottish Deerhound Club of America,
Inc.—*Dr. Robert S. Dove, D.V.M.*

Scottish Terrier Club of America—*Helen
Prince*

Seattle Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jeff Ryman*

Shenandoah Valley Kennel Club, Inc.—
Sharyn Y. Hutchens

Siberian Husky Club of America, Inc.—
Ricki Silveria

Silky Terrier Club of America, Inc.—
Leeann Podruch, D.D.S.

Skyline Kennel Club, Inc.—*Gloria Shaver*

Somerset Hills Kennel Club—*Lois Tubbs*

South Jersey Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jean
Edwards*

South Shore Kennel Club, Inc.—*Linda C.
Flynn*

South Windsor Kennel Club—*Mrs. Laurie Maulucci*

Southeastern Iowa Kennel Club—*Dr. Troy C. Dargin*

Southern Adirondack Dog Club, Inc.—*John V. Ioia*

Space Coast Kennel Club of Palm Bay—*Mrs. Glenda Stephenson*

Spartanburg Kennel Club, Inc.—*Sheila T. Allen*

Spinone Club of America—*Karen Luckey*

Springfield Kennel Club, Inc.—*Dr. Thomas M. Davies*

St. Bernard Club of America, Inc.—*Susan Weigel*

Staten Island Kennel Club, Inc.—*Marjorie Martorella*

Suffolk County Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mr. Robert Eisele*

Susque-Nango Kennel Club, Inc.—*Laura Trainor*

Sussex Hills Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Florence Duggan*

Talbot Kennel Club—*Ann S. Wallace*

Tennessee Valley Kennel Club—*Mrs. Richella M. Veatch*

Terry-All Kennel Club, Inc.—*Dr. Dennis N. Corash*

Texas Kennel Club, Inc.—*Dr. Michael Knight*

Tibetan Spaniel Club of America—*Mallory C. Driskill*

Tibetan Terrier Club of America, Inc.—*Stacey La Forge*

Tidewater Kennel Club of Virginia, Inc.—*Donald M. Bright*

Trenton Kennel Club, Inc.—*Marty Smith*

Troy Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mr. Donald S. Gillett*

Tualatin Kennel Club, Inc.—*James S. Corbett*

Tucson Kennel Club—*Dr. Kenneth H. Levison*

Twin Brooks Kennel Club, Inc.—*Patricia C. Sarles*

Two Cities Kennel Club—*Eduardo T. Fugiwara*

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*

Utah Valley Kennel Club—*Kelly D. Reimschiessel*

Valley Forge Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Carol Fisher*

Wachusett Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Virginia T. Rowland*

Washington State Obedience Training
Club, Inc.—*John J. Cadalso, Jr.*

Waukesha Kennel Club, Inc.—*Marthina
L. Greer*

Weimaraner Club of America—*Jennifer A.
Martin*

Welsh Springer Spaniel Club of America,
Inc.—*Richard Rohrbacher*

West Volusia Kennel Club—*Cathy M.
Driggers*

Whidbey Island Kennel Club Inc—*Laura
Myles*

Yorkshire Terrier Club of America, Inc.—
Pamela A. Langstein



**AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB
DELEGATE MEETING
JUNE 9, 2026**

Gina M. DiNardo, President in the Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. ET.

(National Anthem played.)

Delegates were reminded to check in at the reception desk for attendance purposes. When Staff prints the purple-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 Executive Secretary read the names of Delegates seated since the last meeting:

Terry R. Bridges, Athens, IL, to represent Illinois Capitol Kennel Club

Dennis N. Corash, PhD, Penrose, CO, to represent Terry-All Kennel Club

Martha H. Goings, Huntington, IN, to represent Northeastern Indiana Kennel Club

Gregory Hastings, Hillsdale, WY, to represent Cheyenne Kennel Club

Sharon A. LeVan, Amelia, OH, to represent Clermont County Kennel Club

Joao Machado, The Woodlands, TX, to represent Oakland Dog Training Club

Christian A. Morales Reyes, Miami, FL, to represent Greater Miami Dog Club

Dr. Michelle R. Rowland, Washington, IL, to represent Illinois Valley Kennel Club of Peoria

Lori Sage, Beavercreek, OR, to represent Sherwood Dog Training Club

Lee Sohl, Kent, CT, to represent First Company Governor's Foot Guard Athletic Association

Sharon Tracy, Pocatello, ID, to represent Pocatello Kennel Club

Linda C. Wozniak, Chapel Hill, NC, to represent Durham Kennel Club

Sally N. Wynn, Murfreesboro, TN, to represent Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America

Michael F. Zywicki, New Glarus, WI, to represent American Cesky Terrier Fanciers Association

The following Delegates, who were attending their first meeting since being officially seated, were introduced from the floor:

Debarah Billings, to represent Biewer Terrier Club of America

Dennis N. Corash, to represent Terry-All Kennel Club

Sally N. Wynn, to represent Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America

Michael F. Zywicki, to represent American Cesky Terrier Fanciers Association

The minutes of the March 10, 2026 Delegate Meeting were published in the online April 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 **Rat Terrier Club of America** was duly elected as a member of The American Kennel Club.

Dr. Thomas Davies delivered the Chairman's Report as follows:

Good morning. I want to begin by addressing the login issues that have created difficulty for many of us and for AKC customers over the past several days.

On May 8, 2026, AKC implemented mandatory two-factor authentication as part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen

account security, protect customer information, and reduce fraud risks across AKC Marketplace and other AKC platforms. This initiative is part of a broader modernization effort tied to single sign-on technology and our long-term commitment to maintaining a secure and reliable digital experience.

The issues some customers experienced were not caused by two-factor authentication itself, but by a third-party vendor issue that inadvertently caused a limited number of accounts to become unvalidated. Once identified, our teams worked as quickly as possible alongside the vendor to restore the affected accounts. I am pleased to share that remediation is well underway, and the vast majority of issues have now been resolved.

I would also like to recognize our Customer Service team for their extraordinary efforts throughout this process. They remained fully engaged, responding to inquiries, monitoring website activity, and assisting customers every step of the way. We understand the frustration this situation caused, and we are committed to resolving all remaining issues while continuing to safeguard the security of our organization and our customers.

As we work to strengthen and improve the experience that we provide to our customers, we are equally committed to

recognizing and supporting the people who are the foundation of our sport.

That commitment is reflected in the continued success of the AKC National Owner-Handled Series.

What began as a pilot program in 2012 has grown into one of the most successful initiatives in our sport and is now offered at 92 percent of All-Breed shows nationwide. The program was built on a deep understanding of who owner-handlers are, what they contribute, and the dedication they bring to the sport every day.

Today, I am pleased to share that recognition is expanding even further.

Effective this May, owners of dogs that have earned NOHS Levels of Achievement certificates may add those accomplishments as official suffix titles to their dogs' AKC records. Available at the Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum levels, and grandfathered back to the inception of the program, these titles will appear on future pedigrees and registration certificates, creating a lasting tribute to the passion, perseverance, and sportsmanship of owner-handlers and ensuring their achievements become a permanent part of their dogs' histories. Owners may apply through the AKC Title Application Portal using their dog's registration number.

We are also pleased to announce the host

clubs for the 2026–2027 NOHS Regional events:

- Cornhusker Kennel Club - Nebraska
- Skokie Valley Kennel Club - Illinois
- Corpus Christi Kennel Club - Texas
- Birmingham Kennel Club - Alabama
- Los Encinos Kennel Club - California
- Plainfield Kennel Club - New Jersey
- Clackamas Kennel Club - Oregon
- Cook Inlet Kennel Club - Alaska
- South Shore Kennel Club - Massachusetts

Event dates and additional information are available on [akc.org](https://www.akc.org) under Sports & Events.

As we continue evaluating the future of our organization, we are taking a thoughtful and comprehensive look at many aspects of the AKC – from our internal processes and technology infrastructure, which Gina will discuss in greater detail during her report, to expanding international partnerships with kennel clubs around the world, and finding new ways to share the AKC story and connect with dog owners across the country.

To support that effort, we recently developed a new short “Welcome to AKC” video that showcases our passion for dogs, highlights the important work we do every day, and demonstrates how the AKC's impact extends far beyond reg-

istration and events. The video reflects the heart of our organization – our commitment to dogs, responsible ownership, education, canine health, and our mission to make the world a better place for dogs.

I am happy to share that the video will serve as a cornerstone of our new Welcome Email Series, launching in July 2026, helping introduce new audiences to the AKC in a more engaging and meaningful way. It's a reflection of who we are, what we stand for, and how we continue to evolve in our service to dogs and the people who love them.

(Video played.)

Dr. Davies: In conclusion, just a couple of personal remarks. Those who know me know that I, unlike some of our high-level government officials, seldom go off script. But here I go. We talk incessantly about the graying of the sport. I am perhaps a bit grayer than many of you. Along with that graying comes the realization that while the passion continues in the heart and in the mind, sometimes the other parts of us say that perhaps it's time to mitigate some of those activities. Speaking personally, it's a bitter pill to swallow, but at some point, it will and has come to each of us. It can take a toll on our psyche. It is not pleasant to experience. The fact remains it will happen and dealing with it will be difficult. To borrow from

Ernest Hemingway's, *The Sun Also Rises*, "You don't get away from yourself by moving from one place to another." What prompted these comments? Last Friday, we received the June edition of *Perspectives*. In it, there is a wonderful piece by Gini Denninger, which I encourage you all to read, digest, and read again. It certainly helped me in navigating this transition. I'm sure it will aid in your transition as well. Thank you, Gini.

Ms. DiNardo delivered the President's Report as follows:

Today, I'm pleased to share an important step forward for AKC as we begin our Business-Led Transformation initiative. This work represents an investment in AKC's future and our ability to continue serving the sport, our breeders, clubs, exhibitors, dog owners, and the many communities connected to AKC for generations to come.

To support this effort, we've engaged BDO, a consulting firm with deep experience in helping organizations align strategy, operations, business processes, and technologies in a way that will support long-term success. We selected BDO not only because of their expertise, but because of their collaborative approach and their understanding that meaningful transformation must be driven by the business and shaped by the people who

know it best, our employees and our Delegates.

I'm excited about the opportunity ahead because this is not simply a technology project, nor a change for the sake of change. It is a business-led effort focused on strengthening AKC as One AKC.

As you know, people interact with AKC in many different ways. Some engage through registration, others through events and competitions. Some come to us for education, commerce, performance sports, or customer support. All of these experiences are important, and they often happen independently.

Our goal is to create a more connected experience where our customers and constituents experience AKC as a single organization, regardless of how or where they engage with us. When we talk about "transformation," we mean something much broader than improving one department, replacing one system, or launching a new project.

Transformation means stepping back and asking important questions, which I have tasked our staff with to be very honest about the problems that we have, the goals that we want to accomplish, and where we want to see AKC going in the future. We say things like:

- How do we serve our customers today?

- Where are our processes helping?
- Where are they creating friction for our constituents?
- How can technology better support the business instead of limiting it?
- How do we position AKC to remain trusted, relevant, and sustainable for the next 140 years?

Those are the questions that will guide our work. As we move forward, there are three objectives that will anchor our efforts. First, customer-centric experiences. We want our customers to experience AKC as one organization across registration, events, commerce, education, and support. Their journey should feel connected and intuitive, not shaped by organizational boundaries. Second, aligned and agile business processes. We want processes that are consistent where alignment matters, flexible where differences create value, and scalable enough to support continued growth and improvement. Third, sustained, flexible, and updated technology platforms. Technology should enable our business and our mission.

It should be secure, adaptable, maintainable, and designed to evolve over time. This effort will involve many parts of AKC because no single team, no department, no person can do this work alone.

Over the coming months, AKC teams and BDO will work together through

interviews, workshops, surveys, working sessions to better understand where we are today and where opportunities exist for the future. Equally important, this work remains grounded in our mission and our values that have guided AKC throughout history. We're not changing who we are. We're strengthening how we operate so we can continue fulfilling our mission more effectively with greater connection across the organization.

I believe this work is essential. AKC has a remarkable legacy and with that legacy comes great responsibility, not only to preserve what has made us so successful and so important, but also to prepare the organization for what comes next. This transformation is about building that future together.

I look forward to sharing updates as we progress. I'm very excited for what we will accomplish and thank you for your continued support. I plan to reach out to many Delegates for feedback, let them experience what is being proposed, and get expert advice from those who use our processes and procedures most.

I would now like to introduce Doug Ljungren, who will be speaking with you today about our exciting new international partnership initiatives.

Doug Ljungren, EVP Sports & Events, spoke as follows:

Early this year a Delegate forwarded to me an interesting Facebook post. In essence it said: "The world is changing. The world of dogs is changing. What is the AKC of the 20th century doing to adapt and thrive in the 21st century?"

What a thought-provoking question. I'm here to discuss what could be part of the answer in shaping AKC's long term future; our international partnership initiatives. This coming November 2026 will mark a historic milestone. For the first time in our history, AKC dog shows will be held outside of the United States. From Thursday, November 12 through Sunday, November 15, AKC shows will take place daily at the Expo Santa Fe Center in Mexico City. Held through a licensing agreement with the Mexican Kennel Club (Federación Canófila Mexicana) which goes by the initials of FCM, the FCM Universal Championship show will closely reflect the AKC show experience as we know it. The shows will feature AKC-approved judges, be evaluated against AKC breed standards, and include four Junior Showmanship competitions. Onofrio will serve as the superintendent for these events.

Since there are many breeds in the world that are not fully recognized by AKC, and since FCM wants these shows to be welcoming to all dogs, there will be a concurrent special attraction show that is

open to all breeds that are not eligible to participate in the AKC show.

In addition, we are hoping to offer AKC Canine Good Citizen testing during the shows, helping expand awareness of this program and further promote the important role that dogs play as family companions.

FCM has started promoting the Universal Championship. They had a booth at the World Dog Show in Italy last week. They have a social media team that has been hard at work, and I'd like to share with you a draft video that they have developed.

(Video played.)

Our global engagement extends beyond Mexico. We have signed Mutual Cooperation Agreements with the Kennel Club of Brazil, the Korean Kennel Federation, and the New Zealand Kennel Club. These agreements are public statements of our shared commitment to advancing the sport of dogs and supporting the long-term future of purebred dogs worldwide.

Together, we are working to expand canine events and registrations, strengthen education and breeder support, promote responsible dog ownership and breeding, and continue highlighting the important role that dogs play as family companions.

We have also held productive discussions with the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC). Earlier this year, AKC began recognizing some CKC titles on AKC pedigrees, an important step that benefits exhibitors and breeders in both organizations.

Our collaboration has continued to grow in other areas as well. Last year, the CKC expressed interest in the AKC Fetch program, and we shared with them our regulations. This July 2026, the CKC will launch their own Fetch program, modeled after the AKC program. AKC Fetch judges are trained online through coursework in Canine College. CKC has chosen to utilize AKC's Canine College for training their Fetch judges, rather than building their own system.

The initiative with Mexico has been more than two years in the making. The path getting there has not been a straight line. When you're building something new, you must be able to accept the uncertainty that goes with it. It requires patience, flexibility, trust, and a willingness to listen and understand our international partners. These relationships take time, but they create meaningful opportunities for collaboration and growth. We are currently in discussions with several other organizations around the world, though many of these conversations are still in the early stages.

Collectively, these efforts send a message that AKC is opening its doors to wider collaboration, welcoming more people and more dogs into our community.

As we've engaged more deeply with our international partners, we've learned some important things:

- The AKC brand is deeply respected around the world.
- AKC Judges are viewed as among the most knowledgeable anywhere.
- Kennel clubs genuinely want to engage with us to share their challenges.
- Perhaps the most concerning, in the broadest picture, is that there's a decline in purebred dog registrations globally. Now if you just think about that for a minute. What's going on here? Are purebred dogs falling out of favor? I don't think so. These are treasures that have been passed down to us from generations before. We need to step up. I go back to Mari-Beth's Forum presentation. Of all the dogs in AKC litters, 45 percent are registered. If we just get to 50 percent, that would be a huge step forward. We need to advocate better for purebred dogs.
- Participation in dog shows is declining worldwide.
- New dog owners want activities that are fun, quick to learn, and not overly

time consuming. Now in a lot of our Delegate committees, we dismiss that point of view. However, that's what the dog world is moving toward, and we have to understand that and embrace it and make it ours.

- Many kennel clubs are seeking to diversify their activities that they can provide.
- Due to the many new AKC sport activities that have been launched in recent years, AKC offers the most diversified canine sports portfolio in the world.
- Other kennel clubs are eager to learn from AKC's experience. I can assure you we can learn from them.

The goals of our international partnership initiative could have a major impact on AKC's future. These goals are:

- Explore opportunities to expand and enhance canine events.
- Promote registration of purebred dogs to expand breeding opportunities.
- Share knowledge and promote the education of judges, exhibitors, event officials, and breeders.
- Promote dogs as family companions through Canine Good Citizen programs.
- Collaborate on animal rights issues

and canine health issues to align on facts.

Through these activities, we increase our knowledge, deepen our perspective, enhance the AKC brand, and strengthen the global dog community through cooperation and sharing.

While these efforts are creating new opportunities, they also come with new challenges. We believe that the long-term potential is meaningful and well worth exploring. It is important not to look at these initiatives as what they could mean for AKC in the short term. Instead, we should think about what the AKC and the broader world of dog and dog sports could look like in 20 years.

I hope this has provided some greater insight into our international partnership initiatives and how we view these efforts within the broader context of exploring opportunities that may shape and strengthen our future.

I will end where I began. The world is changing. The world of dogs is changing. As a 142-year-old organization, we are faced with a challenge of change – the comfort of doing business as usual versus the willingness to consider alternative approaches to accomplish our mission.

Each of us needs to ask ourselves in our own way, within our clubs, within our

Delegate committees, what must we do to evolve and thrive in the 21st century? Our future will depend on it. Thank you.

Ted Phillips, CFO, delivered the Financial Report as follows:

Good morning. Again, as always, thank you for attending, and we appreciate your support. Before I begin the presentation of our 2026 first quarter results, I'd like to remind everyone that these are preliminary and unaudited. Today's presentation highlights the key operating trends we're seeing in the first quarter, including continued pressure on registration revenues, our efforts at disciplined expense management, and the strength of the balance sheet as we navigate a softer revenue environment. Here's a high-level view of the interim financial results and key operating metrics for the first quarter ended March 31, 2026.

Total operating revenue was \$21.9 million, or 6 percent lower than the same quarter in 2025. Total operating expense was \$22.7 million, or 7 percent lower than the same quarter in 2025. Before we use our investment spend rate that is predetermined at the beginning of the year, Q1 2026 results reflect an operating loss of \$796,000 versus an operating loss in the same period of 2025, that totaled \$1 million. After we apply the investment spend rate in 2026, the net result was a

loss of \$86,000. The key takeaway, before we get into more details, is that revenue remains under pressure, but the expense discipline and targeted investment support improve the net result year over year.

On this slide, please note the three primary groups of operating revenues. Registration and event fees totaled \$14.7 million in the first quarter of 2026, which is 4 percent, or \$595,000 lower than the previous first quarter period. However, it is still our largest source of revenue. Advertising, sponsorship, and royalties totaled \$3.8 million. They were down about 16 percent, or \$713,000. Products and service sales totaled \$3.5 million, down about 6 percent, or \$203,000. All three revenue groups are clearly softer year over year, with registrations remaining the largest driver of underperformance.

This slide provides a breakdown of the revenue of the registration dollars into dog and litter components. Dog registration totaled \$5.3 million, which is a decline of 7 percent, or \$378,000, and litter registration totaled \$2.6 million, which is a decline of 12 percent, or \$360,000. Looking at the unit activity, we see that litter registrations and dog registrations equally declined by 11 percent in their respective categories, with litters landing at 49,697 and dog registrations at 111,864. At the same time, let's remember that our online activity ranges as high as 87 percent of all regis-

trations, which is an important metric for AKC.

Related to registration, we have our pedigree sales coming in for the first quarter at \$1.1 million, which is a 22 percent decline, or \$300,000, versus the prior year's quarter. Other registration-related fees totaled \$1.2 million, compared with \$1.3 million in the prior year. These lines follow the underlying registration volume, so lower dog and litter activity continues to have a ripple effect across several categories.

Here's a breakdown of the major sport category revenues. Conformation revenue increased by 19 percent to \$1.5 million; Companion events increased by 8 percent to \$1.9 million, and Performance events increased by 19 percent to \$813,000. The only underperformer in this area was the Family Dog program, which was lowered by 11 percent at \$846,000, as compared to \$946,000 in the prior year's period. Here's the activity of entries and events.

We see the slide that you've heard about regarding entries, where they're down 3 percent to 783,000. The number of events, however, has increased to a little over 6,000, so that increases three percent more than the prior year period. Patterns suggest that event demand remains stable, but participation per event is somewhat softer.

Looking at another key area of revenue, sponsorships, advertising, and royalties. Our sponsorship revenue totaled \$2.5 million and is down by about 11 percent from the prior year. Advertising revenue totaled \$763,000, and this is where we see the largest hit in this area, where it's 31 percent lower. It remains the most significant pressure point in this category and continues to move with registration-related activity at a faster clip than actual registration efforts. Royalties were down by 11 percent, as compared to the prior year.

Let's look at operating expenses. As you may remember from the first slide, and these will be posted on the Delegate Portal for you, total operating expenses were \$22.7 million in the first quarter. Of that, \$12 million includes staff salaries, travel, all those good things we need to move people around. This is a 5 percent decrease from \$12.7 million last year. Professional fees were also down. They totaled \$3.9 million, which was \$798,000, or 17 percent lower than 2025, and fulfillment costs were comparable. The continued focus on cost control is an important effort in how we're managing through the current environment without compromising our core operations.

This slide shows our expenses related to insurance, rent, depreciation. They're essentially \$2.6 million, so they're com-

parable with last year, a little bit lower because of some efforts around reevaluating how we look at some of our insurance costs while never compromising and also realizing some of the depreciation efforts of some of our long-term software initiatives that have become fully depreciated. Donations totaled about \$1.1 million versus \$1.3 million. Remember that there is an in-kind piece of donation that goes on. We have cash donations, which are supported by the investment portfolio, and on the in-kind piece, we've done some reevaluation to sort out how best to support our affiliates. That's where you see the slight decrease.

Finally, our balance sheet. The statement of financial position is a strategic asset as we move the organization forward through the efforts that Gina discussed. Total assets were approximately \$260 million, with investments of \$189 million representing the largest asset class. Now, if we can pause for a minute and recall that the market was very ugly on March 31, and since then we've seen a very nice recovery on our investments. We're pleased about that. The liability section continues to be comprised of retirement plan and lease obligations, and obviously these long-term obligations represent an important factor in our future planning.

Thank you, I appreciate your time. If you have any questions, please feel free to

contact me, and we'll have the presentation on the Delegate Portal in a few days. Thank you.

There was a vote on the amendment to **Chapter 3, Section 12** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Classifications*, 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 Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee and brought forward with the approval of the Board of Directors.

There was a two-thirds vote in the affirmative and the amendment was adopted.

The Chair called on the Executive Secretary to read the proposed amendment to **Article XIV, Section 1**, of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club*.

Ms. Goffe: This amendment is the **Article XIV, Section 1**, of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club*, which adds verbiage to address that a fee is required to be submitted to the event-giving club when a complaint is filed at an AKC event.

The amendment was proposed by the Delegate Bylaws Committee and disapproved by the AKC Board at the

February 2026 meeting.

Pursuant to Article XX, Section 3 of the AKC Bylaws, the Delegate Bylaws Committee demanded that it be brought forward to the Delegates.

It will be published in two issues of the *AKC Gazette*, and you will be asked to vote on it at the September 2026 meeting. The full text is on the worksheet previously emailed.

There were no questions or discussion.

Ms. DiNardo informed the Delegates that the proposed rule change to **Chapter 11, Section 8**, and **Chapter 11, Section 8-D** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* will be read and voted as one amendment.

The Chair called on the Executive Secretary to read the proposed amendment to **Chapter 11, Section 8** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dogs Affecting Eligibility*.

Ms. Goffe: This amendment is to **Chapter 11, Section 8** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dogs Affecting Eligibility*, which inserts clarification and identifying language, revises format and relocates text involving change of appearance to Chapter 11, Section 8-D.

The 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 September 2026 meeting. The full text is on the worksheet previously emailed.

There were no questions or discussion.

The Chair called on the Executive Secretary to read the proposed amendment, **Chapter 11, Section 8-D** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dogs Affecting Eligibility*.

Ms. Goffe: This amendment is to **Chapter 11, Section 8-D** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dogs Affecting Eligibility*, which inserts all text from Chapter 11, involving change of appearance, rearranges paragraph order to put like items together, and adds cropping of ears and docking of tail for clarity.

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 September 2026 meeting. The full text is on the worksheet previously emailed.

There were no questions or discussion.

The Chair called on Bill Ellis, Senior Director of Broadcasting, for a presentation on Reimagining Dog Sports for Television and Beyond, who spoke as follows:

Good morning. This feels even more appropriate following Doug and talking about the evolution of our dog sports. Last year I came up here and spoke about the reach that we have through our production and television broadcasts on national television, on ABC and ESPN, and also our weekly syndicated show. What I want to talk to you about today is taking a step back and looking closer at the events and how we reimagine these for television. It's no secret that the television audience evolves very, very quickly. You could still get a DVD in the mail from Netflix three years ago and send it back to them. It changes very, very quickly. Our productions need to change and evolve at that same rate. It's not enough to just cover competition. Viewers expect stories, personalities. They need all of the context that goes around the competition that they are watching. The challenge that we are continually faced with is not simply producing an event, whether it's a Conformation dog show, an Agility trial, Diving Dogs, et cetera, but rather creating a whole experience for the audience. I think one of the best examples that we

can look to is the AKC National Championship dog show. We're all familiar with the great event in Orlando at the end of the year. We produce it live for everyone to enjoy in the moment digitally. Then the show is turned around, produced very quickly for a television special to air on the ABC television network. This past December was the sixth year in a row that the show premiered on ABC. Like we do every year, we do a lot of research, we do a lot of analysis, and we worked very closely with our partners at ABC to adjust the premier of that show to 12:00 p.m. Eastern as opposed to mid-afternoon because we felt strongly that it would provide us with a much more robust audience. ABC agreed, and thankfully that came to fruition. It was the best result that we have had with that show on ABC, reaching millions of people. I think the best takeaway and talking point that all of you can go out and spread the word about is that this show was the number one rated show on television, on any channel, between 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. that day, that was not the NFL. We will take that company every day and twice on Sundays.

Anytime we produce our shows, it's really about meeting these audiences where they are.

They consume content in so many different ways. We can't assume that they're consuming

this content for the first time on television. Maybe it's digitally, maybe it's in person at an event. These productions need to evolve through enhanced storytelling, fan engagement, production quality, all of the things that keep an audience engaged. It's not about making changes to any of the sports but rather changing the way that audiences experience them. A big part of the way that we do that is through the power of storytelling, something that we look to in not only the broadcast but working closely with our digital team, social media team and the editorial team so that we can really highlight these great stories for the viewers. It might be about a competitor and their dog. It might be about a Junior Handler showcasing the next generation of our sports. It might be about a working dog outside the ring as a therapy dog. It's those stories that really enhance the production and in turn, amplify the experience for the audience.

In addition to stories, it's about great cinematic camera work. Elevating it through slow motion, enhanced data and graphics. We have spent more than the last year developing how we show data, metrics, statistics through television. Audiences expect those from sporting events, right? We all have seen so many examples of this. We are starting to bring that to life this year. What was the speed of that dog

as they went through an Agility course? How high did they jump off that dock? What was the force of that dog coming off the dock when they were competing in Diving Dogs? All of those different elements combined to create this modern sports presentation. One of the ways that this has really come to life recently is just a couple of days ago. We were in Philadelphia at the Navy Yard on their Marine Parade Grounds. We took over this incredible field, and we hosted the American Kennel Club Celebrates USA 250. Three days, three events that were all produced for ESPN that will premier later this summer, all under the same theme of celebrating America's 250th anniversary.

In continuing this kind of innovation and elevating of the sports, we had Diving Dogs on Friday, then turning our attention to Agility for Saturday and Sunday. I want to highlight the Sunday Agility event, the Agility Team Challenge. This is a brand-new event, first-of-its-kind team event through AKC Agility. We worked very closely with the AKC Agility staff, as well as getting feedback from Agility competitors because we really sought to create an event that would be new, not only for television audiences, but new for those competitors and a way for them to showcase their dogs in a different and unique way. The first thing we did was identify six team captains, not only peo-

ple that compete at the highest levels of the sport, but people that we identified as being great ambassadors for this new event. From there, we assigned additional team members. We ended up with six teams. They represented six different cities from across the country in keeping with this patriotic USA 250 theme. They competed on a larger Agility ring in two early rounds. There were some nuances to those courses that you wouldn't find at a typical AKC Agility trial. Based on those results, they were seeded and put into a bracket. Once again, sports audiences are pretty familiar with what a bracket format looks like. We turned that ring into two. We split it right down the middle, and teams competed head-to-head in three different knockout rounds. So, a completely different competition experience, a completely different visual experience, not only for those there, but for the television audience as well.

We were thrilled with how it went, but the most impactful takeaway was how excited and how much these teams really embraced this new format. They were so excited to get to compete with their dogs in a different way and have this incredible camaraderie among their teammates in a sport that is traditionally just an individual sport.

As we were getting ready for this weekend and we knew that we were going to

have Agility on one side of the field and Diving Dogs on the other side of the field, we realized that we needed to create a centralized hub, if you will, for not only competitors, but the fans and spectators that were going to be there. I would like to introduce you to the AKC Doghouse.

The goal with the AKC Doghouse was to create a more elevated and premium experience. This is an image from this past weekend. The AKC Doghouse was built in the middle of the field. It's open air. It was really kind of the anchor for not only the field, but all of these events as well. There was a Kid Zone. There was an AKC Meet the Breeds® activation. We had about 10 to 12 breeds each day for the public to come and interact with. There was AKC branding throughout, which included QR codes that led people back to learn more about all of the work that we do at the American Kennel Club. This also provided a hub for all of the brands and sponsors that interact with these shows and, you know, quite frankly, allow us to continue to do them and give them that touch point with audiences. We're very happy with how it turned out and equally excited that it's something that we will be able to continue to roll out and customize at future events. I won't leave you without a video. Gina showed a video. Doug had a video. The video guy has to have a video. I will let

you enjoy this short video, which highlights some of the work that the team has done over the last 18 months to put these shows together.

(Video played.)

Mr. Ellis: As we look ahead, I'll leave you with a couple of points. One, the evolution of the American Kennel Club on television, specifically through this partnership with ESPN and ABC is very intentional and very thoughtful and does not happen by accident. We are a small but mighty team. We have great production partners. We work very, very hard to bring these events to life and showcase them on ESPN, who are incredibly supportive of the work that we do. There is always a focus on promoting not only the actual event that you're watching, but the AKC mission and messaging and introducing audiences to the ways that they can get involved through the AKC. My hope is always that folks will watch it and go, "Wow, I didn't know that I could do that with my dog." I want to learn more. If you're free this weekend, you have two opportunities to watch shows that were produced earlier this year, both on ESPN2. We just confirmed yesterday afternoon that there will be an encore broadcast of the National Agility Championship on Saturday at 12:00 p.m. ET and the Diving Dogs Premier Cup on Sunday at 2:00 p.m. ET. Hopefully every-

one will get a chance to watch, and even more importantly, you'll spread the word. Thank you.

Ms. DiNardo: This department has done exceptional work by partnering with the most important sports network in the world and making AKC events relatable to millions of people, encouraging them to join our AKC family. We are fortunate to have such an amazing team.

The Chair called on Mari-Beth O'Neill, VP of Sports Services, for a presentation on behalf of AKC and the Junior Task Force Committee, in support of 4-H Canine Clubs, who spoke as follows:

Good morning again. Today I'd like to recognize two clubs that have established Junior clubs under the umbrella of their All-Breed clubs, based on their relationships and involvement with the local 4-H club. They are Finger Lakes Kennel Club and Greater Clark County Kennel Club.

Finger Lakes Kennel Club member involvement with the Junior Tailwaggers goes back at least 45 years. Over the years, various members have volunteered as instructors, judges, mentors, and more. Part of this initially was that all the local dog groups used the same location to hold training classes, sharing space equaled sharing time, equipment, and resources. Currently, Finger Lakes Kennel Club supports the 4-H club by loan-

ing equipment for their trials, sponsoring awards, and helping promote the club. 4-H members can attend their drop-in handling classes at no charge.

When AKC formalized the Junior Liaison position, Melissa LoPinto became Finger Lakes Kennel Club's point person. She and Jacob Ragusa spearheaded the Finger Lakes Kennel Club establishment of a Junior Kennel Club under the umbrella of Finger Lakes Kennel Club. The ten members of the Finger Lakes Kennel Club are also Junior members of the Finger Lakes Kennel Club. They ran the Plan B match this spring and are planning next spring's event already. They volunteer as jump setters, leash runners, and general gofers at Agility trials. Some of the older Juniors are starting to learn how to steward in Conformation. They have helped at shows, matches, Earth Dog, Fast CAT®, and are also active in 4-H beyond dog events. Over the years, Tompkins County 4-H Junior Tailwaggers members have joined other 4-H clubs, and their artwork, scientific presentations, baked goods, and more have been recognized as the Tompkins County and New York State Fairs.

The Finger Lakes Kennel Club membership recognizes the importance of 4-H as a resource for dog sports, both for the AKC as well as other organizations. We are proud of our Junior members and the

Junior Kennel Club and are excited for the future of all. Thank you to Amanda Pough, President of Finger Lakes Kennel Club, and alumna of the Tompkins County 4-H Junior Tailwaggers. Margaret Pough, would you please come and accept this certificate for the club?

(Certificate presented.)

Ms. O'Neill: Seeing as how Margaret's daughter, Amanda, is the current club president, this is an appropriate multi-generation honor.

Greater Clark County Kennel Club has supported the 4-H club in Clark County, Washington for many years through trophy sponsorship, donating time for training, judging matches and fairs, and hosting a Meet the Breeds event at the local fair. The percent of 4-H's coming into AKC events was low, so the Greater Clark County Kennel Club AKC Junior Club was established to help streamline more connections to getting more 4-H's into AKC events. The goal was not to just support Junior Showmanship, but to develop strong leaders in all venues of AKC. Greater Clark County Kennel Club established a Junior club under its umbrella, led by Emily Fish. The members of this group have assisted in coordinating with the club, offering Junior Showcase events, coordinating a match, and they are planning a Scent Work trial

the weekend of June 27-28, 2026. Delegates Karen Burgess and Don James are two members of Greater Clark County Kennel Club.

(Certificate presented.)

Thank you to both of these clubs for establishing these Junior clubs to become involved in the running and coordinating of multiple AKC events and learning leadership skills.

The Chair called on the Executive Secretary to read the list of vacancies for the Delegate Standing Committees that are to be filled in September.

Ms. Goffe: These are the vacancies on Delegate Standing Committees that are to be filled at the September 2026 Delegate meeting:

All-Breed Clubs Committee –
3 three-year terms.

Bylaws Committee – 4 three-year terms.

Canine Health Committee –
4 three-year terms.

Companion Events Committee –
3 three-year terms.

Delegate Advocacy and Advancement Committee – 3 three-year terms.

Dog Show Rules Committee –
3 three-year terms; 2 one-year terms.

Field Trial and Hunting Test Events Committee – 4 three-year terms.

Herding, Earth, Dog, Coursing and Scent Work Events Committee – 3 three-year terms.

Parent Clubs Committee – 3 three-year terms; 1 one-year term.

Perspectives Editorial Staff – 6 two-year terms; 3 one-year terms.

Ms. DiNardo announced that the Delegates will be emailed self-nomination forms by the end of June. The self-nomination form must be returned to the Executive Secretary by Monday, July 20, 2026.

Questions on procedures to be followed should be directed to the Executive Secretary. Delegates may only self-nominate for one committee, except that a member of the *Perspectives* Editorial Staff may also serve on another standing committee.

In August, the Delegates will be emailed the nominees for each committee and their qualification statements with the September meeting notification.

The Chair called on Bob Rynkiewicz, Delegate from the Eastern German Shorthaired Pointer Club, to provide an update on AKC PAC, who spoke as follows:

Good morning, all. As you know, this is

an election year. I'd like to start off by thanking Government Relations for the work that they're doing to keep us informed, especially on topics such as the Farm Bill. I also want to personally thank each and every one of you, if you've contacted your Senators or Representatives. You can still reach out to them. They are going to be voting by the end of this month. We need to make the impact. We need to have this bill passed without all the extra flim-flam stuff that goes along with it. You have groups that are trying to push through, as I would say, nonsense amendments. We need to get out there. You probably have gotten a memo from Government Relations with a form letter that also has contact information for your Senators. Please take that form letter and customize it. Tell the folks what you do, how you're involved with dogs, and how important it is.

Regarding the PAC, there's a table outside. We're looking to raise money. One thing that many of you probably don't know is that 100 percent of the contributions you make go to support your legislators, whether at the federal, state, or local level, pertaining to dog legislation. Many times, you go to different organizations, and they say, "Make a contribution: \$12 a month, \$19 a month." Of that, maybe a dollar goes to the real cause. In your case here, 100 percent goes. Also,

this year, the PAC is offering a week-long trip.

Ms. Goffe: This is our trip to the beach in Costa Rica.

Mr. Rynkiewicz: Two bedrooms, two baths, living room, and it overlooks the ocean. Tickets are \$25 each, five for \$100. I'm willing to take \$500 bills from you. All right, thank you very much, and we'll see you outside at the donation booth.

The Chair informed the Delegates that the Tuesday, September 15, 2026 Delegate Meeting will be held at the Doubletree Newark Airport Hotel. More detailed information will be emailed as soon as it becomes available.

Lunch was served following the meeting's conclusion on the Terrace.

Delegates were not required to return the badges; new badges will be printed at each meeting. Delegates were given an option to recycle the badge holders and lanyards.

The following Delegates spoke during New Business:

Helen Prince, Delegate from the Scottish Terrier Club of America, spoke on behalf of the Parent Clubs Committee, who presented the Pat Laurans Difference Maker Award for the quarter. The three honorees were Gayle Bontecou, Thomas

H. Bradley III and Harry Miller.

Dr. Charles Garvin, Delegate from the Dalmatian Club of America, recognized an upcoming milestone, the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and noted that it has been one year since Gina DiNardo first presided over the Delegate meeting. He described the past year a "new era" for the AKC, marked by improved attitude, morale, efficiency, and effectiveness across the organization. He referenced support from the AKC Board of Directors for Gina DiNardo as President and encouraged the Delegate Body to formally demonstrate support and appreciation for her leadership.

(Standing ovation.)

Eduardo Fugiwara, Delegate from the Two Cities Kennel Club, emphasized the importance of watching the two AKC Sports TV programs on ESPN this weekend. He encouraged the Delegates to not only watch themselves, but to also invite club members, families, and friends to tune in, as higher viewership can lead to more rebroadcasts and attract sponsors. He expressed gratitude to the Broadcasting department and current sponsors for their efforts.

Monica Stoner, Delegate from the Saluki Club of America, spoke as the Editor of *Perspectives*, sharing that the next issue

will focus on Juniors and Junior articles. She asked the Delegates to send pictures of kids and their dogs outside the show ring. Monica assured potential contributors that even if they felt they couldn't write well, they could submit their ideas for refinement.

Neal Goodwin, Delegate from the Flat-Coated Retriever Society of America, personally addressed the decline in entries at Conformation events and the importance of recognition for dogs through group placements. He pointed out that the increase in recognized breeds from 126 in 1983 to 205 today has lowered the chances of any breed receiving a placement from 22 percent to less than 14 percent, reducing the incentive for exhibitors to participate. Neal proposed that groups with more than 30 breeds should have six placements, while those with fewer than 30 should have five, adding a total of 12 placements per show and potentially increasing exhibitor participation and entry fees.

Hearing no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

(One sharp rap of the gavel.)

(Proceedings concluded at 12:00 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



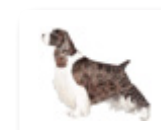
Curly-Coated Retriever



English Cocker Spaniel



English Setter



English Springer Spaniel



Field Spaniel



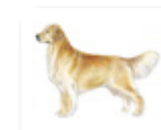
Flat-Coated Retriever



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



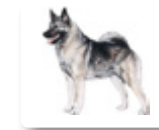
Harrier



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



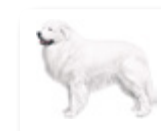
German
Pinscher



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



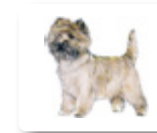
Bedlington Terrier



Border Terrier



Bull Terrier



Cairn Terrier



Cesky Terrier



Dandie Dinmont
Terrier



Fox Terrier
(Smooth)



Glen of
Imaal Terrier



Irish Terrier



Kerry Blue
Terrier



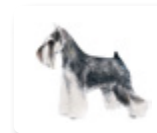
Lakeland Terrier



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



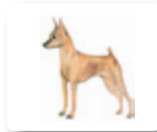
Japanese Chin



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/>