



gazette

OCTOBER 2026



Building
Better Dog
Clubs



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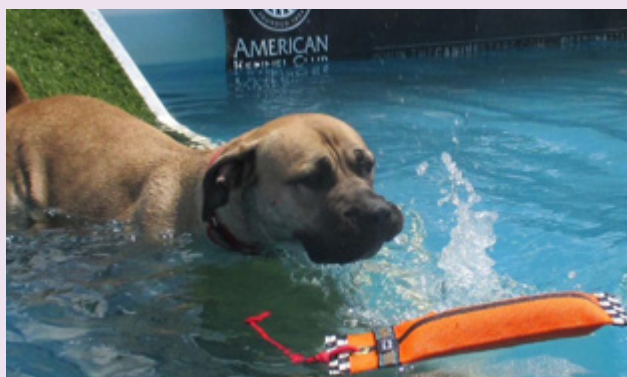
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Sporting and Working Groups	Hound and Terrier Groups	Toy, Non-Sporting, and Herding Groups
January, April, July, and October issues	February, May, August, and November issues	March, June, September, and December issues

COURTESY OWNER

SKOKIE VALLEY KENNEL CLUB

SINCE 1938



THE RECOGNITION IS YOURS

In 1938, a handful of fanciers started an AKC club around a simple idea to give back, and to host events where other dog owners could exhibit their dogs. Eighty-eight years later, we're still doing exactly that and this year, on the biggest stage we've ever offered you.

But you've been doing this all along. Loading the crate before sunrise. Driving the miles. Walking in with the dog you raised, at the end of your own lead.

To every owner who has ever walked a dog into a Skokie Valley ring and to every one of you entering our event this year, the recognition is yours.

FOR EVERY DOG YOU BELIEVED IN.

FOR EVERY RING YOU ENTERED.

FOR EVERY MEMORY YET TO COME.

FOR THIS EVENT... ENTER, THE RING IS YOURS!

AKC NATIONAL OWNER-HANDLED SERIES

REGIONAL EVENT

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2026

Hosted by Skokie Valley Kennel Club at the Fall Harvest Cluster with Kenosha and Starved Rock

Enter at BARAYEVENTS.COM

NOHS Regional is a separate entry.

Closing Date: Wednesday - Nov 04, 2026

Lake County Fairgrounds & Event Center
1060 E Peterson Rd Grayslake, Illinois 60060



Event Website: FallHarvestCluster.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



A Shared Responsibility

As participants in the sport of dogs, we share a responsibility that comes before every ribbon, title, or win: ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of the dogs entrusted to our care.

With that responsibility in mind, AKC recently released Dog Sense at AKC Events, a series of reminders and best practices designed to encourage exhibitors and attendees to remain mindful of dog safety throughout every event.

Dog shows offer us an opportunity to celebrate our dogs, enjoy the camaraderie of the sport, reconnect with friends, and take part in spirited competition. From the excitement around the ring to time spent with fellow exhibitors, these events should be rewarding experiences for everyone involved. At the center of them all, however, are the dogs themselves.

Whether at the show site, in grooming areas, at hotels,

or traveling to and from an event, attentive care, proper supervision, good judgment, and appropriate safety measures are essential. Conditions can change quickly, and each of us has a responsibility to remain aware of our surroundings and prepared to act when necessary.

As part of this effort, AKC will provide clubs with Dog Sense at AKC Events posters highlighting important safety reminders. We encourage every club to prominently display these materials at its events and ask exhibitors, handlers, owners, volunteers, and attendees to remain vigilant about the safety and well-being of dogs throughout the day. Keeping dogs safe is a responsibility we all share.

That commitment will be evident as we look ahead to our cornerstone show, the AKC National Championship. Entries are now open for the show,



returning to the North/South buildings at Orange County Convention Center in the Orlando on December 12 and 13.

Now in its 26th year, the AKC National Championship stands among the world's premier celebrations of canine excellence. As the largest dog show in North America, it brings together exceptional dogs, breeders, handlers, and exhibitors from across the country and around the world. At the culmination of the competition, one outstanding dog will earn one of the sport's most prestigious distinctions: America's National Champion.

Entries are also open

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

for the AKC/Royal Canin National All-Breed Puppy and Junior Stakes, taking place Friday, December 11, and the AKC National Owner-Handled Series Finals, taking place December 12 and 13 at the OCCC. Both events celebrate important parts of our sport. The Puppy and Junior Stakes offers an exciting look at the next generation of show dogs with the potential to become future champions, giving promising young dogs an opportunity to shine on a national stage.

The NOHS Finals recognize the dedication and accomplishments of owner-handlers who compete with their own dogs at the highest levels of the sport. Their success reflects the commitment, preparation, perseverance, and special partnership between an owner-handler and their dog that are at the heart of the National Owner-Handled Series. We look forward to recognizing these talented dogs and dedicated competitors in Orlando.



The All-Breed Puppy and Junior Stakes will be among the many delights of the multifaced ANC.

Premium lists and the latest event information are available on the AKC National Championship event page.

Championship Week will once again showcase the breadth of AKC sports and competition. In addition to conformation, the week will feature the AKC Agility Invitational, AKC Obedience Classic, AKC RACH Invitational, Junior competitions in conformation, agility, obedience, and rally, and the always popular diving-dogs special attraction. Specialties, group shows, and events hosted by the Space Coast Kennel Club of Palm Bay, Brevard Kennel Club, and Central

Florida Kennel Club will add to a full week celebrating dogs and the sport we all value.

I encourage you to make your plans for Orlando, and wherever your next AKC event takes you, to keep the principles of Dog Sense in mind. Competition is an important part of our sport, but the care and well-being of our dogs must always come first.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Orlando this December.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gina M. DiNardo".

Gina M. DiNardo
President and CEO
American Kennel Club



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB

DOG SENSE AT AKC® EVENTS

Best Practices for the Care and Well-Being of Dogs

Temperature and Environmental Safety

- Take appropriate measures to maintain safe and comfortable temperatures in all weather conditions.
- During extreme heat, keep dogs cool, not cold. Moving dogs from excessively cold environments directly into hot conditions can negatively affect performance and may pose health risks.
- Always have a cooling plan in place when attending events in hot weather, i.e., equipment to provide shade and cooling equipment such as cooling mats, cooling coats, portable fans, etc.
- If dogs must remain in a vehicle, ensure the vehicle is properly ventilated and check on them frequently.

Crating and Housing

- Use crates that are appropriately sized and adequately ventilated for the breed being housed.
- Keep crates clean, secure, and well-ventilated at all times.
- For travel, use sturdy, well-ventilated crates whenever possible. Soft-sided crates are not recommended.
- Refrain from leaving collars on dogs that are crated overnight or left unattended.
- If leaving dogs in a building overnight, ensure you arrive promptly when the building opens to care for your dogs.
- Keep sufficient slip leads readily available for all dogs traveling with you.
- Check crate doors, exercise pens, RV doors, and hotel room doors regularly to ensure they are secure.
- Never leave dogs unattended in exercise pens.
- When leaving a hotel room, ensure dogs are safely crated.

Grooming Area Safety

- Never leave a dog unattended on a grooming table. Being physically present does not always mean a dog is being adequately supervised.
- Multiple dogs on grooming tables require multiple responsible individuals to safely manage them.
- Always display emergency contact information near your vehicle and/or grooming setup.

Supervision and Daily Care

- Dogs should always be supervised by individuals who can respond thoughtfully and appropriately in an emergency.
- Provide adequate opportunities throughout the day for exercise and elimination breaks.
- Ensure fresh, clean water is available at all times and monitor dogs for proper hydration.
- Carry current vaccination and health records and keep them readily accessible when needed.

Health and Emergency Preparedness

- Seek veterinary attention promptly if a dog shows signs of illness or injury.
- Keep a fire extinguisher accessible and have an emergency fire plan in place.
- Be prepared to respond quickly to any health, safety, or environmental emergency.



**Everything We Do,
We Do for Dogs.**



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.



AKC GAZETTE, the official journal of the sport of purebred dogs since 1889

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Substack: “Once Upon a Dog”



GAZETTE breed columns and “Times Past” items are in our regular Substack mix.

to our Substack, called “[Once Upon a Dog](#),” helping to build it into the go-to place for dog lovers on this important digital platform.

For the past few months the GAZETTE and *AKC Family Dog* have been posting at Substack, the popular interactive platform that enables readers to have stories, photos, and video sent directly to their inbox. Publications use Substack, free to creators and readers, to

increase their reach and to engage their subscribers between issues.

We are having lots of fun rummaging through our “greatest hits” folders in search of content of interest to fanciers and pet owners alike in our twice-a-week posts. We hope you will enjoy the results and subscribe



On Our Cover:
Australian Shepherd,
Wendi Pencille photo
©AKC

AKC GAZETTE COLLECTION

AKC MEET THE BREEDS® returns to New York City January 23th and 24th, 2027 at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center!

Sign up to represent your breed
and join in the fun!



Meet the Breeds®

AKC Meet the Breeds offers a unique opportunity to educate the public about our wonderful breeds and responsible dog ownership. With colorful breed booths and exciting demonstrations, it is a fun, family-friendly event.

Your breed deserves to be represented! Come meet and greet thousands of dog lovers and be a champion for your breed!

Sign Up Now

or contact Meetthebreeds@akc.org to sign up.

The deadline for Parent Club signup is October 30, 2026



The Run-Up to ANC Begins

Entries are open for the **26th AKC National Championship presented by Royal Canin**, returning to Orlando's Orange County Convention Center on December 12 and 13. Entries are also open for the **AKC/Royal Canin National All-Breed Puppy and Junior Stakes**, on December 11, and the **AKC National Owner-Handled Series Finals**, on December 12 and 13.

The ANC is the largest dog show in the United States

and the only conformation event hosted by the AKC. It brings together exceptional dogs, breeders, handlers, and exhibitors from across the country and around the world. This year, for the first time, one outstanding dog will earn the newly minted prefix title ANC (AKC National Champion).

The excitement extends well beyond the conformation ring, with championship week showcasing the breadth of AKC sports and competition. The week features the

AKC Agility Invitational, AKC Obedience Classic, AKC Rally Invitational, Juniors competitions in conformation, agility, obedience, and rally, and the always popular diving-dogs special attraction.

Leading into the National Championship, the Convention Center will also welcome specialties and group shows, along with events hosted by the Space Coast KC of Palm Bay, Brevard KC, and Central Florida KC, creating a full week of competition featuring outstanding dogs across a wide range of disciplines.

Hotel room blocks are open for those traveling to the event to compete. For information, visit the [ANC hotel and travel page](#).

Event coverage will be highlighted on [AKC.tv](#) and the AKC [YouTube](#) channel.

Premium Lists

[ANC All-Breed Show](#)
[National All-Breed Puppy & Junior Stakes](#)
[National Owner-Handled Series Finals](#)

UPDATES

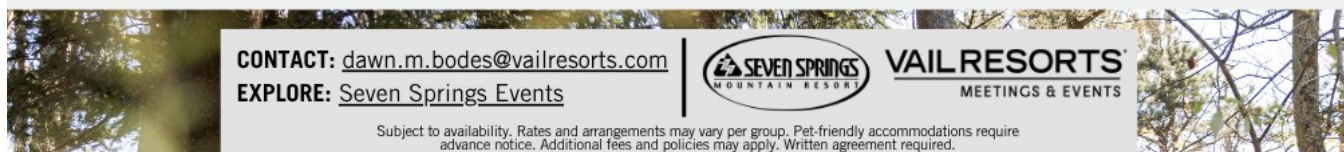
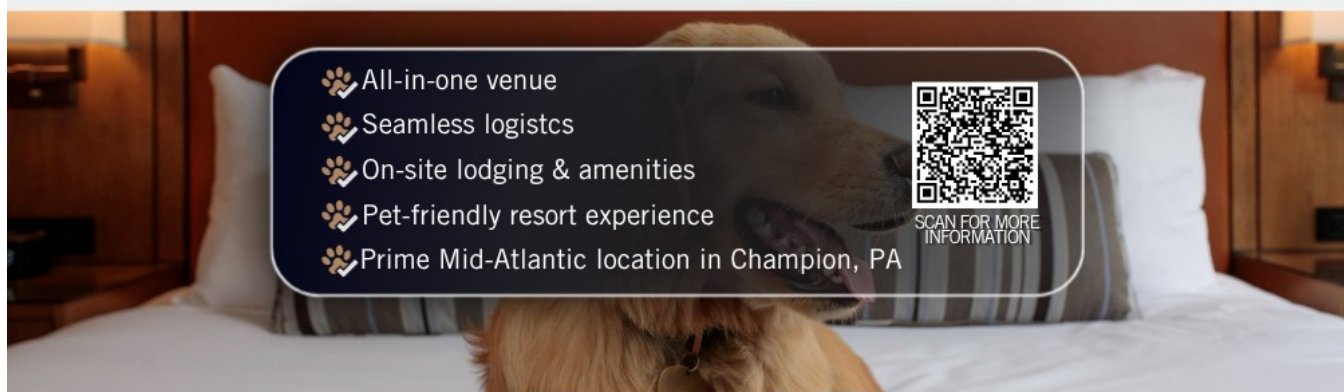
CHF: Final PPCP Donation

RALEIGH—Purina has donated \$78,838 in support of AKC Canine Health Foundation-funded canine health research through its final contribution from the Purina Parent Club Partnership program.

Since its launch in 2002, the PPCP program has provided more than \$9 million to support canine-health research and other initiatives that have improved the health and well-being of dogs. The PPCP concluded in 2025 after more than two decades of supporting canine health.

“Purina’s Parent Club Partnership program has been a powerful example of what can be accomplished when those passionate about dogs, breed clubs, and industry partners work toward a common goal,” CHF Chief Executive Officer Dr. Stephanie Montgomery says.

“For more than 20 years, this program has advanced discoveries that are improving the lives of dogs. We are deeply grateful to Purina and the Purina Pro Club members whose participation has built this legacy.”



UPDATES

2026 Spurling Scholars Announced

The AKC Humane Fund, Inc., has announced the 2026 recipients of the Sir John D. Spurling Scholarship, celebrating the human-canine bond. Each year, the AKC Humane Fund awards five fulltime students enrolled in courses of study that contribute to the well-being of dogs and the advancement of responsible pet ownership.

The scholarship is named for Sir John D. Spurling, founder of PetPartners, Inc., provider of comprehensive and affordable pet-health insurance to pet owners throughout the United States.

“The commitment these students demonstrate to animal well-being, academic excellence and service is remarkable,” AKC Humane Fund President Brandi H. Munden says. “We are proud to support their continued education as they work to make a meaningful impact for animals.”

The AKC Humane Fund awards \$2,500 to each of the five scholarship recipients, payable as tuition assistance to accredited institutions in which each student is enrolled in courses of study focusing on the care of pets.

AKC HUMANE FUND SPURLING SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Ava Belcastro Virginia Tech University, **Zoe Gayle Louise Brewer** Florida Southern College, **Andrea Megan Woehr** Mississippi State University—College of Veterinary Medicine, **Tiffany Chang**, Purdue University—College of Veterinary Medicine, **Savannah Ann Kendall**, Louisiana State University—School of Veterinary Medicine

Info: [Humane Fund scholarships](#)

New on AKC.tv

Enjoy these newly archived 2026 events on AKC.tv.

- [2026 Flyball CanAm Classic](#)
- [Carolina KC all-breed show](#)



DAVID WOO ©AKC

Join fellow breeders during
AKC National Championship Week for the inaugural



AKC® BREEDER SEMINAR

CONNECT - LEARN - BREED

December 9–10, 2026 | The Royal Canin Learning Lounge in Orlando



Why Breeding Matters

Doug Johnson



Breeding 101

Dr. Joellen Gregory



Making a Difference as a Breeder

Dale Martenson

TWO-DAY EDUCATIONAL EVENT | Sessions Daily 12:00–2:00 p.m.

- Designed for breeders of all experience levels •
- Expert-led presentations •
- Breeder-to-breeder focus •

EVENING BREEDER ROUNDTABLE | 5:00–6:00 p.m. both nights

- Q&A with past AKC Breeder of the Year and AKC ANC Best Bred-by-Exhibitor recipients and nominees •
- Gain insights on building a successful breeding program •
- Learn from some of the sport's most accomplished breeders •

\$50 registration includes all presentations & roundtable discussions both days

Registration proceeds will benefit the AKC Canine Health Foundation's Small Animal Theriogenology Residency Grant helping educate future veterinary reproductive specialists

Registration opens soon— for questions contact breederdev@akc.org



It's That Terrier Time of Year The Montgomery County KC show is America's premier all-terrier event, a mainstay of October's show schedule for generations of terrier folks since 1929. This month's *Gazette Gallery* slideshow pays tribute to this cherished institution with a collection of terrier art from the combined AKC and AKC Museum of the Dog collections. As you will see, there is something about a terrier's upbeat, tenacious personality the brings out the best in canine portraitists.

See the slideshow's YouTube page for captions identifying each painting.



AS OF TODAY, A TOTAL OF \$2.2 MILLION HAS BEEN DONATED BY THE FUND

The AKC Humane Fund provides support grants to non-profit organizations, including domestic violence shelters, rescue organizations, and veterinary care organizations, as well as scholarships to students who are dedicated to advancing canine welfare.



How We Help



Providing support to rescue organizations

The Fund provides grants to not-for-profit canine rescue groups that are taking on significant, rescue-related expenses while providing for dogs in need.



Helping domestic violence shelters

We provide grants to shelters that allow victims of domestic abuse to stay with their pets. AKC Humane Fund grants help these pet owners find peace and safety and transform their lives.



Providing access to low-cost Veterinary care

The Fund provides grants to organizations that help make essential veterinary care accessible to dogs whose owners are facing financial hardship.



Scholarships

Each year the Fund awards thousands of dollars in scholarships every year to students who are pursuing education focusing on the care of pets and the advancement of responsible pet ownership.



Awards for Canine Excellence (ACE Awards)

The Awards for Canine Excellence celebrate the ways in which dogs contribute to our lives. One award is given every year in each of these categories: Law Enforcement, Search and Rescue, Therapy, Service, and Exemplary Companion Dog.



Donate Today!

Join us in our mission to protect pets

akchumanefund.org

Ways to give:

Individual Giving • Organizational Giving • Legacy & Special Occasion Giving

Two Men, a Magazine, and a Pointer in a Field of Turnips

The January 1890 GAZETTE launched a 33-year-long association of this magazine with Spratt's, and with Landseer's Pointer.

Although Spratt and Cruft were household names in doggy circles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they were not “dog people.”

James Spratt, who lived for many years in America, came of an honorable old English family. He was an electrician whose specialty

was lightning conductors, for which he had taken out several patents.

In his so-called “declining years” he returned to London and took up the manufacture of biscuits

suitable for dogs, livestock, and poultry. He bought the entire issue of Sir Edwin Landseer's engraving of a Pointer in a field of turnips to use as his trademark. Later, upon finding knock-



TIMES PAST



Left: James Spratt, the dog biscuit king; right: Charles Cruft was page-one news in 1891, the year he launched his famous dog show.

offs of his product reaching the market, he stamped his biscuits with an X to identify them as genuine Spratt's Dog Cakes. The X had long been used by his ledger clerk, Charles Cruft, to distinguish trade customers from private customers.

From January 1890 through December 1923, the cover of THE AMERICAN KENNEL GAZETTE featured an ad for a variety of Spratt's products: Patent Dog Cakes, medicines, mange cure, kennels. The ad rate: a mere two dollars an inch. No wonder Spratt's held on

as our featured advertiser from 1890 to 1923.

This 33-year association with the GAZETTE made the Spratt's name famous among American fanciers. In turn, the revenue generated by the prominent advertising helped keep the young magazine solvent.

MR. DOG SHOW

Charles Cruft was for some years engaged as an industrial jeweler in his father's business. Finding this occupation sedentary and humdrum, he joined Spratt's small business in

1865 as a vendor of dog biscuits, and rose to the position of general manager. Through his efforts the business grew to the largest of its kind in the world and became Spratt's Patent, Ltd., "caters for everything in the way of biscuits and foods for dogs, cats, rabbits, poultry, pigeons, game and cage birds, besides manufacturing and supplying everything required in any way associated with all those varieties of live stock."

During his 30-year connection with Spratt's, Cruft became head of their dog-show department and visited and managed events throughout the United Kingdom and Europe. He had a special arrangement with Spratt's that allowed him to hold shows on his own account. These began with terrier shows in 1886. The world-famous English all-breed show founded by Cruft in 1891, and still conducted under his name, bears testament to Cruft's place in our sport.

SPRATT/AKC ARCHIVES; CRUFT/THE KENNEL CLUB IMAGE



familydog™

AKC'S
MAGAZINE to

**BRING
OUT
THE**



BEST IN YOUR DOG

Now an exclusively digital magazine, **AKC Family Dog** is emailed directly to subscribers —so we're with you and your dog wherever you go.

1 Year (6 issues) \$12.95

2 Years (12 issues) \$18.95

Another year just \$6 more.

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NO RISK GUARANTEE!

Cancel at any time, for any reason. The AKC will refund your money for any and all unreceived issues, no questions asked.



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!

Building a Better Dog Club

The clubs that will survive the next 20 years are the ones willing to be uncomfortable now.

By Heidi Kilgore, Delegate, Evansville KC



Lynda Beam

PHOTOS COURTESY LYNDA BEAM

FEATURE

Let me start with a confession. I have sat through more club meetings than I care to count where the same six people argued about the same three things for two and a half hours. The rest of us sat there wondering if we left the oven on. If that sounds familiar, congratulations—you belong to a dog club.

The thing is, most of us got into dogs because we love the breed. We love showing, we love training, we love the camaraderie of sitting ringside with people who understand why we own lint rollers in bulk.

Nobody signs up because they dream of serving on a nominating committee or debating whether the club checking account should move to a different bank. Yet somehow, that is where the energy goes—into the machinery of the organization instead of into the people who make it worth having.

I have been involved in dog clubs long enough to



see the pattern repeat. A club starts with passion, builds momentum, attracts good people, and then slowly begins to calcify. The same names cycle through the same positions. New members show up, feel invisible, and leave. The old guard wonders why nobody wants to volunteer anymore. It does

not have to go this way. The clubs that will still be standing in 20 years are the ones willing to take an honest look at themselves right now—even when what they see is not flattering.

THE MENTORSHIP GAP IS KILLING US

Here is a question every club should be asking:



What happens to someone who walks through the door for the first time? In too many clubs, the answer is nothing. They get a polite hello, maybe a newsletter, and then they are on their own to figure out how anything works. That is not a welcoming environment. That is a waiting room.

The single most impactful thing any club can do is pair

new members with experienced mentors. Not in a formal, awkward, assigned-buddy kind of way—just intentionally making sure someone is looking out for the newcomer. Introduce them around. Explain the unwritten rules. Answer the questions they are afraid to ask because they do not want to look stupid. Every person reading this can

remember what it felt like to be new. Most of us can also remember the one person who took the time to make us feel like we belonged. Be that person. Make it part of the culture, not an afterthought.

The newcomers who leave are not the ones who could not hack it. They are the ones nobody bothered to help. That is on us.



CLIQUEs ARE NOT A MYSTERY—THEY ARE A CHOICE

Every club has its inner circle. Pretending otherwise is like pretending your dog does not shed

on company—everyone can see the evidence. The question is not whether cliques exist. The question is whether the club tolerates them running the show.

Healthy clubs have friend groups. That is normal. Unhealthy clubs have power structures disguised as friend groups. The difference is whether someone outside the circle can

FEATURE

propose an idea, volunteer for a role, or disagree with a decision without being frozen out. If the same people control every committee, every conversation, and every decision, the club has a governance problem wearing a social mask.

Addressing this takes courage. It means the people in charge have to actively invite others in—not just leave the door unlocked and assume everyone feels welcome. Inclusion is not a passive state. It is a verb.

RUN YOUR MEETINGS LIKE YOU VALUE PEOPLE'S TIME

Nothing drains the life out of a club faster than meetings that feel like hostage situations. If your monthly meetings routinely exceed ninety minutes, something has gone wrong. Either the agenda is bloated, people are grandstanding, or the chair has lost control. Possibly all three.

Publish an agenda in advance. Stick to it. Give each item a time limit. If a discussion is going in circles, table it and assign a small group to come back with a recommendation. The full membership does not need to spend forty-five minutes debating the wording of a flyer.

This is not about being rigid. It is about respecting the fact that your members drove across town on a Tuesday night, probably after work and after feeding dogs, and they deserve better than watching two people relitigate something that was settled last month. Keep it moving. People will actually show up if they know they will get home at a reasonable hour.

TRANSPARENCY IS NOT OPTIONAL

If your members cannot easily find out how much money the club has, where it goes, and who decided to spend it, you

have a transparency problem. Full stop. Financial reports should be available to every member, not just the people sitting at the board table. Meeting minutes should be published promptly and completely—not sanitized versions that leave out anything uncomfortable.

The same goes for governance. Term limits or board rotation keep things healthy. When the same person holds the same position for a decade, it stops being dedication and starts being entrenchment. Fresh eyes catch things that familiar ones miss. Succession planning is not a personal insult—it is responsible stewardship.

Review your bylaws regularly. Treat them as a living document, not a relic carved in stone. If the bylaws do not serve the club as it exists today, change them through the proper process. That is what the amendment procedure is for.



STOP TALKING ABOUT RECRUITMENT, START TALKING ABOUT RETENTION

Clubs love to wring their hands about declining membership. Recruitment drives get launched. Social media campaigns get discussed (and rarely executed). Somebody makes a tri-fold brochure. Meanwhile, the

members you already have are quietly burning out, feeling underappreciated, and wondering why they are doing all the work.

Retention is the real problem, and it is harder to fix because it requires looking inward. Do you recognize your volunteers? Not once a year at a banquet, but consistently and publicly? Do

you survey your members about what they actually want, or do you assume you know? Do you offer programming that serves different interests—performance people, pet owners, breeders, newcomers—or does everything revolve around the show ring?

Here is a radical thought:

FEATURE

pet owners are not a lesser class of member. They are your pipeline. The person who shows up to a CGC class with their first puppy might be the person chairing your specialty in ten years. Treat them like they matter, because they do.

THE ELEPHANT IN THE RING: BEHAVIOR

This is the section nobody wants to write and everybody needs to read. Toxic behavior is the number one reason good people leave dog clubs. Not politics, not logistics, not disagreements about breeding — behavior. Yelling at someone ring-side. Gossiping about a member behind their back. Organizing whisper campaigns during elections. Retaliating against someone who dared to disagree. We all know it happens. Too many clubs choose to look the other way because addressing it feels harder than ignoring it.

It is not harder. It is just uncomfortable.

Uncomfortable is not the same as impossible.

The AKC Code of Sportsmanship and Civility is not decoration. It sets a clear standard for how members should treat each other — with dignity, respect, and professionalism, both in person and online. Your club's code of ethics exists for the same reason. These documents have teeth, but only if someone is willing to use them. A code of conduct that is never enforced is just wallpaper.

Clubs that thrive take conduct seriously. They address problems early, before they metastasize. They protect the people who report issues instead of punishing them. They make it clear, through actions and not just words, that belonging to this club means treating people decently. Period. The members you lose by enforcing standards are the ones you should have lost years ago. The members

you keep are the ones who will build something worth having.

ADAPT OR BECOME A CAUTIONARY TALE

The demographics of dog clubs have changed. The average age is climbing. Younger people interested in dogs often do not have the same schedule flexibility, financial resources, or tolerance for bureaucracy that previous generations had. That is not a character flaw—it is reality. Clubs that insist on doing everything exactly the way it was done in 1995 are not preserving tradition. They are accelerating their own decline.

Offer hybrid meeting options for routine business. Use social media to reach people where they actually spend their time. Make your website functional and current—not a digital time capsule from 2008. Respond to inquiries promptly. These are not revolutionary ideas. They

FEATURE

are baseline expectations in 2026.

Expand your programming. Fun matches lower the barrier to participation and remind people that this is supposed to be enjoyable. Partner with other clubs for joint events to share the workload and the cost. Offer workshops, seminars, and educational opportunities that go beyond the ring. The clubs that treat every gathering as a chance to learn and connect will outlast the ones that treat them as obligations.

THE SUCCESSION CONVERSATION NOBODY WANTS TO HAVE

Here is the uncomfortable truth: many clubs are one or two retirements away from collapse. The people who know how to put on a show, file the AKC paperwork, manage the finances, and keep the whole operation running are a small group. They are tired. They have been doing this for years. More times than not,

nobody has been trained to replace them.

Succession planning is not a suggestion. It is a survival strategy. Every key role in your club should have someone learning how to do it. Document your processes. Create handoff materials. Shadow the show chair, the treasurer, the trial secretary. Make this an expectation, not a favor.

The people who have been carrying the load deserve to know that the club will not fall apart when they step back. The club deserves to know it has a future. These two things are not in conflict—they are the same thing.

SO WHERE DO WE START?

You do not have to fix everything at once. Pick one thing. Maybe it is assigning mentors to new members. Maybe it is publishing your financials. Maybe it is finally having the conversation about the person whose behav-

ior everyone tolerates but nobody addresses. Start somewhere.

The clubs that will survive are not the ones with the most members or the biggest trophies. They are the ones where people feel respected, included, and valued. They are the ones where disagreements happen in good faith and get resolved through proper channels. They are the ones where the next generation sees a place worth joining.

We all got into this because we love dogs. Somewhere along the way, the dogs got buried under Robert's Rules of Order and parking-lot politics. It is time to dig them back out.

The future of your club is not somebody else's problem. It is yours. It is mine. It is all of ours. The question is whether we are willing to do the uncomfortable work to build something better — or whether we would rather sit in a three-hour meeting and complain about it.—**H.K.**



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Sunset Striders

New research explores the link between canine dementia and gait.

The onset of dementia often comes with a change in gait: for example, years before they display any loss in memory, patients may start to walk more slowly with shorter, uneven, and sometimes shuffling steps. These changes are thought to be driven by a deterioration in the function of the brain's frontal cortex and the cerebellum, which are responsible for planning and monitoring movement.

Now, scientists have found a similar change in dogs

with cognitive dysfunction syndrome, also known as canine dementia. Noting such a change in their pet could thus prompt owners to seek veterinary help earlier. The results are published in *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*.

“Here we show that the length of front leg stride taken by dogs decreases with age, but even more importantly, decreases with a cognitive impairment. In fact, we found that the effect of cognitive decline is larger

than the effect of age by itself,” says lead author Dr. Natasha J. Olby, a professor of veterinary neurology and neurosurgery at North Carolina State University.

Olby and colleagues followed 88 senior and geriatric dogs (females and males, and purebred or mixed-breed) as part of the Longitudinal Study of Canine Neuroaging. These had been enrolled in the study upon reaching 75 percent of the life expectancy for their size

FEATURE

and breed, corresponding to 12.7 years old on average.

THE STUDY

Dogs visited the laboratory for three days every six months for the remainder of their life. Here, they underwent a comprehensive battery of physical, neurological, physiological, and orthopedic examinations, including tests for cognition, mobility, vision, hearing, and strength. Each time, owners were asked to fill out questionnaires about their companion's health and behavior, for example the Canine Dementia Scale (CADES) to measure cognitive impairment and the Canine Brief Pain Inventory (CBPI) to assess chronic pain.

A filmed assessment of gait speed and stride length formed an integral part of these visits. Dogs were set up to walk at their own pace along a five-meter-long walkway, while being held on a slack leash by the researchers. No verbal

encouragement, treats, or other external motivations were given to them during these trials. Two key measures analyzed were the dogs' absolute average stride length and their relative average stride length, adjusted for body size.

The relative stride length of the front legs tended to decrease across visits. But more detailed analyses showed that this reduction was not driven to a significant extent by increasing age itself when age and cognition were included in the same statistical model: rather, the relative stride length decreased with worsening CADES scores, indicating that as dogs age, greater cognitive decline results in shorter strides of the front legs.

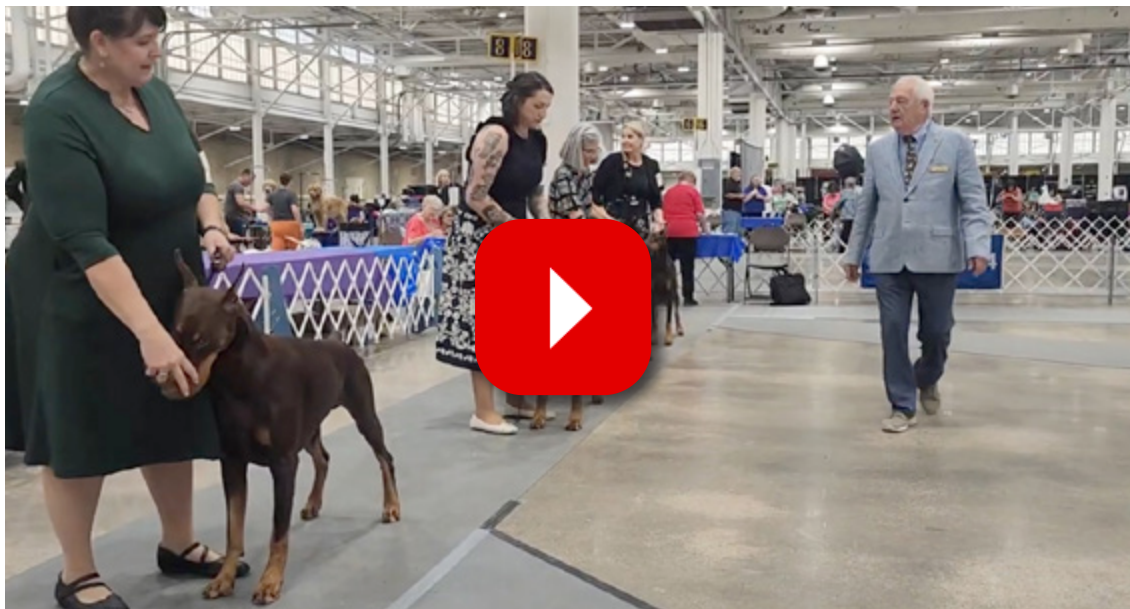
On average, a 10-point increase in CADES translated into a 1.2 percent reduction in the relative stride length of the front legs. In contrast, the relative stride length of the hind legs did not significantly change over

time, either in association with greater chronological age or worsening cognitive performance.

THE TAKEAWAY

The authors concluded that front leg stride length is an objective measure of mobility that reflects changes associated with age-related cognitive decline (and, to a lesser degree, chronic pain) in dogs. While other factors like orthopedic and spinal health can influence stride length, it could nevertheless be useful for clinical monitoring.

"If owners notice that their dog's front leg stride is becoming shorter they should visit their vet, for there are possible alternative causes such as arthritic pain or neck issues that can be treated," recommends Olby. "If a diagnosis of cognitive decline is made, there are likewise several lifestyle interventions than can be made, even if there is currently no cure. **GZ**



Dobes in the Hawkeye State

Thomas Nesbitt judges Doberman Pinschers at Des Moines KC. 7:10



Pure Dog Talk: Diego Garcia

Sportsmanship, conditioning, and treating dogs like royalty. 43:57

VIDEOS



Form and Function in Dog Breeding

From AKC Canine College: master breeders on the connection between structure and purpose. 13:50



Bird Up!

Schuylkill Valley German Shorthaired Pointer Club: A typical day in the field at an AKC Hunt Test. 13:24

VIDEOS



Retro Terriers

Schnauzer Shorts presents the Montgomery County KC Bests of Breed of the 1970s.

11:46



Come One, Come All!

Enjoy these beautiful vintage posters from dog shows around the world. 1:18

THE ONE BOOK EVERY DOG LOVER NEEDS

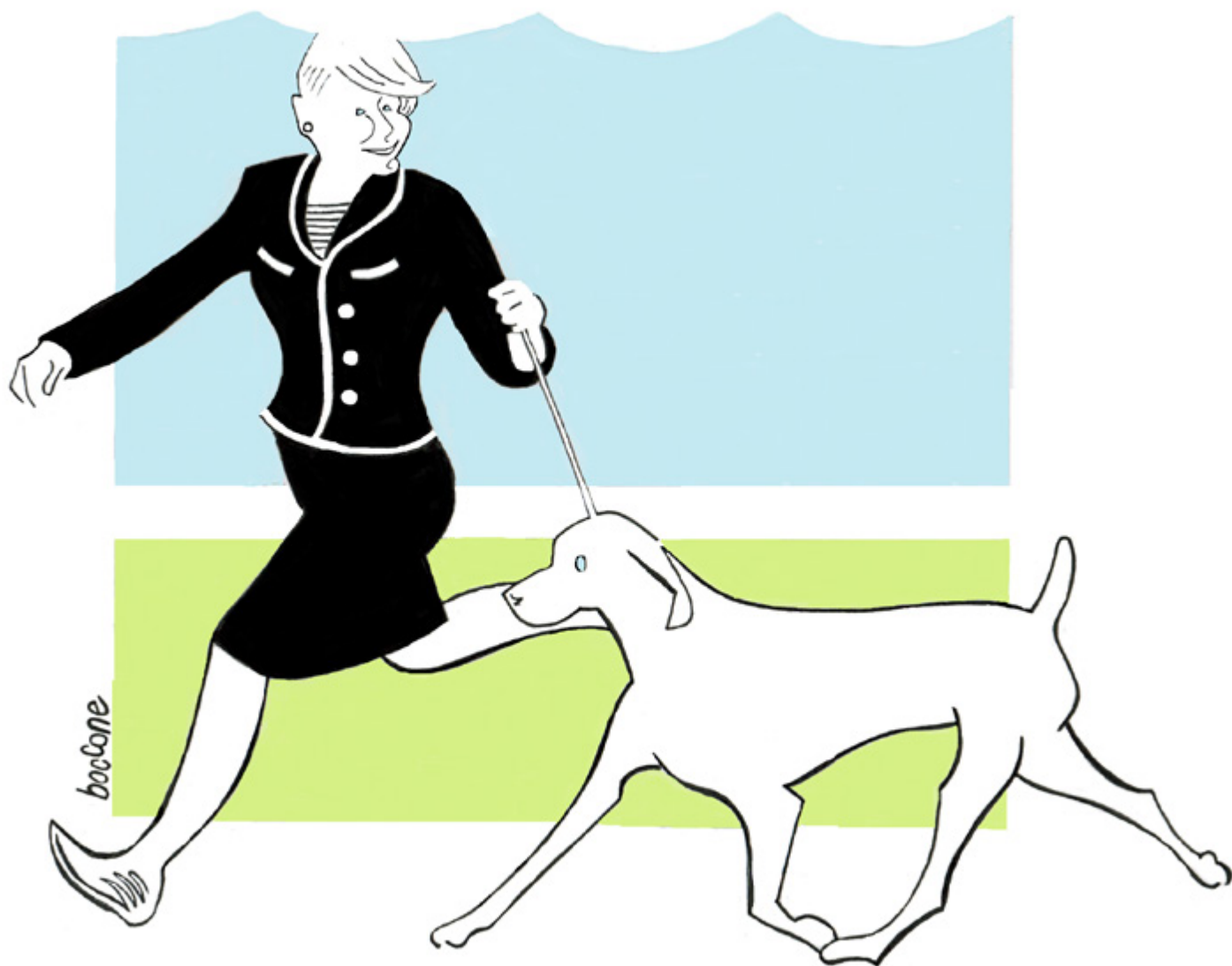


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Michelle Scott

We're approaching the 20th-anniversary year of our "Dog People" caricature page. To mark the occasion, GAZETTE staff is working on something special. It's a commemorative paper issue of the GAZETTE featuring more than 100 drawings, like the one on this page, saluting beloved and admired members of the fancy past and present. This unique collector's item is coming this fall.

BUD BOCCONE ©2026

BREED COLUMNS

Edited by **Arliss Paddock**

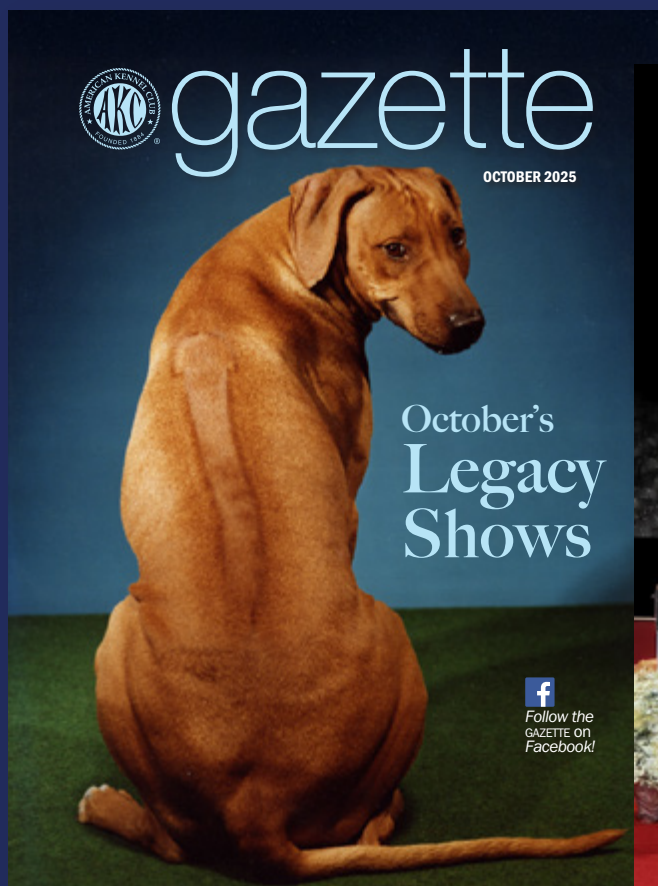


Do you struggle to maintain composure when non-dog people spout misinformation about dogs? In this month's Field Spaniel Society of America column, Shannon Rodgers offers advice on how to get through such conversations without blowing your cool.

MARY BLOOM ©AKC

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BREED COLUMNS

ABOUT THE BREED COLUMNS

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



THIS MONTH

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COURTESY OWNER

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Pointers

ARE POINTERS THE RIGHT BREED FOR YOU?

Every breed of dog was bred for a specific purpose that influences the nature of the dog and whether it is the right dog for your lifestyle.

The Pointer is a beautiful, athletic dog. When raised properly, with attention to mind and body, through good nutrition and health-care, exercise, good housing, gentle training, and socialization, the Pointer has a wonderful, kind, biddable temperament.

Pointers are typically calm in the house while also always ready for outdoor adventures. There is a lot of material written about Pointers (consider starting [here](#)). However, as with all breeds, you should try to meet Pointers in person before deciding whether to bring one into your family.

Where can you meet Pointers in person?

Pointers are not that common, and a person may

never encounter one in his or her day-to-day activities. Thus, to meet a Pointer, you may need to look up dog events or contact those who have Pointers.

A great place to start is to check out upcoming AKC events (<https://webapps.akc.org/event-search/>), as Pointers are often present at conformation shows, performance events (hunt tests and field trials for pointing breeds), and companion events. For each event, there is an event chair or secretary who can provide information about attendance and whether there will be Pointers competing, at what time, and where.

Further, you may wish to attend a Pointer club event. There is the [American Pointer Club](#) (APC, <https://www.americanpointerclub.org>), which is the parent club for the breed in the United States. The APC holds a national specialty each year that brings more Pointers than any other event throughout the year.

There are also several

regional clubs. The Pointer clubs hold Pointer conformation, performance, and companion events (sometimes as part of the same series of events, sometimes with each other, and sometimes separately). You can look for event announcements on the APC website at <https://www.americanpointerclub.org/pointer-events/>.

Making contact with Pointer breeders and owners

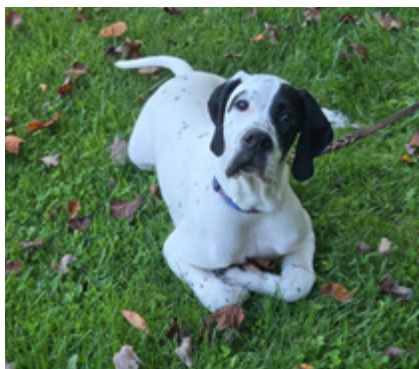
Beyond attending events, you can reach out directly to Pointer breeders and owners to arrange a “meet and greet.” Not everyone has availability in their schedules for these, but it won’t harm to introduce yourself and ask if it may be possible to meet some of the Pointers.

The APC has a [breeders’ directory](#) that lists the breeders who choose to make their contact information publicly available.

There are other breeders and owners who are APC members; to reach these,

BREED COLUMNS

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"The Pointer is a beautiful, athletic dog ... typically calm in the house while also always ready for outdoor adventures."

contact the APC (info@americanpointerclub.org) or even some of the breeders in the public directory to let them know about you, your location, your interests in Pointers, and your desire to meet the breed in person, and they may be able to direct you to an appropriate Pointer owner near you.

Finally, remember to meet at least a few Pointers in person, preferably from multiple households.

And always remember, each Pointer is an individual—so, while meeting multiple Pointers can help provide a more comprehensive idea of what the breed is like, any Pointer you may

choose to bring into your home will be his or her own person, displaying both typical breed characteristics as well as a set of unique qualities.

Good luck in your hunt for a new companion!

—Hayley Thompson,
windlight1@aol.com
[American Pointer Club](http://AmericanPointerClub.com)

(1) COURTESY KRISTIE REISENWEAVER / (2) COURTESY MARIANNE GYRAFAS / (3-7) COURTESY HAYLEY THOMPSON

BREED COLUMNS

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German Shorthaired Pointers

THE STANDARD OVER TIME

How well do you know your breed's standard? Developers of a breed usually come to agreement about the desired characteristics they want that are recognizable in addition to specific inherent qualities to do the job for which it is being created. Once created, a standard is set for future breeders to keep breeding true to type.

From the beginning, Shorthair breeders were in agreement that nose sensitivity and scenting capabilities couldn't be fine enough. A majority prevailed when it came to the inclusion of breeding stock exhibiting specific physical head characteristics thought at the time to enhance scenting capabilities. But in 1879, in Hannover, when the breed standard was revised, some of the best breeding stock were eliminated simply because they didn't exhibit the legendary ancient German lineament.



(Top) Axel v. Wasserschling (Germany); K.S. Kraft v. Syratal (Germany)

Questions about our standard arise from time to time: “When did they take that

out?” or “When did they change the [fill in the blank] section?”

COURTESY PATTIE TITUS

BREED COLUMNS

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Periodically a standard may be changed depending upon circumstance and/or the prevailing interest of those tasked with the change. Or for those asking the questions, it may simply be a misconception between two different breed standards or the time frames of their breed's current standard and a previous one.

The first documented import of a Shorthair was in 1926, with the breed recognized by AKC in 1930, and in 1935 individuals organized as the National German Shorthaired Pointer Club wrote a standard. In 1938, some of the same people were part of the group that made application to the AKC to become the breed's official U.S. parent club, the German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America.

The term "Roman nose" first appeared in the parent club's 1946 AKC standard: "The foreface should rise gradually from nose to forehead—not resembling the Roman nose."

In 1953, the AKC man-

dated the GSPCA to re-organize and become a separate entity from its original Minnesota club roots. In 1962 the re-organized club assembled a committee to review and rewrite the 1946 standard. Using Ernst v. Otto's 1902 German standard as a reference, the subsequent standard approved in 1976 didn't contain the "Roman nose" reference, nor did the revision in 1992 that is still current today.

In 1954 the Fédération Cynologique Internationale (FCI) was founded, and the standard for the Deutsch Kurzhaar contains a similar reference still current today:

"Viewed from the side the nasal bridge shows a slight curvature in all transition from a nobly constructed ram's nose to a slight rise above the straight line—more prominent in males. A totally straight nasal bridge, although still acceptable, is less attractive, a concave bridge (dish-face) is a serious fault."

Early American imports

came with German immigrants prior to World War I or with returning American soldiers after both wars. Both sources were depended upon the German kennel stock available at the time.

After WWII, the prepotent Axel v. Wasserschling dominated Shorthair breeding for almost a decade in Germany, with his get and grand get exported worldwide helping many German kennels rebuild and influenced the breed in America though imports. Axel had a Roman nose.

In today's show ring, regardless of whether AKC or FCI standards are applicable, one could conclude a Shorthair with a Roman nose would be "much ado about nothing."

—Patte Titus,

chexsix@mac.com

German Shorthaired
Pointer Club of America

Chesapeake Bay Retrievers

Our guest columnist
for this issue is Lorrie

BREED COLUMNS

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(Top) Chesapeake puppy Gemma learning Buried search; Sammie doing Exterior search



Johnson of Knoxville, Tennessee. Lorrie shared some information about her background:

“I’ve owned six Chesapeake Bay Retrievers

since 1992. I earned the CDX obedience titles on my first two dogs, and then with my third, I began competing in other sports. Lex (Ch. Silvercreek Applejohn

Alex, CDX, RAE, NA, OAJ, THD, WD) and Marina (Silvercreek Applejohn Marina, CD, GN, RAE, NAP, OJP, OFP) were my first conformation, rally, and agility dogs.

“I began agility training with my next dog, Ariel (GCh. Silvercreek Applejohn’s Little Mermaid, CD, PCD, BN, RE, NAP, NFP, OFP, SENE, SCME, SEME, SBME, SHDA, SWM, DS, TKP, CGC), but in 2019, I broke my foot and was forced to take a break from agility.

“Since Ariel still needed a job, we started training for scent work. We had competed in a few scent work trials before everything shut down for COVID in 2020. Luckily, scent work was something we could continue to do at home and around the yard.

“When we returned to competition in 2021, Ariel quickly completed

COURTESY LORRIE JOHNSON

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her Master level titles and clearly showed me that she preferred scent work over agility and anything else (except swimming!). We were working on her Detective title and had just gotten her eighth of 10 qualifications needed when we unfortunately lost her suddenly to cancer at only 7 years old.

“My current dog is Sammie (Huron Sands Applejohn’s Red Rocker, SWE, FITB, VHMP), who earned all five Novice scent work titles at only six months and five days old. We are now working on Master titles, and our goal is to compete at the Detective level by early 2027.”

AKC SCENT WORK

Scent work is one of the fastest growing events in AKC companion/performance sports. Emulating the work of professional detection and search and rescue dogs, scent work trials require the dog to find “target odors” and neither the dog nor the handler

knows where the “hides” are located. The dog must indicate when it successfully locates the hides and the handler must call “Alert.”

Four essential oils are used as the target odors: birch, anise, clove, and cypress. Searches are conducted in a variety of environments, called “elements”: Container, Buried, Interior, and Exterior.

In Containers, the odor is concealed within a container, such as a box or luggage. The Buried element is performed with the odors buried in containers of sand and/or water. For Interior, the odors are hidden in indoor, real-life rooms, so the dog could be searching in an office or classroom, for example.

For the Exterior element, odors are hidden in an outdoor area, and the dog must work through changing air patterns, weather conditions, and natural distractions.

There are five progressively more difficult levels, beginning with Novice, which consists of one hide

per search. The Advanced level contains two hides per search, while Excellent searches have three. At the Master level, the number of hides is unknown to the handler, which adds the difficulty of knowing when the dog has “cleared” the area.

The Detective level tests the most seasoned and well-trained teams, incorporating multiple interior/exterior sections over a large search area, an unknown number of hides, and numerous distractions.

(For information on AKC Scent Work, see <https://www.akc.org/sports/akc-scent-work/getting-started/>.)

Chesapeake that compete in scent work typically perform at a high level. They enjoy the opportunity to work independently, and their hunting skills and keen sense of smell serve them well in this sport.

I am fortunate to train with two other Chesapeake owners, Susan Varrasso and Lisa Varrasso, and together we have handled five Chesapeake Bay Retrievers

BREED COLUMNS

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to multiple scent work titles with numerous placements and High in Trials. Our current dogs are TakeMeHome Tucker, CD, PCDX, BN, GO, RM, RAE2, RC, FDC, BCAT, SWD, SWME4, SHDN, RATO, CGCA, CGCU, TKI, FTN (owned by Lisa Varrasso); Laurelwood Southern Gem, CD, PCD, BN, GN, RAE, FDC, SWAE, SWM, SCME, SEME, SBME, CGCA, TKN, ATT (owned by Susan Varrasso); and Huron Sands Applejohn's Red Rocker, SWE, VHMP, FITB (owned by Lorrie and Joe Johnson).

Scent work is a positive, fun activity that can be enjoyed by dogs of all ages, including puppies and seniors. It helps build a trusting relationship between the dog and his or her handler and is especially valuable for dogs who need a mentally engaging job.

Because the trials take place in real-life environments, searches can be practiced at home or in parks and other public

spaces. Be ready for a wide variety of distractions at trials, however. We have had searches take place beside campground swimming pools—a little scary with a Chesapeake who loves to swim.

One of the trials I did with Ariel was at a fairgrounds in Ohio. They also used the property to train harness racing horses. One of the Exterior searches took place in full view of the oval track. Ariel was searching well when the first horse came trotting by. She stopped to watch it briefly but then continued searching. Then another horse came around, and this time she watched it more intently until it disappeared from view. By the third time the horses came around the track, Ariel had figured out that they would be coming back, and she just stopped to wait for them. The judge and I were both laughing as she stood there staring at the track.

In a recent trial the Buried search was on a grassy area outside, and there

were 12 containers filled with sand and water. It was an Excellent level search, so three containers were “hot.” The property shared a hedgerow with several houses. While Sammie was searching, a young child suddenly popped out of the bushes and started running between all of the containers. The judge and I both had visions of “hot” sand and water going everywhere, but luckily the child's dad appeared quickly. I don't think Sammie expected a toddler to appear in her Buried search area, but she thought it was great fun!

We hope to see more Chesapeake Bay Retrievers become involved in scent work. The dogs really love it, and it is fascinating to watch their excellent noses at work.
—Lorrie Johnson

Thank you, Lorrie, for sharing your experiences with your dogs.

—Betsy Horn Humer
tiderunr2@verizon.net
American Chesapeake Club

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Curly-Coated Retrievers

THE LAUNCH OF A NEW CLUB

For several years, Sue Davis and I had kicked around the idea of forming a regional club. We wanted a club that would focus on the diversity of activities that Curly-Coated Retrievers participate in. There is such an overall emphasis on conformation, and our dogs are doing so much more. Also, there are many Curly owners who just want to share their enjoyment of their dogs and are not interested in competition of any kind. We wanted to engage these people.

The AKC has changed the definition of regional clubs. No longer can a club encompass multiple states. At a minimum, the region must be a state. It could also be part of a state. Initially, there must be at least 12 people from the region represented by the club, although anyone can join. In addition, the AKC created an easier way for club formation. It is mentoring



The newly formed Ohio Curly-Coated Retriever Club held its regional specialty in Canfield in August.

program with the assistance of an AKC representative, and it bypasses the tedious requirements of holding multiple match events.

In the fall of 2024, we contacted all the Curly people in Ohio to join us. We had an enthusiastic response. In December, we convened a

COURTESY ELLEN MANES

BREED COLUMNS

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board meeting and began the process of forming the club. We surveyed members to find out what kind of activities in which they were interested.

There were a wide variety of interests that expressed the versatility of our breed.

To that end, we hosted a Barn Hunt fun session in February 2025, and a general meeting in March. We planned a field demonstration for June, which unforeseen circumstances forced us to cancel. We also participated in a Fast CAT trial in September. In the meantime, we began the process of submitting the paperwork to become a licensed AKC club.

Once we completed the extensive and sometimes frustrating requirements for licensing, we were given permission to hold a designated specialty. Kudos to Sue Davis for being tenacious in filing the paperwork and keeping the process on track. We decided to hold the specialty at the Steel Valley Cluster to be held

in late July-early August in Canfield, Ohio.

The specialty was held on Saturday, August 1, at the Beaver County Kennel Club show. Our inaugural judge was Linda Clark. We had a wonderful entry of two class dogs, five class bitches, four dog specials, six bitch specials, one veteran dog, and one veteran bitch.

Best of Breed was GCh.G Pizzazz Kurly Kreek Raise a Ruckus, owned by Kathy and Scott Shifflett. Best of Winners/Winners Bitch was Fullcurl Pepper North with Pizzazz, owned by Melissa Kime. Best of Opposite was Ch. Daybreak Gullyfluff, RN, JH, owned by Kara Miller. Select Dog was Ch. Gypsy's Soul Fun in Black, FDC, FITB, RATN, DCAT, owned by Mark and Pat Stearns and Jennifer Kofron. Select Bitch was Ch. Jakandy Putn On the Ritz, CGC, BCAT, owned by Michele McGroarty. Winners Dog was Sovereign Soil's Niatross, owned by Lori Walton.

After judging we celebrated

by having a potluck lunch. We conducted a very profitable raffle, which earned the club over \$500. In addition, we got a very favorable review from the AKC rep on our specialty.

All in all, it was highly successful day. A week later, we received notification that we were approved as a fully licensed club.

We want to thank everyone who has supported us in the process. The old cliché that it takes a village is never more evident than when trying to launch a new club. We look forward to holding a variety of events in the coming year and hope you will come out to support us.

—Ellen Manes,

jollycurl54@gmail.com

Curly-Coated Retriever
Club of America

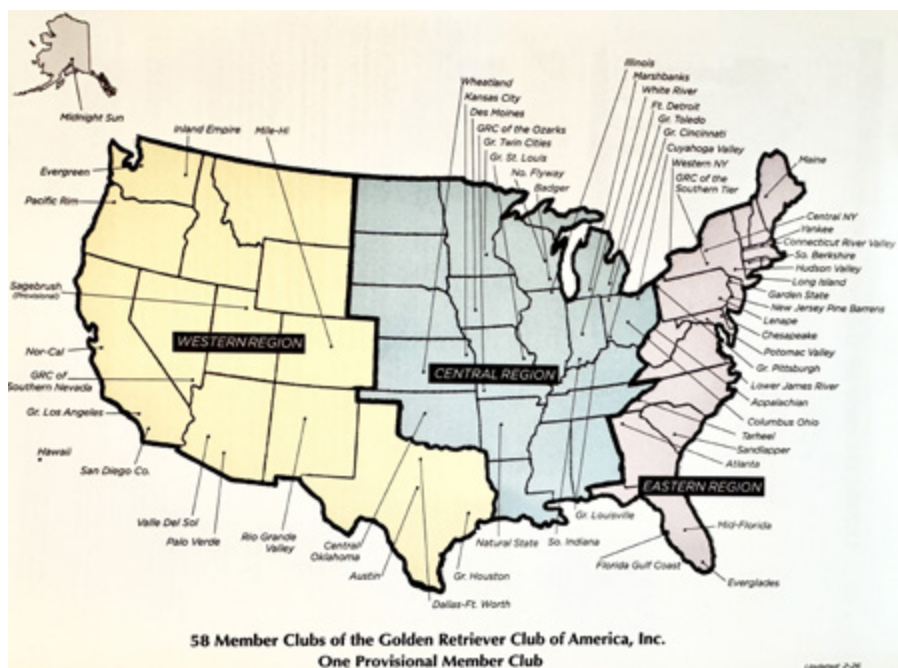
Golden Retrievers

IT'S NATIONAL TIME!

As you are reading this, the Golden Retriever Club of America national specialty should be in full swing in Greeley, Colorado.

BREED COLUMNS

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Top left: Map of GRCA member clubs. Highlights at Golden nationals: a bagpiper and agility, conformation, obedience, and field events.

(Dates are September 29 through October 10—event and location details can be found at <https://grca.org>.)

Let's explore this annual Glorious Golden Gala. For those who love the breed, this is the premier gathering in the

country of like-minded people and their dogs. Although Crufts and the World Dog Show regularly have entries nearly as large, the representation of countries and styles is unsurpassed at the GRCA national.

COURTESY GRCA

BREED COLUMNS

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With all venues included, the annual national specialty encompasses roughly 14 days in the months of September and/or October. This window of time allows flexibility based on climate in each region. There are three regions of membership in the GRCA: Western, Central, and Eastern. Not sure in which region you live? Check the accompanying map to find out!

The national rotates through each region, in the order of Eastern, Central, Western, then back to the Eastern region and so on. This year the national specialty is being held in the Western region; in 2027 it will be in Ocala, Florida (Eastern), followed by Des Moines, Iowa in 2028 (Central).

The annual Open All-Age Field Trial must be held in conjunction with the conformation and obedience events. This commitment to our retrievers being “primarily a hunting dog” has been a topic of discussion multiple times regarding holding the

field trial at another time of year. However, keeping the events together has always prevailed.

It is increasingly difficult to find field trial grounds; both public and private land suitable for the event are disappearing to development or becoming unusable due to dangerous vegetation (such as foxtails) or lack of water.

An annual challenge taken on by the national specialty committee of GRCA is the task of finding venues within a reasonable driving distance for a huge gathering of Goldens and their people at the main location, and a dedicated group of competitors for the field events.

By number, in the 2000s the combined entry of all venues for the national averages 1,838 of this amazing breed!

The required events at the national specialty, per the Bylaws, are conformation, obedience, and the field trial. All other events are optional. However, it has been decades since the only events offered were the

ones listed above. In 2026, exhibitors are offered those three events as well as agility, Certificate of Conformation Assessment, hunting tests, rally, scent work, sweepstakes (Puppy, Veteran, and Gundog), tracking, Working Certificate, and Working Certificate Excellent.

Along with the competitive events, the national hosts the annual board and general membership meetings, breeder education, a Field Trial Awards banquet, a health clinic, a Hero Parade to honor the participants in the Morris Animal Foundation Golden Retriever Lifetime Study, judges’ education, a Parade of Titleholders, the Top 20 competition, a welcome dinner at each venue, and a sometimes planned/sometimes spontaneous karaoke night, English tea, or taco truck party (we are a group that loves to socialize and enjoy life, just as our Goldens do). It is a busy couple of weeks!

One special achievement offered only at the national

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specialty or one of the three regional specialties each year is the coveted Triathlon Award. To earn the award, dogs must earn a passing score or placement in three areas: conformation, field, and performance. We are a proud multipurpose group of retriever enthusiasts. The Triathlon is considered a pinnacle accomplishment, and because it can be repeated each year the challenge never ends!

My wish is that you will be curious or excited enough to make your plans to attend the next national. It is an event that many breed enthusiasts never miss, making vacations blend with the annual national specialty locations.

If you are reading this while we are gathered in Greeley, come get your Golden fix! Information can be found for every national on the GRCA website (<https://grca.org>) or Facebook page (<https://facebook.com/GRCANationalSpecialty>). Come, sit, and celebrate the Golden Retriever in every

area in which it excels! Whether you are a spectator, volunteer, or exhibitor, you will be warmly welcomed.

Wishing success and safe travels to all national specialty exhibitors!

—Nancy Talbott,
belgoldnt@gmail.com
Golden Retriever Club of America

Labrador Retrievers

Our guest author for this two-part series is Deborah L. Brown.

JUMP-STARTING PUPPIES FOR FIELD WORK PART ONE

Learning how to learn

You have put your heart and soul, plus love and so much hard work, into bringing a litter of healthy, sound baby retrieving machines into the world. Whether their future is as a hunting buddy, a happy Working Certificate holder, an eager and talented hunt test qualifier, or an all-star field trial competitor, puppies destined for the field can be taught to learn how to learn at a very

young age. That capability will serve them so well when their formal training begins.

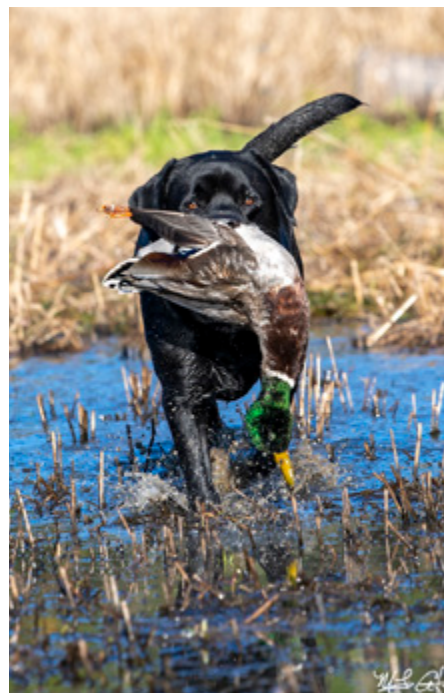
By their second day of eating gruel, I begin teaching my puppies the all-important habit of coming when called. Before I round the corner with their meal, I blow my come-in whistle. At my house, that sounds like “toot-toot-toot” on a Roy Gonia Mega pea whistle, because that is the whistle I use in the field. By the time these puppies are 5 weeks old, I can blow that whistle anywhere, including while they are wrestling in the yard or sound asleep under a Kuranda bed, and they all come running. How much fun is that?!

A side benefit of this lesson is that the recall that is in place when they go home with their forever families stays with them as long as they can hear, on the condition that it is intermittently and randomly reinforced—and that no one ever plays chase-the-puppy with them.

Shortly after, they learn to love water. They have been

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Doing what they were bred for: Labrador Retrievers Northledge Adira, CDX, MH, and Northledge Leeway, CDX, MH

exploring their puppy yard long enough to be comfortable climbing up on very low platforms. I put about an inch of water in a kiddie pool, with one low platform inside and one outside of the pool, and let Mama or one of my other big dogs out to play. It doesn't take long for the big dog to jump into the pool to soak, and the puppies just follow right along. From then on, they help themselves. I will put very small bumpers or udder tug-toys in the pool. They learn to stick their noses

underwater to get the prize. A side benefit? They learn to love being chamoised dry and having their ears cleaned and toenails (softened by the water) clipped!

Learning how to engage

By 8 weeks, it is time for them to advance their ability to engage with me, another all-important foundation skill. Down the road they are going to be required to be my devoted teammate, ignoring distracting sounds, smells, and movement to

focus on our retrieving tasks at hand. Teaching them to ignore a startled rabbit crossing the line to a blind begins with baby steps staying engaged with me. I earn their rapt attention by making sure I am the most fascinating being in their universe.

I use a lure (often a very small bit of string cheese) to coax them into performing the behavior I want, but that lure is used for just a very short time—one or two sessions. I use a reward marker: I use

MARK ATWATER, UPCLOSE PHOTO / COURTESY DEB BROWN

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the word “yes!” spoken with enthusiasm and always followed by (1) a loving touch from me, and (2) a small treat or toy to mark the exact behavior I want.

As Connie Cleveland-Nolan, internationally renowned dog trainer, people-teacher, coach, and top competitor in obedience and retriever field trials, instills in us, her students: “If you say it, you must pay it.” I also use a “carry-on marker” (I use a calm “good dog”) to give them the information they need to keep doing what they are doing (not followed by a treat or toy).

What behaviors do I teach?

I teach hopping up on a Cato board (or my veterinary scale) with all four feet to sit, teaching them to stay there until released—starting with me close by for just 10 seconds, and working up to several minutes with me a few feet away.

A working gun dog needs to know that sit means sit until a different command is given. While they sit, I will

have a friend pet them. Sit means sit!

In the December 2025 Duke study “Inside the Minds of Puppies: How Do They Develop Their Thinking Skills?” researchers made three key discoveries. One was this: “Puppies appear biologically primed for cooperative communication. Skills such as understanding simple human gestures emerged early, alongside basic skills like working memory.”

Once my puppies are able to hop up on a Cato board and pause there, I put out three Cato boards about eight feet apart in a triangle with me in the middle and teach them to hop from one to another by pointing. They quickly catch on to this basic casting drill. How exciting to see a young puppy doing rudimentary “overs” and “back”!

Down. I like to induce a down by sitting on the ground beside them and luring them under my bent knees. I have found that makes the information

clearer for them. I down my dogs in hunt tests while they are honoring, to be certain they understand they are not going to be sent to retrieve.

I do almost all my teaching at this point without a collar or leash except when the lesson is to walk on a loose leash. I want my puppies to choose to engage with me, and they do. —Deborah L. Brown

To continue in the January 2027 issue.

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

Gordon Setters

SOME HISTORIC FIRSTS

Gordons as a breed have been around for quite some time, so let’s look at some of the historic “firsts.”

The first two Gordon Setters in the U.S. were Rake and Rachel, imported by George Blunt of New York in 1842. Blunt gave Rachel to his good friend Daniel Webster. The first Gordon registered in a North American studbook was Bang, owned J.W. White

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The first Gordon Setter to earn an obedience title: Timberdoodle Dan of Avalon, UDT, who earned all his titles in 1941 with all qualifying scores.

of St. Louis. The registry was the National American Kennel Club Stud Book, published in St. Louis in 1866. In 1886 that registry was merged into the AKC Stud Book. Gordon Setters were one of the original 10 breeds recognized by the AKC.

The first Gordon Setter specialty show for which results exist was held in 1945 in north Westchester, New York, with an entry of 24. Best of Breed was Ch. Downside Bonnie of

Serlway, with Opposite to Ch. Brenda of Serlway—littermates.

The first Gordon Setter national specialty did not come along until 1983 and was held in Springfield, Ohio, and judged by Mrs. Jeanette Allen of Scotland, with an entry of 393. She selected Ch. MacAlder Penelope for Best of Breed, and her son Ch. MacAlder Best for Shojin as Opposite. The oldest current specialty is the Midwest specialty, held each May in Ohio. It's

been going since 1954.

October 4, 1969, marked another first for a Gordon Setter, when Ch. Legend of Gael became the first Gordon to win a Best in Show in the U.S., at the Vacationland KC show in Maine. He was owned by Mrs. Cheever Porter of New York and was handled to Group 1 by Robert Forsyth and to Best in Show by Jane Forsyth.

The first Gordon to win the Sporting Group at Westminster came in 1975, when Ch. Afternod Yank of Rockaplenty, owned by Mrs. W.W. Clark of Virginia and handled by George Alston, took the blue rosette.

There are no known records listing the first Gordon Setter champion of record, so more research needs to be conducted.

The first Gordon to earn an obedience title is a remarkable case of “brains” in the GSCA’s motto of “Beauty, brains, and birdsense.” The dog was Timberdoodle Dan of Avalon, UDT, owned by

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George Dixon of Ohio. Dan began his obedience career on March 8, 1941, when he was 2 years old. He finished in three trials and earned his CD on April 20, 1941. He plunged into Open competition on June 14, 1941. He completed his CDX on August 24, never missed a beat, and completed his Utility Dog title on September 7, 1941—one day shy of six months since earning his first CD leg. He earned his tracking title on August 22, 1941, as tracking was a part of the Utility requirements at that time.

He never had a nonqualifying score, and of his nine scores, six were better than 190.

The first Gordon to earn the Obedience Trial Championship was in 1985, when OTCH Steve's Gift of Love, TDX, owned by Janie and Steve Bristow of North Carolina, earned the last points under Gordon breeder-judge and longtime obedience judge George Pugh.

The first Master Agility

Champion was Ch./MACH3 Brentwood's Commander in Chief, who earned the title in April 2005. He was owned by Julia Ashley and Pam Krothe, of Ohio and Indiana.

There are many firsts in the field category, covered in another column.

—Jim Thacker

[Gordon Setter Club of America](#)

Irish Setters

IRISH SETTERS IN HUNT TESTS AND FIELD TRIALS

We all see Irish Setters in shows or walking in the neighborhoods with their owners, but how often do we see them doing what they were bred to do?

One of our club members is an example of mastering not only showing our beloved breed but also working them in the field. To our excitement, Kelli Aitken-Thompson and her Irish Setter Griffin, NGDC FC AFC Red Bird's The Fifth Element, won the 2026 AKC Pointing Breed Gun

Dog Championship. This is the first time in history an Irish Setter has won the prestigious placement at this event.

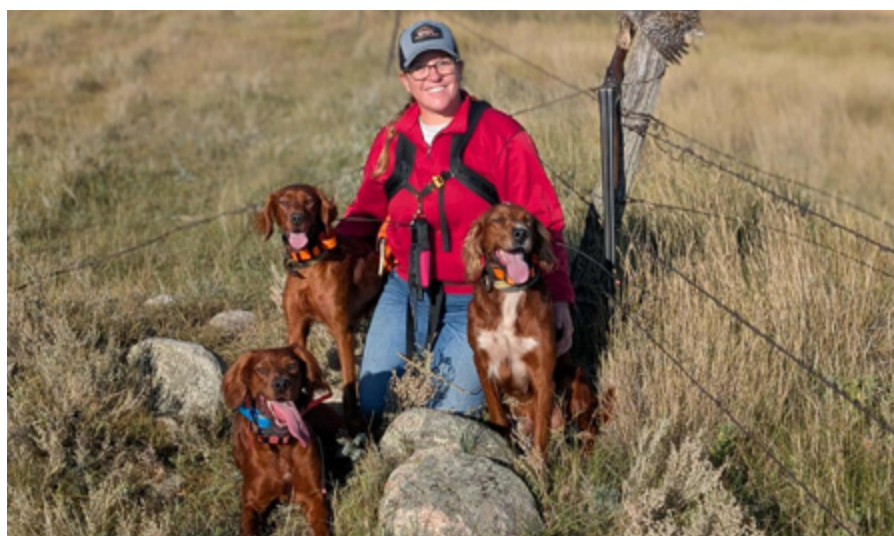
Kelli started showing dogs in conformation at age 7, and started showing Irish Setters at age 8. She “walked behind her dog” in the field at age 25 and was hooked. A few years later she started breeding Irish Setters.

I've asked her to explain to the Irish Setter fancy how hunt tests and field trials are conducted. So many of us who own (or are owned by) Irish Setters know what they were bred to do but do not know much about competing with them in that capacity. Kelli was kind enough to share the following information.

“Field trials and hunt tests are both excellent ways to prove pointing breeds, with the difference being that a hunt test is judged to a ‘meet the standard, pass/fail’ manner, whereas a field trial is more like a dog show and judged in a ‘who's the best specimen’ approach.

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Top: At left in the lineup, Kelli Aitken-Thompson's Irish Setter Griffin, winner of the AKC Pointing Breed Gun Dog Championship—the first time in history an Irish Setter has won this prestigious event. Bottom photos: Kelli with her Irish Setters in the field.

“Hunt tests allow dogs at least 6 months of age to run in any of the three levels of testing. This allows for adult dogs to be run in a basic/introductory test we call

Junior Hunter, or JH. JH doesn't require any formal training, but the dog must find and point birds and show no aversion to gunfire. Formal training, called

steadying or breaking, must be done for higher levels of hunt tests.

“Field trials are a bit more limiting. Puppy and Derby stakes allow dogs under 2

COURTESY KELLI AITKEN-THOMPSON

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years to compete with no formal training, but after 2, the only options for competition require dogs to be fully steady on their game to be eligible for a placement.

“Field trials offer horse-back and walking options, with walking trials becoming more popular. For someone who is just trying to evaluate a dog’s natural desire and ability, a Puppy/Derby stake or a Junior Hunt Test is an excellent place to start.

“Training and development are the most challenging part for most competitors. Some people send their dogs to professional trainers who specialize in appropriate game and gun introduction, as well as formal breaking for advanced competition. Other times, people will find a method, attend seminars/lessons, watch videos, read books, and train their own dogs.

“Generally, the first year is focused on development, building the desire to hunt appropriate cover in an independent but cooperative manner, and find and point

game. As far as the formal breaking process goes, every dog is different and is ready for that process in their own time and will go at their own pace. This pace can be influenced by things like genetics, age, maturity, and opportunity.

“The training suggestion I recite the most is that not every training program is right for every dog. Find the right method for your dog and stick to it. I see many novice people who try too many approaches, and they end up with a frustrated and/or confused dog. Additionally, not every person is worthy of taking advice from.

“Field trial and hunt test season vary from one region to another, with weather patterns being a major influence. Generally, you’re looking at opportunities to attend events in the spring and fall. You can use AKC Event Search to find pointing-breed hunt tests and field trials near you.

“If you’re looking for suggestions to begin your

training, try reaching out to the clubs that are hosting these events. Generally, they will have a few good leads they’re happy to share to help get you started in the bird dog community.

“I personally spend a large amount of effort contributing to a nonprofit organization called HerUpland. We work to further educate and provide opportunities in upland hunting, bird dog training, conservation, and mentorship for youth and women through camps all across the country. I love mentoring women at these camps, and the pointing-dog training clinics are great for novices!”

In closing, the Irish Setter Club of America and fancy is excited to have an Irish Setter win the AKC Pointing Breed Gun Dog Championship. This is such a prestigious win, and we celebrate this accomplishment and congratulate Kelli. Kelli is a wonderful example of what can be done with our beautiful breed on many levels. My husband put a JH on one of our dogs, and it was

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so much fun to watch the two of them in the field. The dogs truly love this sport, and seeing them do what instincts drive them to do is a beautiful sight.

Thank you for sharing your expertise, Kelli!

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

[Irish Setter Club of America](#)

Irish Red and White Setters

A BUSY IRISH RED AND WHITE SETTER IS A HAPPY IRISH RED AND WHITE SETTER

This month we share an interview with Diane Welling Companion Sports. Diane's family has four dogs—Innis, age 10, an IRWS who is methodical, and most concerned about being perfect; Kerrera, age 3, a Gordon Setter referred to as "a Border Collie in Gordon coat"... fast and can be reckless; Scarlett, age 4, an Irish Setter between the other two dogs; Sissi, age

10, retired and titled in conformation, agility, and Hunt Test. Quote from Diane: "My primary goal is to have fun with my dogs!"

Our interview with Diane follows.

How long have you had setters?

I have had a setter most of my life. My first dog was an Irish Setter my horse-riding trainer bred and gave to me for Christmas at age 13. Molly left me the day before Christmas Eve, when I was 28. We felt it was not fair to have a setter in a subdivision, so I did not have another setter until we bought the farm. My husband's mother was on sabbatical in England. She found and shipped a Gordon to me. After the Gordon passed, I wanted another Gordon with European lines. We found Munroc Kennels, who co-own my Gordons and IRWSs.

What drew you to them?

When your first experience was great why switch

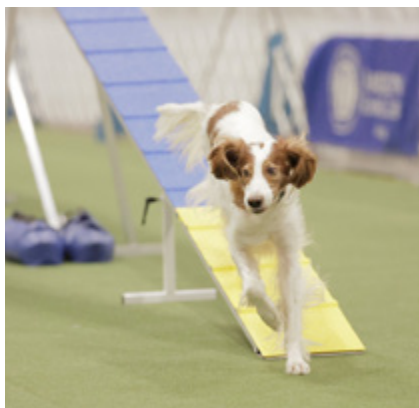
breeds? There are several varieties of setters. My husband wanted an IRWS. On a trip to England he met with Cataluna Kennels, who suggested kennels to obtain an IRWS. He fell in love with her Irish. We started our purchases with Irish, later getting an IRWS from the kennel she suggested.

When do you start training?

Early on I play training games—where to put your feet, how to stack, playing on a small teeter board. Kerrera was about 3 months when we started running around barrels, slowly adding commands to the activities. As early as I can, we enroll in puppy kindergarten to help with socialization. When they are about 9 months we take beginning obedience classes at our club. We start low jumps after about a year, working with our vets to define the appropriate time to adjust their jump heights. I now keep pigeons to use for field training. I need to get better at working them with the pigeons.

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From top: (1) Irish Red and White Setter competitors at the AKC Agility Invitational Kathy and Tully Brown, Diane and Innis, Lou, and Gracie, and Corlie and Bree; (2) representing our lovely breed in agility at Orlando; (3) Innis clears the dog walk at Great Dane Invitational; (4) Innis flying in form over the high jump.

What is the dogs' training routine?

I live on a farm, ride and train my dressage horse, and work full time. The past few years I have concentrated on the dogs due to soundness issues with my riding partners. I just purchased a new horse, so I again will need to balance horses and dogs.

I train at Queen City Dog Training Club. Every day we walk around the field, practicing recalls, tricks, and finding things in the field. I try to get them to practice more with field training when I can schedule time with a trainer. I host training clinics at my farm. For agility, I also have some equipment

at home and an indoor arena so that I can set up courses. My new horse has had spooking issues with the weave-poles at the front of his schooling area. But they will stay, and he will adjust.

What about grooming?

Today they are a bit hairy and need their setter cuts.

COURTESY KATHY BROWN / COURTESY DIANE WELLING / COURTESY CORLIE ELDRED

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Innis and Sissi I don't groom much. Kerrera and Scarlett are better groomed because they are still in conformation shows.

I work with my vets on food, and I feed easily purchased food because at times they can go with the co-owners. It's easiest to normalize one food that is easy to buy.

How do you determine what AKC events to participate in?

I primarily participate in agility, conformation, and field work. I work full time and campaign many dogs at a time, this works well for me.

Do your dogs have other titles?

All my girls are champions or grand champions. All have agility titles. Sissi earned a Junior Hunter title. She was awarded the GSCA Brains Beauty Bird Sense award as Owner Handled.

Is there a point where you focus on one event?

I love going to the AKC Agility Invitational! I am

so lucky, Innis has been invited for the past six years. Kerrera was invited last year before she turned 3. Scarlett as well as Innis and Kerrera are currently on the list for this year.

I am also an avid volunteer! I work with awards for this event, also at NAC in 2026. Sadly, I could not schedule to help in California this year. The AKC Agility team is wonderful to work with. Every one of those people works so hard to make the event phenomenal for the competitors! I wish more competitors would give back to their sport.

There are conformation shows that are very special to me: Marietta; Hamilton, Ohio; and Monroe, Michigan. Marietta the OVIRWSC is another fun, active group, and our show is at this venue. Hamilton is close in location. Several of my dogs have gotten their first points and finished there. In Monroe, Innis had a great Best of Breed win there when she was younger.

It is exciting to have lots of IRWSs at an event. Yes, I am very excited to work with Queen City to host the IRWS agility trial. We are extremely fortunate to have all but one of the Invitational competitors come for this event. We crate together. It is a wonderful time! The group is fun and super supportive.

High in Trial was awarded both days: Saturday—Bree, owned by Keith and Corlie Eldred. Sunday—Tully Brown, owned by Kathy Brown. The ribbons were gorgeous! We treated ourselves to Cincinnati ice cream.

Can you tell us about going to Orlando?

I love, love, love going to Orlando! The AKC Agility Invitational is a fun event! Ohio people crate together. Our group is fortunate to qualify a large number of dogs. We travel together and find fun activities to enjoy with our dogs.

Any other things you would like to share?

Cherish every day with

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your dog! They may not be here tomorrow. Strive to be the best handler you can be.

Thank you, Diane.

—Cynthia Lancaster,

clclancaster@gmail.com

Irish Red and White Setter
Association of America

Clumber Spaniels

JACK OF ALL TRADES

Picture this concept in your mind: *sporting dog*.

What do you immediately envision? A beautiful setter in the field, sun glinting off his coat as he pursues a downed bird? Pointers locked and loaded, awaiting the gun? Retrievers launching from the boat in pursuit of a downed duck? The Clumber Spaniel delightedly holding three tennis balls at once in his jowls? ... what??

I dare say many folks picturing the affable Clumber Spaniel in their mind's eye recall the somewhat famous photos of Clumbers holding three tennis balls at once.

The standard describes the breed, in part, as “dignified, pensive, with great enthusi-

asm for work and play.”

It is the latter that piqued my interest, in determining what folks actually *do* with their Clumbers. A survey was undertaken, and the results might surprise you.

Primarily an upland hunting dog, the Clumber is nonetheless a “Jack of all trades,” or so it would seem. Stories abound of Clumbers arriving on the hunt field among more traditional breeds. Initially there was a bit of skepticism from the traditionalists as their dogs put up birds one after the other. When the field had been cleared, the Clumber

was put to work and flushed birds that had been missed by the more traditional breeds. It is said that by the end of the day the hunters had a newfound respect for the Clumber’s innate hunting ability!

But what of the average Clumber family whose dog plays in the yard and sleeps on the couch? Given the breed’s “fluffy marshmallow” appearance, their list of accomplishments is quite amazing.

Survey results revealed quite an extensive list of activities involving the versatile Clumber Spaniel.



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While the expected “couch warming,” snoring, and eating ranked highly, the list of activities in which Clumbers participate is huge. Considering that Clumbers are a somewhat rare breed, being listed as a “minor” spaniel, the number and variety of activities was surprising. Almost 10% of respondents reported involvement with conformation shows; 6% obedience and rally; nearly 7% CGC activities and such; almost 8% were traveling companions; and 3% each tracking, hunt tests, and therapy work.

Within the breed record there are dock-diving Clumbers; rat-hunting Clumbers; many Clumber service dogs, including emotional support animals (ESAs); those working with children learning to read; a hearing assistance dog; an airport greeter; and even a search-and-rescue Clumber who was deployed by LAPD, the California Office of Emergency Services, and the Maricopa, Arizona, Sheriff’s Department more

than two dozen times!

The record shows Clumbers participating in Barn Hunt, CABT, Fast CAT, Fit Dog, Fetch, Meet the Breeds, NASDA, Parkour, nose work/scent work, rodent control (different from Barn Hunt for sport), trail riding, trail walking, tricks training, and more!

The vast majority of Clumbers excel at treat-eating, couch-sitting, snoring, watching TV, butt-wiggling, kisses, and taking their place as integral members of the family.

In short, it seems no matter which activity you have in mind, a carefully chosen Clumber can fit right in. Clumber Spaniel Club of America (CSCA) breeder referral is available should you need assistance in pursuing your passion with a Clumber by your side. Check the CSCA website (www.clumbers.org) for notice of any upcoming activities or to get in touch to meet this “Jack of all trades.”

A word of caution, however: Clumbers are like potato chips, and it is the rare family that has just one!

See you at the next CSCA national specialty in Asheville, North Carolina, March 13–19, 2027.

—Norma Simpson,

Clumber1@hughes.net

Clumber Spaniel Club of America

Cocker Spaniels

THE “TOP LINE” OF THE COCKER SPANIEL TOPLINE

The topline of the Cocker Spaniel is where much is revealed.

A “top line” message is the distillation of the key points we want to get across in our communications. This column will relate the Cocker Spaniel overall structure and the components of that structure, to see what can affect the appearance of Cocker topline when still and when in motion.

Ever wonder how the wealth of information we gather on Cocker structure is all pulled together? This

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Cocker Spaniel Ch. Gilfran's Getaway, 1944 (Sargent Studios photo)

column examines how the Cocker topline functions as a premier indicator of the dog's overall structure and performance.

The foundation for guidance, as usual, is the official AKC standard for the Cocker Spaniel as approved by the breed's parent club, the American Spaniel Club.

We go right to an excerpt from the standard's "General Appearance" section: "He stands well up at the shoulder on straight forelegs and with a topline sloping slightly toward strong, moderately bent,

muscular quarters." Then we go to an excerpt from the standard's "Body" section: "Back is strong and sloping evenly and slightly downward from the shoulders to the set on of the docked tail. The docked tail is set on and carried on a line with the topline of the back, or slightly higher ..."

And then to the "Gait" section: "The Cocker Spaniel, though the smallest of the sporting dogs, possesses a typical sporting dog gait. Prerequisite to good movement is balance between the front and

rear assemblies. He drives with strong, powerful rear quarters and is properly constructed in the shoulders and forelegs so that he can reach forward without constriction in a full stride to counterbalance the driving force from the rear. Above all, his gait is coordinated, smooth and effortless."

Having gathered all that information, how do we evaluate the Cocker's structure in relation to its purpose? How do we determine if the Cocker is in balance?

First, we can evaluate the structure in an examination of the Cocker while standing on an exam table.

There are a couple practical challenges to examining the topline by feel. First, we have the level of grooming. Are we feeling through coat left on the topline or perhaps in the tail set area? There may even be excess coat left on the topline from the set on of the neck and shoulders to the set on of the tail. You have to use your hands to feel in an attempt

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to “unsee” excess coat.

Secondly, there may be the challenge of excess weight over the shoulder area and over the hip area in front of the set on of tail. Not only is this not good for the individual dog because it puts abnormal stress and strain on hip joints, but also it could mislead the examiner in judging topline.

We move to examination of the side gait and topline in motion. This is surely helpful in evaluation of the overall structure, balance, and stability. We do not want to see any rolling in motion, no roaching, and no sway-back dips in the topline. The dog should not appear high in the rear. The topline should not be running in reverse from the tail set downward to the withers. (Yes, it happens!)

We must look past any “grooming tricks,” any excess coat sitting in the topline, and any excess weight over the back also.

Then, to get the whole structure story as revealed in motion, we think back to the picture expressed in

the “General Appearance,” “Body,” and “Gait” sections of the standard as quoted.

The examination on movement should reveal whether a particular Cocker fits the function for the breed in motion as these portions of the standard require.

—Kristi L. Tukua,
columnist

[American Spaniel Club](#)

English Cocker Spaniels

SPOTLIGHT: JUNIORS IN THE FIELD

At the 2025 National Amateur Cocker Championship (NACC) in Pinckneyville, Illinois, 11-year-old Eli Sims made history. Handling FC AFC Warrener’s Yellow Shafted Flicker (Lila), a lemon roan English Cocker Spaniel owned by Jonathan Sims, Eli captured first place to secure the National Amateur title as the youngest handler to ever win this prestigious competition.

Attending this history-making event—my very first cocker field trial—the

energy in the air was electric, and the bond between handlers and their dogs was unforgettable.

While shagging birds during the first series, I noticed a young boy walk to the start line with his dog. Astonished to realize that he was a competitor, I was immediately drawn to Eli’s easy confidence for one so young and his obvious connection with Lila.

I soon met his parents, Jenna and Jonathan, who graciously welcomed my questions and explained to me the inner workings of field trials.

Several months after the trial, I called and had the pleasure to speak with Eli and his father, Jonathan, about Eli’s historic win.

Like all of those who have been successful in reaching their goals, Eli tells me that he had worked with Lila every day.

Jonathan concurs, saying, “Eli worked daily with Lila to build a bond with her. He wasn’t just handed a push-button dog.”

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Their seamless communication in the field was a testament to that dedication.

Eli lives with his family in Salem, Alabama, and grew up surrounded by working dogs. Following in his father's footsteps, he began assisting with training at just 4 years old—throwing bumpers to build retrieve drive in young puppies.

Over time, Eli has become fully immersed in every aspect of the sport, from helping to whelp and raising litters to early field conditioning.

When evaluating litters for potential champions, Eli and his father look for a key trait: "The bold ones are the puppies that stay." His advice to other youth handlers and aspiring competitors is simple and straightforward: "Work hard, and don't give up."

Zara Labrenz, a professional trainer from Dalton, Wisconsin, recalls watching Eli and Lila at field trials leading up to the NACC with immense admiration.

"What impressed me

English Cocker Spaniel Ch. Giralda's Venture (Deopaul photo)



most," she says, "was the genuine team the two of them created. He did a phenomenal job of handling—taking his losses with maturity and his winning completely in stride."

As the youngest licensed AKC Hunt Test judge (achieving the milestone at just 20 years old), Zara understands exactly what it takes to forge a winner. Her own journey into the sport began innocently enough when her family purchased an English Springer Spaniel and sought out field training from Jason Givens, a highly

respected professional spaniel field trial trainer.

Zara was a teenager when she began working at Lighthouse Kennels, cleaning runs and helping to care for the dogs. As she grew more familiar with the intricacies of field training spaniels, Zara immersed herself deeper into the sport, mastering the critical training and business skills required to eventually venture out on her own.

While she remains a vital, respected member of the Lighthouse team, Zara now manages her own roster

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of clients, training dogs for demanding hunt tests and field trials at her Belle Fountain Kennels.

Her expertise was fully realized through her first field trial champion, Twig (FC Juggernaut's Branch Into Belle Fountain, SH), a talented liver and white English Cocker Spaniel bitch.

Today, Zara particularly enjoys working with the "minor" breeds and dogs from show-bred lines. She thrives on learning from them, embracing the unique, rewarding challenges that these dogs present to a trainer in the field.

As a competitor, Zara handles client and personal dogs across both Open All-Age and Amateur All-Age field trial stakes nationwide, consistently placing in these competitions.

Zara regularly judges Master, Senior, and Junior stakes at AKC-licensed hunt tests across the country, including events hosted by the Minnesota Hunting Spaniel Association and the

Cocker Spaniel Specialty Club of Georgia. Zara frequently serves as the Event Chair for regional spaniel events such as the Cocker Spaniel Hunting Enthusiasts Spaniel Hunt Test, demonstrating strong organizational skills alongside her field work.

While Eli holds the distinction of being the youngest handler to claim the NACC, Jaelee Schwartz, from Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, set her own historic milestone as the youngest handler to win the National Cocker Championship (NCC). Just 20 years old when she achieved this feat in 2021, Jaelee expertly handled her liver and white English Cocker Spaniel, NFC FC Green Gable's Maximum, MH (Ike), to a national victory. And the following year at the 2022 NCC, Jaelee and Ike placed second, which is quite a rare feat.

Deeply rooted in the sport, Jaelee grew up in a sporting spaniel family: Her father, Jeff Schwartz

of Rock River Kennels, is a highly respected professional spaniel trainer. Stepping into the industry on her own terms, Jaelee launched her professional training business, Green Gable Gundogs, at the age of 18. Since then, she has built a standout reputation training client dogs for competitive field trials and hunt tests.

Reflecting on their landmark victory in an interview with *InSpire Magazine*, Jaelee recalled the profound connection that set them apart.

"Ike made it look so easy and had beautiful finds on all his birds," she noted. "He didn't miss a beat or make a single mistake—he was a true overachiever. It's what made him stand out from the rest. Ike worked the field with great style and—most importantly—he was completely in tune with me, working as a team!"

Jaelee continues to strive for excellence. At the 2025 National Cocker Championship event, Jaelee

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was awarded the High Point Lady Handler—Open and Amateur Stakes title, receiving the FC Dungarvan Ready-Teddy Challenge Award. This annual award is presented to the female handler who accumulates the highest total combined points in Open All-Age and Amateur All-Age stakes throughout the field trial performance year.

Jaelee has openly shared that while her accomplishments are many, embracing failure was a vital stepping-stone toward her ultimate success. She firmly believes that with unyielding hard work and deep dedication, absolutely any goal is within reach.

The journeys of these young ECSCA members serve as a powerful reminder that the next generation of handlers in the field are not just participating in the sport—they are actively rewriting its history.

—Joyce Winkels

English Cocker Spaniel
Club of America

English Springer Spaniels

SNUFFLING, FORAGING, DISCOVERING: ENRICHING THE WIDE WORLD FOR OUR DOGS

Renowned psychiatrist William Menninger noted, “The amount of satisfaction you get from life depends largely on your own ingenuity, self-sufficiency and resourcefulness.” Our dogs, too, need to develop individual learning styles, and command of their actions and abilities to find entertainment and contentment.

For dogs, these aptitudes and skill developments can be defined as “enrichment” and “agency.” In their book, *Canine Enrichment for the Real World: Making It a Part of Your Dog’s Daily Life* (Dogwise Publishing, 2019), authors Allie Bender and Emily Strong explore specific ways to support our dogs while they investigate and participate most fully in the world around them; all the while allowing dogs to make choices to develop their individual personalities.

Bender and Strong explain: “Enrichment is learning what our dogs’ needs are and then structuring an environment for them that allows them, as much as is feasible, to meet these needs. Not only is this topic quite a bit broader than toys or play or pampering pets, it is also much more vital to the physical, behavioral, and emotional health of our pets than most people realize.”

We best enrich the lives and development of our dogs by allowing them to use all their senses to explore and experience the joys of being dogs: smell, touch, hearing, sight and taste.

Allowing dogs to make choices and to explore their world at their own pace gives them agency. According to research and experience by Bender and Strong, “Animals have their own thoughts, feelings, motivations and intentions. Agency can be defined as the ability to have some level of control in our environment and be able to make

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*English Springer
Spaniel Ch. Salilyn's
Sophistication*

choices that will result in a desirable outcome—a key component to the mental health of every sentient being ... [We give] our animals agency to conquer their fears on their own timeline and allow them the opportunity to learn through gradual exposure.”

Springer breeder Jordanne Smith (Ivy Hill) shared ways she offers enrichment and agency to her puppies, explaining, “For litters and young puppies, snuffle mats

for mealtimes are an easy way to engage their brains and their noses.”

Bender and Strong’s research finds: “Olfaction is a dog’s primary sense ... with more than a hundred times more of the nerves located between the nose and the brain than humans. Any kind of scent work has a profound effect on the dog’s mental health and well-being. Allowing dogs to hunt for treats rewards their olfactory brilliance while it

also allows for their natural need to scavenge.” Bender and Strong remind us that “dogs are scavengers, which means they will eat food wherever they find it, hunting only as necessary when easier food isn’t obtainable.”

Smith explores many ways to let pups use their noses, saying, “Beginner scent work classes started pups searching for treats in open topped boxes. [Later] I bought a set of little storage totes from the dollar store and put these totes around the house with treats in them for the dogs to find and eat. ... This fun activity rewards both their need to use their noses and their need to forage. Having control to search the totes in the order they choose also gives the dog the pleasure of making self-rewarding choices, building self-confidence to try new things.”

Smith increased the difficulty of the pups’ foraging efforts when their skill finding rewards in the totes became routine. She explains, “Eventually I got

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tired of getting the boxes out every time, so I graduated to just hiding treats around the house and turning a dog loose to search. I get a lot of joy out of watching them sniff out the treats I've hidden in tricky locations. Getting puppies to engage in foraging behavior helps to modulate arousal, especially on those days when the puppy pen sounds more like a mosh pit. They snuffle to their bellies' content and then settle for their overdue nap."

Enrichment of our dogs' minds does not stop when puppyhood ends. Smith finds other ways to keep her dogs' minds and problem-solving skills engaged, explaining, "I love using ACE Free Work with my adolescents. (Animal Centered Education, pioneered by Sarah Fischer, <https://animalcentrededucation.teachable.com/>) Adolescence is generally a sensitive time for our breed, and giving them a bit of agency does wonders for resilience and confidence. The Free Work exercises provide enrich-

ment and tires them out, and when done thoughtfully can also work to counter-condition and desensitize. Ace Free Work is done at the dog's pace, without any intervention from the owner, and can be a really great way to help a dog gain confidence."

Explore myriad exercises to enhance smell, taste, hearing, touch, and sight in *Canine Enrichment for the Real World*. This book may revolutionize your dog's contentment and skills to investigate and master his world.

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

English Springer Spaniel
Field Trial Association

Field Spaniels

TALKING WITH "NON DOG PEOPLE"

Whether through family, work, or community, we all experience the

sometimes-uncomfortable conversations about our passion with folks who are uninitiated in the world of purebred dog fancy. Having to remain diplomatic can be tough, and striving to educate can be a losing battle, but remember it is an opportunity in every circumstance.

I choose to practice humor in such discussions, because at the heart of it there is usually good intention and the love of the amazing animal shared in common. People appreciate dogs, and many people have a very narrow experience of that appreciation.

Sure, they may have owned multiple dogs and even participated in activities beyond that life, but we fanciers have a completely unique set of views and vision when it comes to all things canine. Remember they just come from a different perspective and generally want to share that.

I try to look at it as factual: A majority of people own common things like homes,

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cars, and dogs. There are niche hobbyists and infinite knowledge for those who have special interest in a hobby such as woodworking, muscle cars, or dog sports. While I may share automobile ownership in common with other people, I am most definitely not a mechanic, nor even an aficionado of a specific type of cars. I own a vehicle as a means of transport, and I love the car I drive. I may even know some specifics on my make and model and car type or purpose, such as cargo space or towing capacity. This does not by any means make me an expert.

(Now of course as dog people, we know there is a sub-class of “preferred dog vehicles” and as such strike up passionate conversation on the topic!)

It really is no different for dog owners. People love their pets, their breeds.

It can be a struggle to maintain composure when you hear people spouting misinformation surround-



Field Spaniel

ing their own dog practices, methods, or beliefs. Much to our horror, people will form such opinions and behavior based on what they heard, read, or experienced in the past. This leads to hearing about how an adult human trained their dog, the breeding notions they maintain, and other disturbing things. Consider that they may have learned it from their elders or an unenlightened internet post.

In the interest of not get-

ting heady, we might not want to jump right in asking if their dog has a CHIC number, what the inbreeding coefficient number is on their litter, or if they have any majors. Learn about their love for their individual dog and what they see as problematic with the breed. Try to find a common ground of appreciating what dog behaviors endear us, and the fun parts of owning beloved companions.

Instead of lecturing the

DAVID WOO ©AKC

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NDP (Non Dog Person), explain to them what lights your fire in terms of your own breed and the dog activities that bring you joy. Paint a picture for them that might inspire questions or invite conversation. Appreciate the differences in not only dog breeds, but the kinds of people who love them! Easier said than done when water-cooler talk turns to hearing a coworker is considering dropping a few grand on a designer dog and has no substantial background information. Mention the depth of research you did when you got started and how happy you are that it truly paid off.

Talk up great programs like AKC's Canine Good Citizen training and certification. Relate it to being able to enjoy your dog as a responsible owner in terms of home ownership, travel, and getting involved in your community. Refer to the conversations and learning you have had with talking to your breeder or fellow fanciers. Invite them to par-

ticipate in a training class or attend a show or event. We were once all beginners, and if we wish to see change, we must be willing to help people learn.

Don't rule out "pet people" or those who have mixed-breeds or crossbreds. Everybody has a place in enjoying dogs, and it is not snobbery to want to foster the dog-human relationship and see dogs in loving "forever" homes.

I find many people are surprised to hear the acceptance when we talk about basics like grooming, treats, or how to prevent unwanted dog behavior. I remind them that we all start with those amazing blank slate puppies or beginner dogs!

Think of times you have been afforded a chance to learn a new skill. Perhaps you even gained confidence where you once had fear. Somebody somehow took the time and effort to show you you could be successful and that no one is a finished product.

So it must be when

approaching a Non Dog Person. I have thrilled at everything from getting a new puppy owner to teach a simple trick to systemically winning over someone who had bad dog experiences as a child.

Discussing veterinary experiences is often a common bond as we all want our dogs to live long, healthy, and happy lives. With so many ways for people to get involved with dog activities now, there truly is something for everyone. Where we once had to discourage the novice who might not go Winners Bitch or achieve a MACH, we can help them to better enjoy their dog's virtues and instincts. Trick training, scent activities, and working with a dog's drives are all incredibly validating.

Be a living example. When a neighbor sees you tiring out your dogs and reaping the benefits, they might just copy you! Maintain good standards as a dog owner, and help others to achieve the same.

I think sharing tips is

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fun, and most people love it when you compliment their dog. The key is to not come across as intimidating or judgmental, even if you don't share their particular viewpoint.

Remember to not take things too seriously. At the end of the day, we can all afford to be kind and appreciate the amazing dogs that make our world awesome and enrich our lives.

Being able to laugh at the fact that we spend many hours, miles, and dollars for a bookmark ribbon is priceless. Know that the letters added to our dogs' names are labors of love that we choose to pursue—they mean precious little to the uninitiated, but they surely built a bond that is readily apparent. Appreciate the silliness of our dogs, and that a feral canine and a pampered grand champion alike still like to poop, roll, and snort.

Share the pride in what you have gained in your experience, and do your best to foster that in others'

learning. You just might be surprised who you teach and what the outcome might look like.

—Shannon Rodgers,
shannontrodgers@gmail.com
Field Spaniel Society of
America

Sussex Spaniels

SHADOWS

Sussex are one of the breeds that, being close to the ground, are wary of shadows. Puppies will often go around one or even just stop and bark or refuse to move. This is because they see it as not a shadow, but as a hole that is just waiting to swallow them.

It is important not to make a fuss about this, but to walk ahead of them into the shadow and return, perhaps several times, to show them that there is nothing to fear.

Since shadows aren't always in the same place, it is another instance of Sussex not liking change—as in if the trash cans are put out on the left side of the driveway, it is unthinkable that one

might be on the right side.

New owners are slow to accept that this is so. As a puppy grows and trusts you that when out for a walk you will not lead him into a deep, black hole, you will both be happier!

Puppy questionnaires are a great tool for breeders when choosing a new home for their beloved puppies. However, some potential buyers seem to think that the questions we ask are open to negotiation.

When we ask them if they will agree to keep a puppy intact until they are 3 or 4 years old at least—because Sussex are rare, growth plates are slow to close, and early neutering will result in a tall, fuzzy-coated dog with a high risk of cruciate rupture and cancer—this does not mean that the responder can say, “We will wait to neuter until the dog is 1 or 2 years old or when our vet says.”

Why not just say “no,” because you won't be getting one of my puppies.

And then there is food—we stress the need to read

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Sussex Spaniel Ch. Vicar of Lexxfield with Pluis Davern

ingredients and to add great things to their diet like beef liver and eggs. Then the responder replies that they “don’t like liver and will feed what their vet sells, which is good enough for the other dogs they have had.”

Again, ingredients—I knew personally when I was young, one of the “inventors” of one of the most popular foods that vets sell. It was a great food, and this couple were great people. It was all meat and vegetables, with a couple of vitamins. Then when they got older, they sold out to a big company, and their name and

the formula was corrupted. At least with a questionnaire we know who not to sell to.

AKC President Gina DiNardo recently said, “Choosing a rare breed is more than gaining a unique companion, it’s helping to preserve a living chapter of history.” This is so very true. Sussex are a breed where someone having just a single litter can influence the breed.

Preservation breeders are the backbone of this breed, and here in the U.S. we are doing very well. There are puppies being born, two new Sussex champions have achieved Best in Show wins.

People are active in all sorts of performance venues as well as conformation competition. Other countries, even England where the breed originated, are having fewer and fewer puppies.

It isn’t enough just to have puppies and sell to people who will neuter and have just a pet. We must continue to breed and show so that the breed will never reach the lows that there were after both of the World Wars.

Hug your Sussex! If not for preservation breeders, he or she wouldn’t be here.

—Marcia Deugan,

ZiyadahReg@aol.com

[Sussex Spaniel Club of America](#)

Welsh Springer Spaniels

BUILDING A HAPPY SHOW

ATTITUDE

Like many people new to dog showing, my first show dog was ... average.

Ike might have been a bit below average, actually, but he loved to show! I was new, he was young, and we learned together. He fin-

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ished before he was 3, and I was thrilled.

Now, of course, I would be concerned if I had a puppy who took that long to finish—but is that the right attitude? If Ike had a thought-bubble above his head in the ring, it would say, “Look at me!” If my next Welsh Springer had a thought bubble, it would have said, “This is *sooooo* boring!”

Chester lived for the birds, and I rewarded his championship by switching him to field training.

Starting with those two dogs, it was clear to me early on that some dogs enjoy their time with you in the show ring, and some just don’t. You can play with them, you can reward them with whatever their heart desires, but some will never be “on” at a show. With my current class bitch, I have dealt with something completely different.

Bridget, the boldest Welshie I have ever owned in all other situations, suffered from obvious stress



Welsh
Springer
Spaniel

early on in her show career. Her first show was the American Spaniel Club’s big Flushing Dog Specialty, and perhaps that was not the best choice for a 7-month-old puppy. By the time I recognized the signs, the damage had begun. People who have been in Welsh Springers for 30–40 years remember when shy temperaments were a major drag on the breed. Back then it could have been considered a success if your dog didn’t cringe or urinate during the judge’s exam. We’ve come a long way since then, but shyness can still crop up in the breed.

With that in the back of my mind, we tried to come up with coping mechanisms for Bridget. I had a professional handler show her mother, Mamie, while I handled Bridget. This helped relax her, but she still wasn’t enjoying herself. So I made the decision to keep her home from the shows for several months.

With Mamie off many weekends with her handlers, I was able to spend more time concentrating on her daughter. Bridget and I spent many hours walking around my small Eastern Shore town, while I studied her reactions to strangers, loud

COURTESY LYNDIA BEAM

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noises, other dogs, and so on. Bridget was one of a well-socialized litter, and was very self-assured in most situations—just not at dog shows. She was bold and brassy at puppy daycare, so other dogs weren't the problem.

Finally I started to notice a pattern, whenever we visited a large pet-store chain. Her ears would droop, and she would avoid contact with strangers, although she still loved the other dogs. The large, echoing building with lots of background noise was a clear trigger for her. With some limited showing at outdoor shows, things began turning around.

When I was less experienced, I would have dragged her to shows until she finished and then taken her out of the breed ring. However, forcing a reluctant dog to show is counterproductive to the dog and to our sport. A happy, wagging Welsh Springer is an ambassador for our lovely breed.

—Wendy J. Jordan

Welsh Springer Spaniel
Club of America

Vizslas

THE MAGIC MOMENT: RETHINKING PUPPY BIRD INTRODUCTIONS

Gene Hill said, “There is no freeze in nature more absolute, nor more electric, than a bird dog on point. To hunt bird dogs is to understand that the thrill is not in the kill, but in the magic moment when a dog turns from flesh and blood into stone.”

Gene Hill captured the exact soul of the sporting dog. That electric freeze isn't something we teach. It is a primal instinct embedded deep in a bird dog's DNA. Coming off raising a summer litter offered the ideal backdrop for nurturing those instincts—warm days, endless outdoor exploration, and plenty of opportunities to introduce young prospects to the world around them. But was I doing it right?

For years, many of us followed traditional puppy protocols passed down through generations. Introduce as a pack to a

bird under a tipper, then pair off like enthusiasm to a tethered bird. However, a recent conversation with professional trainer Jessica Hann of Perfection Kennels completely shifted my perspective on how we approach early bird exposure.

Why do dogs point?

When I spoke with Jessica, she opened with a simple question: “Why do dogs point?”

The answer is fundamental. Dogs point so the bird does not bust. Their natural instinct tells them that if they move, the prey vanishes. They freeze to hold the objective. The entire foundation of the Hann method centers on encouraging and preserving that natural instinct from day one.

Historically, bird dogs started on wild birds. A green puppy on a covey of wild quail stands virtually no chance of catching one. Wild birds teach young dogs respect. The moment a puppy gets too bold, the bird flushes, reinforcing

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Vizsla Sirke on the check cord; three Vizsla puppies encounter a quail.



the necessity of the freeze. Today, however, most trainers rely on pen-raised game.

Herein lies the single biggest takeaway from Perfection Kennels: Never let your puppies catch birds.

When a puppy is allowed to chase down and catch a slow, pen-raised quail, we

slowly chip away at their natural moxie. Catching birds builds the ultimate bad habit. A dog taught that it can catch game becomes the adult dog that creeps, steals points, goes in on birds, and breaks—making you the most frustrating brace mate in the field. The point

is an instinct to preserve. Retrieving can always be taught later.

The Perfection Kennels introduction

The catch pen (around 7 weeks): Puppies are exposed as a group to a pigeon just outside a catch pen. At 7 weeks, a puppy's vision is still developing; only half the litter might spot the bird at first. The exercise lasts just five minutes, but repeated daily, the entire pack quickly locks in.

Do not panic if a puppy shows low interest initially. Early disinterest is no indicator of ultimate drive. Pigeons are the tool of choice here because they fly strong and away.

Individual bird work (9–10 weeks): Puppies transition to individual introductions using a check cord and a bird on the ground. The moment the puppy scents and points the bird, the bird

COURTESY GRETCHEN LEE / COURTESY JAMIE WALTON

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is immediately released to fly away, and the puppy is praised lavishly for pointing.

By keeping birds in the air and out of little mouths, you protect that natural freeze. Preserving that instinct in the early weeks ensures that when your pup grows into the field, you will get to experience the true thrill of the sport: watching flesh and blood turn instantly to stone.

Moving forward, I am stepping up my entire approach to puppy bird introductions by ditching some of my previous introductions and leaning fully into this “flight-first” methodology. Instead of risking sloppy habits early on, the goal is to capitalize on that raw, stone-cold instinct to stop and hold game long before formal field work ever begins. By protecting their natural freeze from the very start, we lay a solid foundation for a style of bird dog that respects game, honors the point, and brings that legendary Gene Hill magic to life in the field for years to come.

—Jamie Walton,
Jamie@professionaldesign.org
Vizsla Club of America

Weimaraners

WHY ATTEND THE NATIONAL SPECIALTY?

Each year, the Weimaraner Club of America sponsors a national specialty that is usually held in conjunction with a futurity, maturity, specialty and performance events put on by the hosting club.

The national entries vary in number depending on the part of the country in which it is held but usually has several hundred in attendance.

The costs to the individual exhibitor are transportation, food, hotels, banquets, and special events, which are included not to mention the cost of entry in conformation, agility, obedience, tracking and field events. These can add up to a substantial amount, which some feel is not worth the investment of time and money.

What many do not under-

stand is how much one can learn about their breed and their own dog by attending.

The WCA national brings together many of the top dogs and bitches in the country. This is the time for evaluation of sires and dams as often multiple progenies of breeding come together. There is no better way to look at type and soundness of dogs at various ages from the 4-to 6-month puppies to the veterans.

The Top 20 Competition is held yearly concluding with a beautiful night spotlighting our top show dogs with music, lights and a banquet giving all a chance to “dress up” for the event. This gives everyone an opportunity to view many of the top dogs from across the country.

The national banquet highlights the breeders of the futurity and maturity winners as well as the individual honored for service to our breed.

Since there are performance events attached, the national is the place to sit and watch agility and obedience, especially if one is not familiar

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with the sports. By viewing the Weims in competition, one might decide that their companion might just be right for the activity. If not, a new appreciation for the work involved in this facet of our world may be learned.

A day or two before the festivities begin, there are usually some field and tracking events held.

Occasionally, a field seminar is offered to those who just want to see if their Weim will point a bird—or in my case, simply ignored the quail walking in front of them! I pointed the bird; my dog did not, and my friends who were watching still laugh at me to this day.

But it is all in good fun. The point is to expose dog and owner to new and fun experiences.

So much can be learned by just watching and listening. For instance, in the show ring there are owner-handlers as well as the professionals, and some of the owner-handlers are every bit as good as the pros. Where to position the lead for best



movement, how fast to gait the dog, and when to stop and show off are all things that can be picked up by watching the big ring.

Simply being around so many Weims and owners who love them for an extended period is an experience that cannot be gained anywhere else. Where else can one come in contact with so many breeders at one time? For newbies to the breed, it is a time to ask questions and sit and listen to them.

I remember going to a national in California long ago and sitting in the grass on a small hill just above the ring and listening to Karla and

Martin South and Lori Jarmie explain to my friend why she liked one dog over another. One cannot put a price on that type of education.

At the end of the week, we all head for home with a greater appreciation of our breed whether we have won, placed, or lost. It is a time of revival well worth the time and money.

Now is the time to start planning for the 2027 national in St. Louis, at Purina Farms. Hope to see you there!

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

COURTESY HOT DOG PHOTOS

BREED COLUMNS

WORKING GROUP

Akitas

ENJOYING DOG SPORTS: STRENGTHENING BONDS

“Akitas are stubborn!” This comment has reverberated past Akita owners for years. However, my experience with the breed has been the exact opposite. Once I learned how to communicate with them, I’ve found them to be responsive and eager to learn, thus living with them has been a pleasure as they are smart, funny, and thoughtful.

My “little red dog” Toka moved in and took over in 2015. An adorable bundle of fluff, he had been bred for conformation but deemed companion status due to a hearing disability. I was already having tremendous success in training and trialing another deaf Akita, so his handicap did not deter me in the slightest.

Our entry into dog sports came from spending hours hiking together to earn titles through Dog Scouts of America’s trail and pack programs. We hiked daily in nearby state parks, where



Doing dog sports together is a great way to bond with your Akita.

Toka quickly earned his 50-mile titles, then hiked on to earn every title up to Pack Dog and Trail Dog 4000... yes, 4,000 miles!

These hikes improved our partnership, helped Toka develop pro-level loose-leash walking and trail manners, and also led us to other sports. Thanks to the hours spent together, I became more adept at detecting even the slightest changes in the demeanor and body language of my dog, and those good trail manners easily

translated into good ringside behavior.

Soon I realized that Toka needed additional activities to keep busy and tire out his young self. Since I work from home, the AKC’s Trick Dog and Dog Parkour programs were perfect for this, as I could take a few minutes multiple times daily to work on these skills. Additionally, the titles can be earned via videotaping, which encourages people to engage with their dogs and improve the dog-han-

COURTESY KIM HOLMES

BREED COLUMNS

WORKING GROUP

dler relationship without having to travel. Another benefit: Many “tricks” can be valuable in real-life situations—“four feet on,” “back up,” “under,” and “around” are all good skills to have. Non-competitive sports foster confidence, new skills, and often the incentive to move into “real” dog sports, as we did.

Together, my willing partner and I tried obedience, rally, agility, AKC Fit Dog, Fast CAT, lure coursing, and Barn Hunt. We took classes, worked with trainers, and even opened our home to several pet rats. Our journey was not always perfect, as Toka did have those “teenage boy” moments—though happily he aged out of them quickly!

Having had earlier success with my older Akita Kiyo trialing in NACSW nose work, I began training and trialing Toka in this sport also. Soon thereafter, AKC rolled out their scent work program, in which we have competed successfully and earned many titles, includ-

ing the “super elite” Scent Work Master moniker. He is, in fact, the first dog to earn both that title and the NACSW’s Elite Champion title. Toka had truly found his favorite sport.

One of the things I adore about this Akita is his calm, stable presence, which has enabled me to train him to a level where he can be handled by different people.

Amy McCardle, a longtime Akita owner and ACA member, wished to include her experience for this article.

“I had the absolute privilege of running Toka a few times over the years at different scent work trials while Nancy was off judging.

This boy has an amazing temperament. Kudos to his breeders and to Nancy for her awesome training skills. How many other Akitas would willingly and happily head off to compete, qualify, and place multiple times with a complete stranger?”

Part of the joy I’ve found in competing in AKC dog sports is the many road trips my Akita and I have taken—

just the two of us having adventures! I made a point of finding parks or natural areas where we could hike on each trip: from Maryland to Maine, the Smoky Mountains, to Chicago, we made new friends and saw lovely scenery, and I deepened my relationship with my pup.

Now, let’s circle back to that bit about Akitas being stubborn. It’s all about communication when creating an enthusiastic and generous teammate who is eager and excited to learn. That’s what Toka has been. He’s fun to work with and made me a better, more creative and patient trainer.

The end result? This talented boy has earned over 140 titles, including Versatile Akita Excellent Level 7, Cornell Companion, and AKC Breed Ambassador, to name just a very few.

Now retired, we are focused on therapy work after accomplishing so many amazing goals, belying the so-called stubbornness of the breed, and leaping over

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the hurdle life handed him:
He is congenitally deaf.

*As told to Kim Holmes
by Dr. Nancy Almann and
Kumite Diamond's Willow
Creek Kodatoka.*

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

Alaskan Malamutes

CREATE THE FUTURE: BECOME A MENTOR!

It's so easy to fly along
in our competition life,
setting and reaching excit-
ing goals for our own dogs,
building our own careful
breeding programs, choos-
ing our own picks, and
seeing some of our precious
youngsters join deserving
families for a lifetime of love
and joy.

In time, given our age and
health and facing retire-
ment, we seek to make
wise choices: giving every
comfort to our dogs at
home, and savoring the joy
of keeping up with friends
whose dogs we bred. And
yet, we often wish for
more—more ways to stay



Alaskan Malamute

involved, and more ways to
reach dog lovers in the wider
world.

And so we come to one of
the finest ways we can con-
tribute: the one-on-one gift
of becoming a mentor!

Mentoring is sincerity
and knowledge itself. Its
beauty is in its simplicity:
It is free of status, politics,
and wealth. It is pure sup-
port and education, based
simply on your honesty,
unbiased experience, and
caring. To see a friend grow
in knowledge and love of
our wonderful breed, and
in vital areas of the sport,

become a legacy that can
flow into the next generation
of Malamute people and
make all the difference for
both one's own dogs and in
breed rescue, plus reaching
out to the dog-loving public
through AKC's Meet The
Breeds events and local
community opportunities.

Creating your legacy

Think for a moment back
to your own beginning with
dogs. For some of us, this
began in childhood, thanks
to a parent who loved dogs
and cared about fostering
that love and caring in you.

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Knowing and loving that dog—purebred or mixed-breed—fired your interest in learning more about the world of dogs, and in time, the joy of meeting others who shared your devotion, often through training and competing in the whole galaxy of dog sports we enjoy today.

At some point, as your interest and your network grew, you met experienced competitors and observed them as the years went on. You compared their personalities and interactions with you and your peers; some were generous in sharing guidance and support, while others seemed more focused on their own wins and visibility.

In time you reached out to those who took the time to share their knowledge and sensed your commitment to your dogs and desire to succeed. Friendship grew into mentoring, which ultimately became the most treasured opportunity of all: to acquire beautifully bred dogs with the soundness and correct

temperament to become your foundation.

On a personal note, I was blessed to have mentors in both dogs and horses. AMCA members Pat and Paul Kostock, of Colorado, created my foundation by trusting me with two exceptional girls: Kodi, Ch. Champaign's Montak Blue Magic, and Savvy, Ch. Champaign Benchmark Big Shot, ROM.

Wonderful years and great friends followed. Benchmark dogs graced their lives: They steadied toddlers learning to walk, they comforted teens reaching out for a solid companion, they showered love, sensitivity, and uncanny understanding to their people when health crises made every day a challenge that only their Malamute could allay.

In sport ponies, Lesley Feakins of Trevelyan Farm enabled me to have my incredible foundation mare, Watermark, who achieved Premium status and then blessed me with two Premium foals in suc-

cession by Lesley's leading sire Forrest Flame; both foals went on to wonderful careers. And here's the key: They all trusted me with their finest, and I earned their trust. Yes, there were ups and downs along the way, but I was determined to chart a good course, and I am thankful that I succeeded.

And now it's your turn

Indeed, now it is your turn to grow your mentoring circle, to take this precious gift of time and use your knowledge to reach out to those who show that spark of devotion and ambition to thrive as they grow their presence in our beloved breed. It is your turn to take up the banner of stewardship and help enable others to ensure our breed will thrive in the decades ahead. Your turn to build a legacy to withstand the test of time.

The most wonderful thing about mentoring is that it is centered on truth, objectivity, knowledge, and caring for both the people and dogs you help bring together. It

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is an exalted calling, free of prejudice, free of politics, free of hurt, and free of power. Its triumph is knowledge, mastery, and selfless devotion. In our complicated lives, it stands above; it is the purity of love that endures for all time.

—Phyllis I. Hamilton,

Benchmark1946@gmail.com

[Alaskan Malamute Club of America](#)

Anatolian Shepherd Dogs

**BETTER TO LIGHT A CANDLE
THAN CURSE THE DARKNESS
—OR, DIY AND THE LIVESTOCK
GUARDING DOG**

How many of you here are old enough that you've picked up a physical book on how to knit or crochet? Raise your hands, and keep them up. Now, how many of you actually learned to knit from that thin, paperback volume with lots of words and a few photos? Have you successfully made a scarf? Blanket? Pair of socks?

To those few with your hands still in the air, I applaud you. I have a small library of do-it-yourself knit and crochet books and have never managed to move beyond a simple chain to turn it into anything useful. Puppy collars are the best I can do, and why knit a chain for that purpose when you can just use a piece of yarn?

I know what you're thinking: "How does this relate to Anatolians?" I'm getting there, Gentle Reader. Bear with me.

Many people find their way to the breed because they decided to get back to their roots, especially post pandemic. They move to a small property of five or so acres, decide to get some goats to keep the weeds at bay, maybe a few chickens, plant a garden, and live life in a simpler fashion—work remotely, no more traffic, give the kids room to run around, and experience a lifestyle that is easy to romanticize, that sort of thing.

Sounds good, right? Who

doesn't want fresh eggs, fresh produce, and the feeling of satisfaction that comes from growing your own food?

Then they find that the goats they've purchased and turned into pets, the chickens that provide eggs and a moment of calm reflection as they drink their coffee, are actually more work than they expected. The animals that they have named and gotten attached to are predator magnets. The goats bring coyotes and loose dogs to the house. The chickens bring foxes, raccoons, snakes, in addition to the aforementioned loose dogs to the house.

Depending upon where they live, the predators may be even larger—cats, bears, and wolves—predators that can easily prey upon people and their free-ranging children as well as small hoofstock and poultry.

Our hobby farmer walks out one morning and finds dead birds and a goat that they either have to get sewn up in order for it to sur-

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Anatolian Shepherd Dog

vive, or that ends up in the freezer because it was too badly hurt to treat. Tears abound.

What next? Our hobby farmer goes online and searches for predator friendly solutions to their problems and learns about livestock guarding dogs. One of the top hits is our beloved Anatolian Shepherd. They think to themselves, “Easy peasy—let’s get a pup, turn it out with our animals, and everything will be A-OK from this day forward.”

After another search they find a breeder nearby with

pups that are ready to go, and they bring home a dog and turn it loose with the goats and birds.

What they don’t realize is, that while pups are often good with stock, teenaged dogs are often not, and some dogs simply are not well suited to guarding birds.

Raising a good working LGD is more than just turning a pup loose with stock and walking away. It is time consuming, often frustrating, and requires commitment and ingenuity.

Without a good mentor, quite a few people assume

the dog is defective and give up on having an LGD to protect their stock. They may keep the dog and turn it into a house pet, some may return the dog to the breeder, but very often failed LGD end up in shelters or dumped and left to fend for themselves.

The importance of a good mentor when raising a livestock guarding dog cannot be overstated, and quite literally can make the difference between success and failure, between life and death for the dog and for any stock that a young, inexperienced dog may behave inappropriately around.

If you have ever experienced owning a good-working Anatolian, then the very last thing you want is for someone new to the breed to set themselves and their dog up for failure. But you also know that getting from puppyhood to finished dog is not always easy.

So where do you go for a working dog mentor if you’re new to raising and

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training a livestock guarding dog? Your breeder is an obvious choice, especially if they keep their dogs with stock. They should be able to explain working behaviors and help you set your dog up for success as it grows into itself and its role.

If your breeder is not a working person but has gone out of their way to incorporate working lines into their breeding program, they should know working dog owners that they can send you to for help.

Because maintaining the working traits of the Anatolian is so important, the parent club has a working dog committee whose entire reason for being is to promote the Anatolian as the working livestock guarding dog that it has always been, so reach out to the club if you need help.

The list of parent club working dog mentors can be found here: <https://asdca.club/working-dog-mentors/>. Given the electronic age that we now live in, if there isn't someone close to you

geographically, you still have access to a voice of experience for support.

There is no shame in asking for help when it comes to learning how to raise a good working Anatolian, and it will make things easier for yourself and your dog in the long run. Go ahead and light that candle.

—Jo Lynne York,

eboracumk9@yahoo.com

Anatolian Shepherd Dog
Club of America

Bernese Mountain Dogs

TRACKING

Have you tried tracking? Tracking can be used for a variety of things, like search and rescue, hunting, and tracking missing persons or lost animals. Tracking is also an enrichment activity for your dog, using the dog's instinct.

The entry-level AKC title is Tracking Dog (TD). AKC describes it as: "A dog earns a TD by following a track 440 to 500 yards long with three to five changes of direction. The track is laid

by a human tracklayer and is 'aged' 30 minutes to two hours before the dog begins scenting. The goal is to use the scented track to locate an article left at the end of the trail by the tracklayer."

Tracking is a unique partnership where the dog leads. The handler's job is to follow the dog as it scents the trail.

You should wear good shoes that will allow you to keep up with your dog. The dog wears a harness and is on a long line. Many use a nylon harness with one-inch straps, with a 30-foot matching leash. It is easy equipment to keep clean and does not weigh too much when it gets wet.

Plan at least a couple of training sessions per week. Tracking is an all-weather sport, which does mean training in all weather.

For the introduction stage, the only equipment necessary is a collar, leash, treats, and a couple of flags. Pups can be fed their meals on a scent pad with a flag placed in the ground.

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Tracking: Shelly Leary with Miele (Bernergarde # 228364); Marg Geiger and Genny (Bernergarde #219950)

A scent pad is created by stepping/stomping in a two-foot square for small pups, crushing the grass in the square and drop food within it. The scent pad should have well-defined edges approximately the same size as the dogs body

The first few times he may not be fully focused and may play with the flag or look around (my girl did a nose touch on it several times waiting for a payoff), but it won't be long before he is eager to get to that flag! You can make the scent pad larger as he grows, and when he is showing lots of excitement for the flag and to find the food, begin small tracks.

Make it easy for the dog to be successful in the beginning. Track where you can see the footprints. First, track off of the scent pad no more than 10 steps, with food in every footstep to maintain drive and interest.

Train in small increments; short, straight tracks gradually getting longer.

To make a track, plant a flag at the start of your track, like you had next to the scent pad, and then walk your track by shuffling your feet as you go and dropping food every step. For the first few times, keep it short, like 10 feet. Place the article at the end to mark the end of track.

To finish the track, take a

couple of giant steps forward beyond your article and plant the end flag. This is done so the dog doesn't track by sight to the flag.

Step at least a few feet to the side of the track and walk back to get your dog.

In the beginning, plan to run your dog on the track as soon as you get his harness and leash on. In early stages, many rub the heels of their boots with the food treat to maximize scent in the track.

When you are leaving fewer treats, add double scent-layering. To double-layer the scent, the track layer walks out from the start stake, drops the article with food treat, and places a second stake, then turns and

COURTESY MARY ANN SONTAG / BOB GEIGER

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walks back along the track to the start.

After that is successful, some trainers transition to single layer by dragging a bone or piece of meat along the “track.” This added scent aid is discontinued after a few times.

Articles, turns, and aging the track are introduced as the team has experience.

Like all dogs, Berners enjoy using their noses and hunting for treats.

—Marjorie Geiger,
marggeiger@yahoo.com
Bernese Mountain Dog
Club of America

Boerboels

BUILT TO MOVE: WHY BOERBOELS ARE RISING STARS IN PERFORMANCE SPORTS

For many people, the Boerboel is first and foremost a guardian—a powerful, confident, deeply loyal dog whose history is rooted in protecting South African homesteads. It has also gained recognition and success in the show

ring! But across the United States, Boerboel owners are discovering something remarkable: This breed is not only a guardian; it is also an athlete.

In recent years, Boerboels have begun appearing—and excelling—in a wide range of performance sports. Fast CAT, agility, weight pull, obedience, rally, Barn Hunt, and scent work are all seeing increased Boerboel participation. And the results are turning heads.

“People see a 140-pound dog walk into the ring and assume they know what he can do,” says one longtime Boerboel owner and competitor. “Then he clears a jump, hits a sprint time that shocks everyone, or pulls a cart like it’s nothing. The breed is far more athletic than most folks realize.”

This article explores why Boerboels are so well suited to performance sports, how their structure and temperament give them a competitive edge, and what owners need to know if they want to get involved.

Why performance sports matter for the breed

Performance sports do more than showcase the Boerboel’s abilities—they also help preserve the breed’s integrity. A Boerboel that can succeed in sports demonstrates correct temperament: stability, confidence, focus, and trainability.

Sports also validate correct structure, revealing strengths and weaknesses that may not be obvious in the show ring. They promote physical and mental health, strengthen the bond between dog and owner, and reinforce the idea that Boerboel structure is functional, not ornamental.

In a time when many breeds risk drifting into “show type” versus “working type,” performance sports help keep the Boerboel unified under one standard.

The Boerboel advantage: structure and temperament working together

To understand why

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Boerboels have begun appearing and excelling in a wide range of performance sports.

Boerboels excel in performance sports, it's important to appreciate the unique combination of physical structure and temperament that defines the breed.

Among mastiff-type dogs, the Boerboel stands out for its balance, agility, and athleticism. While males can weigh 150 pounds, the breed is not lumbering or heavy-footed. Correct Boerboels move with surprising efficiency. Their balanced angulation, strong and level topline, powerful hindquarters, and substantial bone—without excess heaviness—give them the ability to accelerate quickly, turn sharply, and maintain ground-covering stride.

These traits were shaped by necessity. Boerboels needed to move confidently across uneven terrain, respond instantly to threats, and work all day if required. That same structure translates beautifully into



COURTESY OWNERS

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modern canine sports.

Temperament plays an equally important role. A correct Boerboel is confident, stable, intelligent, and deeply bonded to his handler. “Boerboels have a seriousness of purpose,” says AKC judge Mark R. “But they also have a surprising willingness to work. When you channel that correctly, they become incredible competitors.” This combination of physical ability and mental focus makes the Boerboel far more versatile than many people expect.

Fast CAT: speed, drive, and eye-opening performances

Fast CAT—a 100-yard dash where dogs run individually for time—has become one of the most popular AKC sports, and Boerboels are making their presence known. The sport rewards dogs with strong rear drive, efficient stride, good acceleration, and natural enthusiasm. Boerboels check every box. Their powerful hindquarters give

them explosive starts, and their balanced structure allows them to maintain speed without wasted motion.

Several Boerboels have posted times that rival breeds known for speed, surprising spectators who expect a mastiff-type dog to be slow.

Fast CAT also taps into the Boerboel’s natural joy in movement. “They run like they mean it,” says one competitor. “My male hit the line with so much enthusiasm that the crowd actually cheered. He’s a big dog, but he moves like an athlete.” For many Boerboel owners, Fast CAT becomes the gateway sport—easy to try, thrilling to watch, and deeply satisfying for the dog.

Agility: power, precision, and unexpected grace

Agility may seem like an unlikely sport for a large guardian breed, but Boerboels are proving that size does not limit ability. Agility requires tight turns,

controlled jumps, quick acceleration and deceleration, mental focus, and handler responsiveness. Boerboels’ balanced angulation and strong rear assembly allow them to turn sharply and jump safely. Their muscular build gives them the power to clear obstacles with ease, and their stable temperament helps them stay focused in busy trial environments.

Agility is a partnership sport, and Boerboels thrive on teamwork. “They read your body language beautifully,” one enthusiast remarked. “My Boerboel watches me like a hawk. When he’s on course, he’s all business.”

While Boerboels may not match the raw speed of Border Collies, they bring a combination of precision, power, and confidence that makes them compelling competitors. Their presence in agility rings is growing, and their performances often surprise those who underestimate their athleticism.

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Weight pull: a sport tailor-made for Boerboels

If there is one sport where Boerboels almost always shine, it is weight pull. The sport rewards strength, determination, correct structure, and efficient pulling mechanics—all hallmarks of the Boerboel. Their broad chest, strong shoulders, powerful hindquarters, and stable topline make them ideal for pulling. Many Boerboels have earned advanced weight-pull titles, and several have set records in their weight classes.

Weight pull also showcases the Boerboel's mental determination. "They don't quit," says one weight pull trainer. "Once a Boerboel understands the job, he commits. Their drive is incredible." The sport allows Boerboels to use their natural power in a controlled, rewarding environment, and it often becomes a favorite for dogs who enjoy physical challenges.

Obedience and rally: intelligence and connection

Boerboels are highly intelligent and deeply bonded to their owners, making them excellent candidates for obedience and rally. These sports require precision, focus, calm confidence, and responsiveness—qualities that Boerboels possess in abundance when correctly trained. Their intelligence allows them to learn quickly, and their stable temperament helps them perform reliably in trial environments.

Boerboels thrive on structure and clear communication. They enjoy working closely with their handler and often show remarkable attentiveness.

"My Boerboel's heelwork is beautiful," offers a rally competitor. "He watches me with total focus. It's like dancing with a partner who knows every step."

For owners who enjoy teamwork and mental engagement, obedience and rally offer rewarding opportunities to showcase

the breed's intelligence and connection.

Barn Hunt and scent work: instinct meets problem-solving

Boerboels have strong natural prey drive and excellent scenting ability, making them surprisingly adept at Barn Hunt and scent work. Their structure allows them to move confidently through tunnels, climb straw bales, and navigate tight spaces. Their intelligence helps them problem-solve quickly, and their natural drive keeps them motivated. Several Boerboels have earned advanced Barn Hunt titles, and more are entering the sport each year.

These sports tap into the Boerboel's instinctive abilities while providing mental stimulation. "They love the challenge," comments a scentwork instructor. "Boerboels are thinkers. Once they understand the game, they become very efficient."

For owners seeking a sport

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that engages both mind and body, scent work and Barn Hunt are excellent choices.

Getting started: how Boerboel owners can become involved

For owners interested in trying performance sports, the best first step is simply to attend local trials as a spectator. Seeing the sports in action helps owners understand the atmosphere, the expectations, and the opportunities.

Joining a training club or working with trainers familiar with large, powerful breeds can provide guidance and confidence. Many Boerboels start with beginner-friendly sports such as Fast CAT, Barn Hunt, or rally and then expand into weight pull, obedience, or agility as they gain experience.

Most Boerboels can safely participate in Fast CAT, Barn Hunt, scent work, rally, obedience, and weight pull. Agility and dock diving are excellent options for structurally

balanced, agile individuals. The key is to choose sports that complement the dog's natural abilities and preserve the traits that define the breed.

A final word: The Boerboel is more than a guardian

Performance sports reveal something important about the Boerboel: this breed is not just powerful, it is athletic. Not just confident, but intelligent. Not just protective, but versatile. When Boerboels participate in sports, they demonstrate the full spectrum of traits that make the breed extraordinary. They show the world that correct structure and correct temperament are not theoretical ideals; they are functional realities.

The Boerboel is built to work, built to think, built to move, and built to perform. And when we give them the opportunity, they rise to the challenge every time.

—Karen Cornelius
[American Boerboel Club](#)

Boxers

A SNAPSHOT IN TIME

We live in an age of statistics in the dog world as well as the world at large. From crowd sizes at political rallies and sporting events, to numbers of champions sired by a particular stud dog, to size of entries under a particular judge—we can and do make judgments based on numbers.

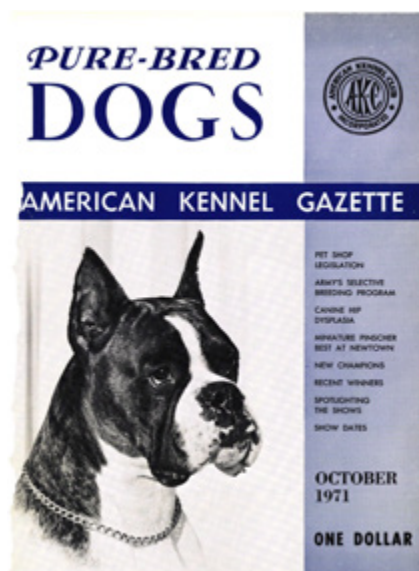
However, it doesn't hurt to point out now and again how these numbers may be skewed in a particular direction or altered over the decades based on new technologies or even changes in our national economy.

Back in the day, when bitches had to be shipped by air and there was no AI breeding, stud dog statistics reflected those times. In the 1970s, for example, shipping was the norm. I spent many an hour waiting or filling out written forms (no computers) at the cargo area at the airport.

While Bang Away did sire 88 champions in the 1950s, the number of bitches sent

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Boxer, October 1971 (Bill Francis photo)

to him was legion, and he remains number one in AKC Boxer champions sired today. This is a tremendous achievement because of the sheer difficulty of physically getting the bitches to him, and the fact that he was only available during his actual lifetime—which in his case was relatively short, just under eight years (January 1949–February 1957). We can all argue with the benefit of hindsight about the good and bad contributions he may have made as our first real example of the “popular sire syndrome” in the breed,

but the fact remains that his influence was indisputable.

Today, the freezing of semen is commonplace. Dogs can and do sire offspring decades after their demise. We can ship chilled semen literally around the world using sophisticated extenders.

So while production records may be eclipsed due to technology, we must remember that not all animals are being counted on equal playing fields. We reap the rewards today of advances in veterinary science and research, treating conditions that might have rendered animals barren not so many years ago.

Times have certainly changed. The dog who sired 20 champions in 1960 might sire 40 or more today.

The advent of DNA analysis has made a dramatic difference in the dog world. Now we can test for health conditions, use more than one sire in a litter, and track generations to be sure of accurate records. Making breeding choices based on

DNA analysis has arguably changed the entire world of purebred dog breeding.

Likewise, dog show numbers and judging opportunities have increased exponentially over the years. Hardly a weekend goes by without shows being available at increasingly closer distances. At the same time, entry fees have increased, and travel is also more expensive. We constantly hear “too many shows, not enough good judges.”

While it is not in the scope of this column to argue that theory, it is clear that entry numbers have decreased, and requirements for majors in many breeds, and certainly Boxers, have decreased. In my region, Zone 1, I remember when it took 24 dogs and 27 bitches for a major, with far fewer opportunities to find them. Boxers were almost at the top of the list of all breeds when it came to the number of entries required for majors. How times have changed—and not just for Boxers, but for many other

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breeds whose AKC registrations have decreased even though their nationwide popularity ranking has stayed relatively constant. Boxers have been in the Top 20 by popularity for a number of years. They were number three during the Bang Away era.

So, we need to be aware of all that has gone before us that has altered the way we look at our beloved breed. Numbers are just that: merely numbers that reflect on a particular point in history. One stud dog or brood bitch record is not “better” than another; it just reflects a snapshot in time.

—Stephanie Abraham, 2018
[American Boxer Club](#)

Bullmastiffs

Thanks to the members of our Bullmastiff community for the ongoing conversations about everything Bullmastiff, from the Bullmastiff breed standard to DNA testing to health clearances and including what we can do to ensure a future

filled with beautiful and healthy Bullmastiffs.

YOU BE THE JUDGE

There is what sometimes seems like a logical progression for fanciers in the sport of purebred dogs. This timeline doesn’t include the folks who get a puppy and are in and out of the sport in a few years. Neither does it apply to those in the sport whose families have shown dogs for generations.

Most of us who are first-generation fanciers get a puppy and somehow get seduced by the sport, though the origin stories vary. We find ourselves 30 years later, having bred generations of puppies, showing dogs from a bloodline we have created, in a sport we love. We have come to prize the opportunity to compare our breeding stock to that of other breeders and in so doing have found a home in this community made up of competition and camaraderie that combine to create the best of the dog show world. Many of us are

breeder-owner-handlers.

These are our people, and we find ourselves hoping that the best among us will take the next step and consider applying for AKC licenses to judge Bullmastiffs. We owe it to the breed.

Recently, ringside and at group dinners afterwards, we found ourselves wondering aloud about whether or not we would apply to be AKC judges. The conversation began with a critique of the judging that weekend and then became a discussion of judging and judges in general.

A few in our group already judge our breed and others, while some are still deciding, weighing the experience and expense it takes to apply and qualify to judge even our breed—a breed wherein we have invested decades of time, money, blood, sweat, and tears.

I was struck by the realization that very few were enthusiastic about taking the next steps to acquire their AKC licenses, even while

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expressing dissatisfaction with judging and with the direction our breed seems to be going in, based on recent entries.

"The future of the breed is in our hands, and we owe it to our Bullmastiffs and to the Bullmastiffs of the future."

It was disheartening to hear that some people whose opinions on the breed I value would not be future judges of the breed. We need the most accomplished among us to become judges, those among us who are the most intelligent, objective, and responsible Bullmastiff

fanciers. We owe it to the breed.

Interestingly, as the conversation continued, we found ourselves agreeing that we should be looking beyond judging at a dog show, beyond the few minutes allocated to judges hired to evaluate animals.

COURTESY VINCE AND LINDY WHYTE

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The talk focused more on what happens before the show ring, on our role as breeders.

The consensus was that rather than placing the responsibility for judging Bullmastiffs on individuals who examine five or 10 or even 20 or 100 dogs and choose the best among them in that short time, we need to better evaluate our own dogs.

Many of us have been breed mentors for some years and have taken part in the Judges Education program, and so can attest to the excellent program and the experienced presenters, ensuring that AKC judges have a wealth of resources and guidance as they continue to learn about our breed and to assess the dogs shown to them.

The unspoken questions, though they are ones to which we all know the answers, are these: “Why do we show our dogs?” “Why do we hire judges at shows to evaluate animals we know better than anyone else?”

“Why are we exhibiting our dogs and paying to show their merits in comparison to others each time we take them in the ring or send them with handlers?” *Why?*

We know that shows began and should still exist primarily as opportunities to evaluate breeding stock, as a way to see current dogs and in so doing to catch glimpses at what might influence the future of the breed. We should show our dogs. We owe it to the breed.

We all agreed that we are really showing our dogs to one another, to our fellow Bullmastiff fanciers, as much as we are exhibiting to a judge on any given day. The answer to the questions of *why*, the answer we breeders provide—the truth—is that *we* are—or we should be—the true judges of our breeds. We new fanciers with our first puppy, we who are showing our first homebred bitches and dogs, we who have several generations of dogs gracing our homes and the rings where we show them as puppies,

adults, and veterans, and also those who inherit the passion from parents and grandparents ... we judge our own dogs and we must do better.

We can't blame AKC judges who do not breed Bullmastiffs for what we are seeing in the ring and for what is being rewarded, or for what is being bred from those winners, whether deserving or not. Only once we own that truth and take responsibility for the dogs we are putting in the show rings can we really judge our breed and do a better job of it. We owe it to the breed.

The conversations are a good starting point, and it is not too late. We must go back to basics and first accept our breed standard. So many might find fault with one statement therein or disagree with one aspect of a description. It may not be perfect, but we first must agree that as Bullmastiff breeders, our goal is to breed to the standard, the template upon which the breed was built and is

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judged, the template by which we should judge our own dogs before they ever enter a ring.

Certainly, there are no perfect dogs. That is a truth upon which we can all agree. It is our goal as breeders to evaluate our dogs and those of others in our breed and to produce better dogs, based on our breed standard.

We cannot rely upon our prejudices, based on what we are producing. We must look to the standard as it dictates appearance, size, head type, body, coat, color, movement, and temperament, and we must apply the standard rigorously, striving to produce dogs that closely adhere to that guideline.

We need to use all the tools at our disposal, from DNA testing to health clearances, including what we have called the art, science, and voodoo of breeding, and work together to make the best use of our knowledge and of the available dogs, so that we can breed better Bullmastiffs.

Next, we need to exhibit

the best animals we breed—not the puppy we kept from our recent litter because we bred him, not the young male who has not quite lived up to early promise, not the narrow bitch who never really matured or the oversized and mastiffy adult. We owe it to the breed.

We must choose the best examples of the breed we have produced, never losing sight of our shared goal: to improve the breed. We need to show fellow fanciers, potential owners, and prospective and current judges Bullmastiffs with correct temperaments and good health whose physical traits best adhere to the breed standard.

We cannot fall victim to the usual snares—issues of ego, or greed, or even kennel blindness—because we owe it to our Bullmastiffs. The dogs we produce and judge to be the best representatives of the breed in accordance with the standard should only then be judged in the ring, after we have subjected them to our own criteria

for correctness. These best dogs should be our breeding stock.

We need to breed better dogs. We need to show the best dogs we produce. The future of the breed is in our hands, and we owe it to our Bullmastiffs and to the Bullmastiffs of the future.

We are all judges of our breeds, and we have a responsibility, whether or not we are licensed dog show judges, and because we are responsible breeders.

Don't we owe it to the breed? You be the judge.

—Lindy Whyte,

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[American Bullmastiff Association](#)

Chinooks

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

It was at the New England Sportsman's Show in Boston that a Maine woodsman named Perry Greene first encountered the breed and was immediately transfixed. For years, he would

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exercise the Chinooks on the Boston Common during downtime from shows before he ever owned one of his own. When Lombard finally decided to sell, Greene was ready.

In October 1940, Lombard sold the Wonalancet-Hubbard Chinooks to Perry Greene. The price was \$500 for 20 dogs and five sleds. But the monetary terms were the least interesting part of the transaction. The bill of sale included conditions that reveal the depth of Lombard's investment in the breed's future.

Greene was required, in writing, to maintain the breeding standards established by Lombard. He was required to sell only males and spayed females. And—in a clause of striking specificity—he was prohibited from making any outcrosses without the express written permission of Mrs. Julia P. Lombard. She was not simply selling a kennel; she was transferring a stewardship, with

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and
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BOSTON
SPORTSMAN'S SHOW
1932 - 1933 - 1934 - 1935 - 1936



WONALANCET
KENNELS
WONALANCET, N. H.

JULIA P. LOMBARD
Owner and Breeder

TEL. TAMWORTH
22-Ring 11

1936 Wonalancet Kennels ad

COURTESY KATHLEEN RILEY

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conditions attached that she intended to uphold.

Greene honored that trust. He moved the dogs first to Warren, then to Waldoboro, Maine, where he and his wife, Honey, established the Perry Greene Kennel. In January 1941, Greene, his stepson Johnny Gephart, and a seven-dog team completed a 502-mile journey from Fort Kent to Kittery, Maine—the longest sled dog trek made entirely within the United States at that time—using Walden’s trained team and completing the distance in 90 hours. The Chinooks, it was clear, had lost none of their working capability under Lombard’s decade of stewardship.

A company and a breed grow up together

The connection between Lombard’s kennel and Old Mother Hubbard was more than a sponsorship arrangement. The 1930s were a formative decade for both the Chinook breed and the American commercial pet food industry, and their his-

tories ran on parallel tracks during precisely the years when Lombard was at the helm.

Old Mother Hubbard, formally established in 1926, was still a young company during Lombard’s tenure. Distribution was regional, the product line focused on baked dog biscuits, and the brand was building its reputation on values that mirrored Lombard’s breeding approach: quality ingredients, honest craft, and genuine care for animals. Sponsoring the Wonalancet-Hubbard team gave the company visibility in the sled dog community—a world populated by knowledgeable, serious dog people who were exactly the kind of consumers Old Mother Hubbard wanted to reach. Every Chinook that crossed a finish line or drew a crowd at a sportsmen’s show was, in a quiet way, an endorsement.

Old Mother Hubbard would go on to outlast Lombard’s era by several decades. In 1961, the com-

pany was purchased by animal nutritionist Jim Scott Sr. and relocated from Gloucester to Lowell, Massachusetts, where it grew steadily. In the 1990s, Jim Scott Jr. worked with a team of veterinarians and nutrition experts to develop the Wellness line of natural pet foods—a product that would become one of the most recognized brands in the premium pet food market. By 2009, Old Mother Hubbard had become part of the WellPet family of brands, and by 2022, the consolidated enterprise was operating as the Wellness Pet Company under Clearlake Capital. The company celebrated the centennial of the Old Mother Hubbard brand in 2026, now a nationally distributed name whose Gloucester origins are still acknowledged in its brand history—hardtack sea biscuits, a sailor’s dog, and a family bakery that decided to try something different.

None of that long institutional history changes what the Hubbard connection

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meant to the Chinook breed in the 1930s. At the moment when the dogs were most vulnerable—their creator broken by grief and poverty, the wider world distracted by economic collapse—the Hubbard family's resources helped keep the kennel staffed, the races entered, and the breed in the public eye.

The legacy of a decade's work

When Julia Lombard handed the Chinooks to Perry Greene in 1940, she had been their primary custodian for roughly a decade. In that time, she had stabilized a three-dog genetic foundation into a functioning breeding program, assembled a professional team to race and promote the dogs, secured commercial sponsorship that gave the kennel financial viability, and written breed standards rigorous enough to survive in the conditions she attached to the sale. She had kept Arthur Walden engaged as a collaborator and given the breed a public identity during years when it might

easily have faded from notice entirely.

She had also, without intending to, demonstrated one of the central tensions in the history of rare breeds: the same protective instincts that preserve a bloodline can also limit its spread. The practice of selling only spayed females, continued by Greene, meant that, for decades, the Chinook's survival depended on the competence and commitment of a single custodian.

When Greene died in 1963, and the population began its long decline toward the eleven breedable dogs of 1981, the roots of that crisis could be traced in part to the tightly held model that Lombard and Greene had maintained.

That is not a criticism so much as an honest accounting of how stewardship works under conditions of scarcity. Lombard was working with a small gene pool during uncertain times, and her caution was understandable. The breeders who rescued the Chinook

in the 1980s—spreading the remaining stock among kennels in Maine, Ohio, and California, trading dogs to restore genetic diversity—were solving a problem that Lombard's era had helped create. But they were also building on the foundation that her decade of careful work had preserved. Without her, there would have been no 11 dogs to save.

America's Sled Dog, reclaimed

Today, with over a thousand Chinooks registered and the breed fully recognized in the AKC Working Group since January 1, 2013, the long arc of the Chinook's survival is easier to trace than it was for those living through any single chapter of it. Arthur Walden created the breed. Julia Lombard saved it. Perry Greene carried it through the mid-century years. A coalition of dedicated breeders brought it back from the edge of extinction. And a generation of enthusiastic owners has, at last,

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established it as a recognized member of the AKC family.

In that lineage, Lombard's place is secure. She was a woman who understood that the value of a breed lies not only in its working ability or its temperament, but in the continuity of its bloodline—the unbroken thread of careful selection that connects each living dog to its origins. She brought resources, rigor, and genuine love for the animals to a program that desperately needed all three. And when the time came to pass the dogs forward, she did so not by walking away, but by writing the terms of their future stewardship in ink.

The tawny dogs of Wonalancet are still running. That they run at all is, in no small part, Julia Lombard's doing.

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[Chinook Club of America](#)

German Pinschers

GERMAN PINSCHER, CHAOS AGENT

I’ve learned after nearly 20 years of living with them that German Pinschers are often the chaos agents of the household. Lovable, smart, athletic, companionable chaos agents but chaos agents nonetheless. And that’s OK. Sometimes



it’s even good. The world needs chaos agents in the same way we need dogs that are bred specifically to protect the flock or guard the property or find lost people and objects. Someone needs to raise the alarm when the alarm needs to be raised, and German Pinschers were and are often the ones to do so.

German Pinschers are intelligent dogs, capable of complicated problem-solving and teamwork, particularly if solving the problem or working with their handler is something they’re motivated to do. They were originally bred to be general-purpose farm dogs, primarily vermin

catchers and alert dogs but also available to lend themselves to the daily tasks that needed to be done on a farm.

This flexibility has not only led to dogs with intelligence and resilience in learning and performing tasks but also, occasionally, to dogs who get very excited about things that no one particularly wants them to be very excited about.

For the German Pinscher, bred to be active and alert, everything is their business. On the farm this was an important trait. An early warning might be the difference between a quick solution or a disaster.

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In the modern world it can be a more mixed blessing. Sometimes the alarm is not worth raising. Sometimes that alertness and focus can be a real plus when directed into sports and other activities we do with our dogs.

The same ancestry that makes them resilient and alert to changes give them an ability to go on without giving up. Anyone who's watched a German Pinscher who is convinced that the rabbit they chased out of the yard 20 minutes ago is still just outside the fence will tell you that German Pinschers don't give up even when you wish they would.

Maybe it's less important in a world of smoke alarms, urban living, and a distinct lack of sheep and cattle in most of our lives to have a dog who can keep us informed about all the very important things they see and hear, but those same traits give us German Pinschers who understand that the world changes, who can see the change coming, and who are ready and able

to respond to it.

None of this precludes a German Pinscher from being a breed champion, a sharp performance dog, or a lovable family companion. It just means they may bring a little chaos along the way.

—Deb Coates,

charmingbillie@gmail.com

[German Pinscher Club of America](#)

Great Danes

SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR GREAT DANE PUPPIES

Every breed, regardless of size, has certain special needs to ensure the dog's proper development into adulthood. Due to their great size, there is an understandable tendency to assume that the Great Dane might be impervious to problems that might plague a smaller breed. To some extent, this is true. However, there are a few notable exceptions which the owner(s) of a new Dane puppy should be aware.

Giant breeds take longer to fully mature than oth-

ers. Therefore, the general skeletal structure does not mature to its full size and strength as soon as most breeds. Small breeds are often fully mature by one year or less, while the average age for a Dane to fully mature will usually range from 3 to 4 years.

One important practice for the owners of a Dane puppy is to feed them off the ground. Food dishes should be elevated above floor level and be adjusted from time to time until their food dish is being placed at about the height of a chair. This prevents the Dane from having to bow its legs to reach food that is too low. This can lead a permanent "bent" condition in the adult.

Try to prevent your Dane from jumping off of furniture. The epiphysis of their bones does not harden until they are more than a year of age. Jarring the shoulder joint from landing can cause a "joint mouse" to form in the shoulder joint. This is a painful condition known as OD (osteochondritis

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Great Dane Ch. Monarch of Halecroft,
1940 (William Brown photo)



dissecans), which must be corrected by surgery.

Dane puppies, like any breed have two speeds: *fast* and stop. Do not allow your dog to play/run/roll after he or she eats. Large-chested dogs can contract “bloat” or gastric torsion. When the weight of food is in their stomach, the stomach can crimp, a which causes “bloat” or gastric torsion. In the case of simple bloat, often the vet can remove the food from the stomach. In the case of gas-

tric torsion, the stomach has flipped completely around, and surgery is the usual option. A large-breed puppy owner needs to be aware of this issue. If your dog has recently eaten and tries to regurgitate and is unable to do so, *get to the vet!*

Please consult with the breeder of your dog for any questions that may arise.

—Bill Stebbins,
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Great Dane Club of
America

Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs

THE NATIONAL SPECIALTY: WHEN WE COME TOGETHER

There is something special about arriving at a national specialty.

Before any dog enters the ring, the grounds are alive with activity. Crates being set up. Draft carts, unloaded. Volunteers making final preparations while exhibitors put finishing touches on their crating areas and dogs. Friends who may only see one another once a year reconnect as though no time has passed.

Then the events begin.

From the outside, a national specialty may look like the biggest dog event of the year. While that may be true by numbers, its importance has very little to do with its size. What makes a national specialty unique is that, for one week, an entire breed community comes together with a shared purpose.

For preservation breeders and all who love the breed, there is simply no substitute for that experience.

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The Greater Swiss Mountain Dog is a purpose-bred working breed. Every breeding decision should be guided by a responsibility to preserve the breed's size, structure, temperament, health, and working ability. That responsibility depends on education, mentorship, honest evaluation, a willingness to learn from one another, and choices made every day.

A national specialty provides an opportunity unlike any other.

Instead of seeing a handful of Swissies at a weekend show or even a larger regional specialty, we have the chance to see the breadth of our community in one place. We can watch generations of dogs from breeding programs across the country. We can appreciate consistency within families, recognize virtues that photographs never capture, and identify areas where we are making progress—and areas where we need to remain vigilant.

Perspective matters. No



Greater Swiss Mountain Dog

breeder, judge, owner, or exhibitor has all the answers. But when we come together, we gain a clearer understanding of where we are today and where we hope to be tomorrow.

Of course, a national specialty is about far more than conformation. The Greater Swiss Mountain Dog was developed to work, and our national celebrates that heritage through draft,

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weight pull, pack hike, obedience, herding, rally, scent work, and other events that showcase the versatility and temperament that define our breed.

Just as importantly, we celebrate the people. The experienced breeder answering questions from someone attending their first national. The junior handler gaining confidence with every trip around the ring. The volunteer whose work behind the scenes makes the week possible. The conversations that begin ringside and continue long after the day's judging has ended.

Those moments rarely appear in the results, but they may be the most valuable part of the week.

Nationals require a significant investment of time, effort, and resources. Yet year after year, volunteers, exhibitors, owners, and breeders continue to make that commitment because they understand that preserving a breed requires more than good intentions. It requires participation and

a willingness to remember that you cannot have competition without cooperation. Preserving a breed takes everyone.

As this GAZETTE issue is published, we are gathered at the 2026 GSMDCA National Specialty in Idaho. Take a moment to look around. Attend a performance event. Watch a class from ringside. Go to the Top 20. Introduce yourself to someone you've long admired—and someone you don't know. Share your knowledge and ask a question or two. Buy some raffle tickets or bid on something at the rescue auction. And seek out and thank the volunteers who made the national happen.

The memories, ribbons and trophies will eventually be packed away, and everyone will head home. What remains are lessons learned, friendships strengthened, and a renewed commitment to the future of the Greater Swiss Mountain Dog.

No one preserves a breed alone. We do it together.

And there is no better place to experience that than at a national specialty.

—Tracey Brant

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

Komondorok

KOMONDORS WITH AND WITHOUT COAT

The Komondor standard demands corded coat by the age of 2. That is wonderful since the corded coat is a characteristic of the breed. The downside is that our abundant coat obscures the animal underneath and very differently at different ages.

With this column are pictures of two Komondors. Both are great examples with good coats, great proportions and angles. The male is shown in full show coat, 7 years old in both examples. The bitch is shown at 18 months in a good young, corded coat and again in her veteran years (being shown is a Brood Bitch class). You can see that she has long cords on her tail.

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What can we see at each age, and what does the naked version confirm?

On the good side, the older dog's gorgeous topline, neck length, pigment, and masculine head shines through is well maintained coat. The mature coat obscures the angles on the dog and his proportions, since you'd have to feel his prosternum and rump to confirm that his proportions are perfect, somewhere around 106 percent longer than tall.

Our standard says: "slightly longer than the height at the withers." This dog is right in the middle of the range described in a Hungarian standard, 100 to 108 percent longer than tall. The same dog, but he looks longer with his coat on. This is partly because of the coat on his front and rear, and partly because vertical stripes are slimming.

The 18-month-old is what you might more commonly see in the classes working toward her championship. She is well stacked and her coat is all corded, well in

advance of the 2-year-old requirement.

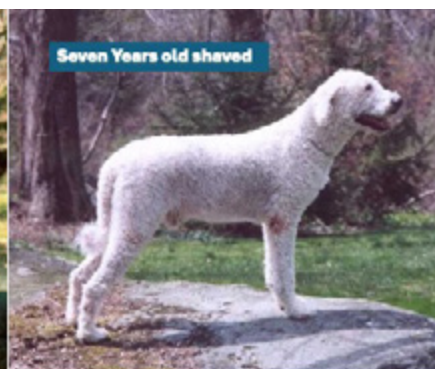
It looks like she has a nice prosternum, neck, and topline—and she might, but please feel these parts, and don't be fooled by the outline of the coat.

Her good rear angles, including a nice slight slope to the root of the tail, are evident, and they are in there in the picture of her six years later.

Hopefully a good examination will teach the judge

what is obscured by the coat in both examples. That examination must touch the head, withers, neck, shoulders, upper arms, depth of chest, length of ribcage, croup angle, tail set, and rear angles in both examples.

You may think you can see all of this, but you might be fooled. Movement is the other key indicator you must see through the coat. This is easy in the 18-month-old, but you can bet that her short cords are flipping side



Komondors in full and clipped coats

COURTESY ERIC LIEBES

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to side on her topline when she moves. That flipping is not faulty, just a feature of the coat at that age.

For the fully coated dog you must watch the footfall in front, light and leisurely gait, and long strides as they move the dog in a balanced trot around the ring.

Please remember that length of coat is just an indicator of age. This 18-month-old's coat is just as correct as the 7-year-old's impressive cords.

These and other good examples of Komondors at various ages can be seen in our judge's seminars and in our illustrated standard. It can be downloaded or viewed at the club's website.

—Eric Liebes,

erichliebes@earthlink.net

Komondor Club of
America

Kuvasz

IS THE KUVASZ A CHILD'S DOG?

Is the Kuvasz a child's dog? The best answer is yes—but perhaps not in quite the

way people usually mean.

The relationship between working breeds and children has long interested me. Five Working Group breeds specifically use the word “children” in their breed standards, while eight use the word “family,” which may imply the presence of children. For this discussion, however, we will focus specifically on the word “children.”

Before we begin, it is important to note that the absence of these words from the standards of the remaining Working breeds should not lead one to any conclusions about their suitability for families. Working breeds can be wonderful with children when the dogs and, just as importantly, the children are raised and guided properly. The Working Group simply presents special consideration since they are generally the largest, strongest, and most robust of all dog breeds.

The word “children” is usually found in either the General Appearance

or Temperament section of a breed standard. The Boerboel is described as “loving with children and family.” The Boxer is “playful, yet patient and stoical with children,” and the Cane Corso is also described as “loving with children and family.” Children are mentioned twice in the Chinook standard: The breed is “known for their love of children,” and later noted for a “special devotion to protect children.”

The Kuvasz standard speaks of an “extremely strong instinct to protect children.” That instinct is an important part of the breed's character, but protection and playfulness are distinct concepts.

A Kuvasz will certainly play with, and deeply love the children in his family, but he may express that attachment in a quieter, more watchful way than one might expect from the stereotypical child's dog. He is not always waiting for someone to throw a ball, and he may consider wrestling and

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Tess (Ederra's Blue Queen of Monarda) and her children

roughhousing undignified or an activity that calls for his attentive supervision. He is often happiest accepting affection, following the children through the yard, or resting nearby while keeping an eye on the surroundings.

This calm presence should never be mistaken for

indifference. When a child belongs to his family, the Kuvasz will sacrifice life and limb to ensure that child's safety. The relationship can be exceptionally tender, shaped by the breed's natural guardian instinct.

I owned Kuvasz long before I had children,

so introducing our newborn babies to the dogs was always a memorable experience. The Kuvasz approached with quiet curiosity, sniffed the baby, and seemed to reach an immediate conclusion that this small, helpless creature belonged to us and was now part of the family.

Anyone who has lived with this breed has likely witnessed the special awareness Kuvaszok can show toward the young and vulnerable.

There is, however, an important distinction between the mature Kuvasz described in the standard and the puppy actually living in your home. This is a slow-maturing breed, both mentally and physically. The thoughtful, discerning adult Kuvasz develops over time and does not arrive fully formed in an 8-week-old puppy.

A Kuvasz puppy or adolescent may be exuberant, impulsive, and unaware of his own size and strength. A large puppy can unintentionally knock down or

COURTESY MARIA ARECHAEDEERRA

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injure a small child during ordinary play.

As with any breed, adult supervision and guidance are essential to establishing a safe and lasting bond. The Kuvasz's natural instincts also need time. Experience, socialization, and sound guidance are needed for the dog to mature into good judgment.

Parents should never try to manufacture suspicion or encourage a puppy to be protective. The instinct is already hard wired into this breed through thousands of years of evolution.

In addition, it is important to remember that children rarely interact in the calm, predictable manner of adults. They run, shriek, wave their arms, quarrel, chase one another, and suddenly burst into tears.

Friends may engage in play that looks more serious to a watchful dog than it really is. A Kuvasz may not immediately understand that the child tackling, grabbing, or chasing "his" child is a welcome playmate rather than

someone causing distress.

For that reason, supervision is always appropriate when children are present. A Kuvasz who is gentle and devoted to the children in his own family may need time and proper introductions before becoming equally comfortable with every child who enters the home or yard.

Introductions should be deliberate, interactions should be supervised, and rough play should take place away from the dog. If excitement escalates, the Kuvasz should be calmly given a quiet place to relax rather than being expected to interpret a confusing situation.

Supervision is not an admission that a dog is untrustworthy. It is responsible management of any dog breed, but especially important with a very large, powerful, independent-thinking breed.

Children need guidance as well. We had very strict, non-negotiable rules in our home. Children were never

allowed to climb on, sit on, or attempt to "ride" a Kuvasz. They were taught kindness and an understanding that their dogs were living, sentient beings and not playground equipment. They were never permitted to pull ears, tails, or other body parts. They were never to disturb a dog who was sleeping or eating.

Children must learn to respect canine communication, and adults must intervene long before either child or dog becomes uncomfortable.

A successful bond between a Kuvasz and a child may come naturally, but it is not created by allowing unlimited access and hoping instinct will take care of the rest. It grows through thoughtful breeding, early socialization, patient training, clear household rules, and active adult supervision.

When raised and managed well, the Kuvasz can give a child something quite extraordinary: love, companionship and the steady presence of a devoted

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guardian. He may not be the stereotypical children's playmate, endlessly retrieving a ball but his gift to a child is different and quite precious. He watches. He accompanies. He stays close. Beneath that imposing white coat and independent mind is a soft heart and a remarkable gentleness toward those he understands to be small, vulnerable, and part of his family.

So, is the Kuvasz a child's dog? He can be a magnificent one, provided the adults understand and respect the distinctive relationship this ancient breed was created to offer.

—Maria Arechaederra,
Kuvasz Club of America
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[Kuvasz Club of America](#)

Leonbergers

AGILITY... IN WATER? BRILLIANT!

While scrolling through social media one day, I happened upon a friend's post showing her lovely

Leonberger doing what looked like agility, but in a pool!

I was immediately intrigued, as I had done agility with my first two Leonbergers and always found it a challenge to train and compete with them because the trials were almost always outdoors, and almost always in the heat of summer. It would involve bringing a pop-up tent and a baby pool filled with ice and water, usually with battery-powered fans and sun-shields draped on the sunny side of the tent. This water agility seemed like a wonderful option for our big, hairy, water-obsessed breed!

I contacted my friend Stephanie Lucero to ask about the sport, and I was delighted with the details she provided. Her Leonberger Lenny Lipowicz (VLX Ch. Cu Leone's Dueling Banjos, RI, FDC, THC, CGCA, CGCU, TKI, ATT, FITB, NDD2, VDD) had just started this new sport as an old man. He was 9.5 years

old at the time, and he wore a float vest at the time. He is now almost 10 years old and no longer wears the float vest.

Lucero put me in contact with Destiny Martel, who runs and operates that facility near the Georgia-Florida border.

Martel, a longtime participant in agility and dock diving sports with her own dogs, is also an AKC-certified FIT DOG instructor. She opened her own dock diving pool in 2018 and in the research process came upon a YouTube video where a woman overseas was using agility-type obstacles in a pool to help condition her working dogs. Martel, who lives in the hot, humid Southeast Coast region of the U.S., immediately saw the potential for adapting the concept into a sport that could keep dogs cool while also building their conditioning and having fun all at the same time. She graciously spent some time on the phone with me, answering my many questions.

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Top: Lenny the Leonberger; dogs working on water agility skills at Destiny Martel's facility

The pool is 4.5 feet deep, and the obstacles are weighted at the bottom so they stay put but have some sway and give as the dog maneuvers through the course. Her pool is salt filtered, which is easier than chlorine on the skin and coat for the dogs, and easier on human skin as well.

The handler and dog enter

and exit the pool on a ramp, and the dog must hold a stay until starting the course, just like in land agility. Both the dog and the handler may wear a water safety vest, and the handler is in the water with the dog the whole time.

Because this is a no-impact sport, it is safe for all ages of dogs, and all breeds.

There are three levels at this

time: Novice, Intermediate/Advanced, and Excellent/Master. There is no time limit for the course, but it is timed for the purpose of placement.

Handlers are allowed into the pool beforehand to walk the course, just like in regular agility. The trainer/judge/coach remains in the pool with each dog-handler team.

COURTESY STEPHANIE LUCERO / DESTINY MARTEL

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The dog is never required to go below the water surface, and the handler can give both voice signals and hand signals throughout the course.

As many of the participants also show their dogs in conformation, a hose is provided by the pool to rinse the dog off after their swim, and Martel also provides a booster bath if needed.

At this time, it is not yet in the works to become an AKC companion event, but it is gaining interest and popularity. For more information, go to Martel's website at <https://www.24kretreivers.com/> or email her at Destiny@24kretreivers.com.

—Shannon White,
oceanleonbergers@gmail.com

[Leonberger Club of America](#)

Mastiffs

This article is written by and appears compliments of well-known breeder-judge Diane

Collings. We extend our congratulations to her having been approved to judge Best in Show.

WHEN IS A RECTANGLE NOT A SQUARE?

Proportion is so important to all breeds, as it is how one recognizes the breed in silhouette and aids in the job for which the breed was perfected.

Of the 32 breeds of the Working Group, 10 are described as square, 16 as off-square, and six as rectangular—these determinations made based on where the breed is measured, whether from the point of shoulder or the prosternum to the ischium. Many of the “off-square” breeds are slightly longer than tall because the length of body begins at the prosternum and the squares measuring at the point of shoulder.

It does matter where the measurement begins, as a breed measured from the point of shoulder asks your eye not to see the forechest in front of the point of



Mastiff on Steps, William Luker Sr, 1863

shoulder. In the majority of these breeds, they ask that the depth of body to length of leg be 50-50 or, for a few, have more length of leg than depth of body, which adds to the overall square or off-square appearance.

In the case of the Mastiff, the standard says: “Proportion—Rectangular, the length of the dog from forechest to rump is somewhat longer than the height at the withers.” The use of the word “somewhat” is important, as it leads the

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reader to believe that it is more than slightly and definitely not off square.

The beginning measurement in the standard is described as the forechest. The standard says: “Forechest should be deep and well defined with the breastbone extending in front of the foremost point of the shoulders”—that is, a prominent prosternum. It is the prominent prosternum that provides for the correct structure of the front that allows for the depth called for in the standard.

The standard says: “The height of the dog should come from depth of body rather than from length of leg.” This doesn’t mean that we have short-legged dogs, but that we just don’t want to see all the visible leg.

The standard describes as follows: “Chest wide, deep, rounded and well let down between the forelegs extending at *least* to the elbow.”

Mastiff breeders want depth to be greater than just to the elbow; we want to see below. It’s this mea-

surement of prosternum to ischium that allows the eye to take in the entire length of the Mastiff and less visible leg that gives the Mastiff the *rectangular* appearance that seems to be harder and harder to find.

The correct depth of body doesn’t come with age; they are born with it, and age only enhances what is structurally there.

As a Mastiff breeder, exhibitor, and handler since the mid 1970s and a judge since 2012, I have seen a disturbing trend in the breed getting taller and straighter, losing the massiveness, depth, and rectangular proportions called for in the standard.

Mastiff height is to be faulted for dogs if less than 30 inches, and bitches if less 27.5 inches at 1 year of age. This doesn’t mean that taller is bigger or better, as this leads to a wrong-way trend typically losing what makes a Mastiff a Mastiff.

In my opinion judges are making the mistake of thinking that the best Mastiff is

the one with the most level topline, regardless of all of the other qualities of type, and that the Mastiff racing around the ring is the best mover. The standard says: “Gait—The gait denotes power and strength.” Speed is not mentioned.

As mentioned above, the massiveness, depth, and breadth are *only* enhanced with age. As a breeder friend of mine says, substance is bred not fed.”

In closing, when judging the Mastiff, please look for a *rectangle*, with great depth and breadth, and the only squares coming when you are evaluating the head!

—Authored by Diane Collings and respectfully submitted by Catherine Angus (Zavoras),

mastyff@gmail.com

[Mastiff Club of America](#)

Neapolitan Mastiffs

DOG WORLD “EXPERTS” MUST MAKE FRIENDS

“Expert” is a title I do not claim, yet, from some of the questions I get

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Neapolitan Mastiff, June 2004,
art by Chet Jezierski

from my grooming-shop customers, I sometimes feel like Solomon.

Example 1: One day a lady came in with a Bichon and a Boxer. I started with the Bichon and she mentioned, happily, that both dogs were pregnant. *Hmm.* I looked at the tiny nipples in the well-tucked-up belly. “When is she due?”

General puzzlement ensued. I explained that it’s about 9 weeks from breeding to birth. Upon learning the date of breeding, I gently told the owner that this meant a due-date of tomor-

row! I then explained that I wasn’t seeing any signs of pregnancy (belly, enlarged nipples, and so on) and advised her to go to a vet for verification.

After some subdued silence, our conversation picked up pleasantly, and I got to the Boxer. “Do you think she’s pregnant?” Again I looked at the trim, muscular body in front of me. “When is she due?” And the owner asked “How many weeks for a Boxer?”

Well, it’s really a logical question. After all, elephants take longer than horses, who take longer than sheep and pigs, who take longer than dogs. So bigger means longer, right? I gently explained, and when the owner left we were still friends.

Example 2: Owner brings a female something-or-other who had obviously had a recent litter. Owner is proud. I ask, how many males, how many females? Owner is startled: “How old do they have to be before you can tell?”

Again, no stupid ques-

tions, right? And in some animals it is hard to tell sex right away. (I’m thinking of the parakeets I raised when I was young.)

Example 3: When we moved to our little farm in wild and woolly western Kentucky, the first thing we did was fence and cross-fence the entire 20 acres, especially since one side abutted a highway. A new neighbor came over to introduce herself and in conversation said, “You can’t have dogs here”—a startling statement, because we knew the local laws, and we clearly planned on having dogs. But then she explained: “They’ll just get hit by cars.” *Ummmm*, that’s why we’re putting up a fence. “Oh,” she mused, “that might work.”

My point is that more people than you realize are stuck with assumptions and knowledge that seem from the 1950s. (Got a dog of a big breed? Ever had someone ask, “Oh, he must be a gentle giant, right?” Same thing.)

In these days of constant

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animal-rights rhetoric, it is critical for each of us to be gently aware of what people think and know or don't. This may help explain why Average Joe/Jane is easily swayed by the animal-rights activists. If a vacuum exists, something will fill it.

After moving to Kentucky, we got involved with and actively worked with our local animal control officer and the local humane society. With friendly repetition, we were able to get them to change their common mantra from "spay and neuter your dog" to "if you don't plan on breeding, spay and neuter; if you do plan on breeding, breed responsibly." They listened to us because, after all, being "AKC folk," we were the "experts." We were their friends, too.

All of us "dog world folk" need to make friends with and be involved with our local forces-that-be. People listen to their friends. — Margaret R. (Peggy) Wolfe,

United States Neapolitan Mastiff Club

Newfoundlands

Our guest correspondent is Tami Palomba (tami.palomba7@gmail.com).

WASEEKA KENNEL: A FOUNDATION KENNEL FOR THE AMERICAN NEWFOUNDLAND

Among the great names in Newfoundland breed history, few carry the prestige and influence of Waseeka Kennel. Established in Ashland, Massachusetts, by Elizabeth Loring in 1929, it became the most successful and influential

Newfoundland breeding program in America. It shaped the modern Newfoundland and established bloodlines that continue to influence Newfoundlands around the world today. The lineage of this year's national specialty winner MBIS RBIS GCh. Bowater's Love Your Flashy Ways at Annisquam Light (Biggie) can be traced back several generations to a Waseeka dog who won the first national specialty in 1940.

When Newfoundland



News clippings about Waseeka Kennel and their Newfoundlands

COURTESY AUTHOR

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breed numbers declined following World War I, Loring recognized the need for careful breeding, sound structure, and preservation of the breeds' distinctive qualities. She appreciated the excellence of British bloodlines and imported several dogs descended from the legendary Ch. Siki. (Siki himself was not a great dog, but he produced very well.) The imported dogs, including Ch. Seafarer, became the cornerstone of the Waseeka breeding program, restoring quality and consistency to the breed in North America.

During the 1930s and '40s, Waseeka dominated the show ring in both America and Canada. The kennel's dogs won Best of Breed more than 170 times, including Best of Breed in nine consecutive years at Westminster and 10 years in a row at Eastern Dog Club in Boston. Ch. Seafarer won Best of Breed dozens of times in both the U.S. and Canada, earned numerous Working Group victories,

and captured multiple BIS awards.

Another legendary dog, Ch. Waseeka's Sea King, enjoyed an equally impressive career. Dogs such as Ch. Waseeka's Sailor Boy, Ch. Waseeka's Wayfarer, Ch. Waseeka's Sea Drift, and Ch. Marc Anthony of Waseeka further solidified the kennel's place in history.

Consistency and uniformity of quality distinguished Waseeka from other kennels. Visitors frequently remarked on the exceptional uniformity of the dogs, whether examining champions, young prospects, or breeding stock. Observers found animals sharing the same desirable characteristics of temperament, structure, and breed type.

This consistency reflected Elizabeth's understanding of genetics and careful selection of breeding pairs. Her philosophy emphasized improvement with every generation. Nothing made her happier than losing to a new fancier with a dog whose breeding she'd previously

influenced. Worthy opposition made showing a much more sporting proposition.

By 1939, there were 179 Newf registrations in the studbook, and there were 245 benched at the shows. Waseeka's share of those entries was about 100.

The kennel produced dozens of Newfoundlands, with multiple litters each year. Despite its size, Waseeka maintained high standards of care and management. Puppies were carefully evaluated, with only the best retained for future breeding and exhibition.

The property was very large and wooded, perfect for 50 Newfoundlands and 30 Corgis. They were able to walk for miles both leashed and unleashed. Kennel buildings were solid structures made to endure the elements. Staff were employed for coat maintenance, exercising, and overall care of the dogs.

Raw meat was always on the menu, with beef, lamb, mutton, and horsemeat purchased from a local

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packing company. Meat was combined with fruits and vegetables for a rich stew.

By the early 1950s, Waseeka's direct breeding activity began to decline, and records indicate the last litters carrying the Waseeka name appeared around 1951. However, the kennel's influence never disappeared. The bloodlines continued to shape breeding programs for decades, and the emphasis on soundness, breed type, and temperament remains a model for responsible breeders.

This author met Elizabeth's daughter, Sue Annis, and her granddaughter, Nicky Annis Caruso, at the recent Newfoundland national specialty. Sue is a spry 95-year-old, while Nicky breeds and shows English Setters.

Waseeka's excellence in breeding Morgan Horses was just beginning as Sue grew up: She and her daughter will be inducted into the Morgan Horse Hall of Fame this year.

Nicky and Sue thoroughly

enjoyed watching the judging at the recent national specialty and must have been pleased a descendant from the venerable Waseeka Kennel won the show!

—T.P.

Thank you, Tami!

—Katie Dolan,

Katie@katiedolan.net

Newfoundland Club of America

Portuguese Water Dogs

Our article for this issue is authored by Kari L. Lavalli, Ph.D.

TRADITIONAL WATER SKILLS OF PORTUGUESE WATER DOGS IN TODAY'S WATER TRIALS

The origins of Portuguese Water Dogs (PWDs) are much debated but likely arose from ancient herding dogs that were brought to the Iberian Peninsula and were molded into the *Cão de Água* of Portuguese fisherman. This breed's instincts for retrieving, herding fish, guarding people and property, and being extremely resistant to fatigue made

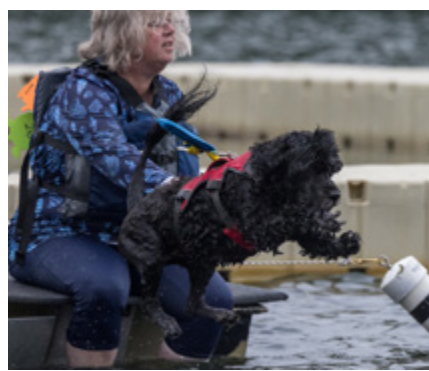
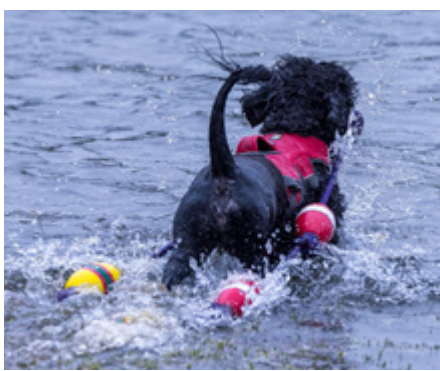
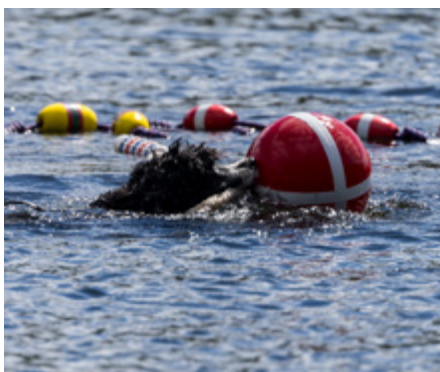
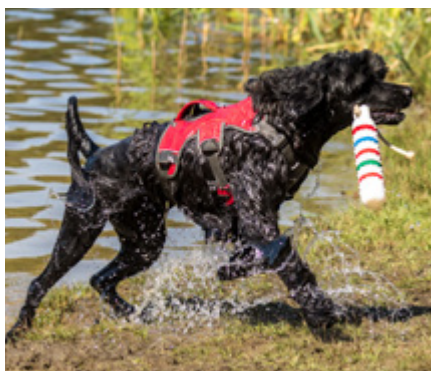
for a valuable working companion to those working on small, inshore fishing boats.

Early descriptions depict a dog that sat in the bow, barked to indicate a school of fish, jumped into water to herd fish into nets, and refused to jump while moving away from the bow to indicate danger from sharks.¹ These dogs also hauled fishing nets, carried mail to other boats, retrieved objects needed or forgotten on shore, dove to retrieve objects that fell overboard, and brought fishermen lunchpails from home. Their usefulness made them so highly valued that they were paid wages in fish.²

As small fishing boats were replaced with larger motorized boats equipped with radios and mechanical winches, these dogs became obsolete and while the breed was preserved, its traditional work disappeared. However, in Europe, Canada, and the U.S., specialized breed-specific water trials were created to maintain the skill sets of the PWD.

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From top: (1) Retrieving a water dummy and returning to shore (Junior & Apprentice level); (2) retrieval of line from shore (Apprentice level); (3) marking the object as it falls into the water for the underwater retrieve (Apprentice level); (4) retrieving a floating line that was placed in the water (Apprentice and Working level); (5) retrieving multiple overboard articles (Working level); (6) delivering the gear bag to the boat (Working level); (7) retrieving the line from shore and (right) returning line to the boat (Courier level); (8) delivery of pouch (blue object attached to harness) to other boat (Courier and Master level); (9) Transfer of dog to work from a second boat (Working level, done from shore at Master level).

PHOTOS BY JEREMY KEZER, USED WITH PERMISSION

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In the U.S. and Canada, these trials have two basic levels: Junior and Apprentice trials take place on the beach and focus on retrieving skills, while Working, Courier, and Masters trials take place on boats and focus on many of the traditional more complex skills.

How does one get started if interested in training a PWD for this kind of water work? Two major areas to work on are: (1) retrieving skills and (2) a strong desire to swim and stay in the water.

Both are best taught when the dog is very young; I start with puppies at around 6–7 weeks. I buy a baby pool and fill it full of pit balls—pups generally love to bat these around and jump into the pool to do so.

After the pit-ball pool is a favorite plaything, I put water in it, high enough to get their feet wet but not so high as to reach the pup's elbows. I look for puppies that think splashing water and rolling in the pit-ball pool is the best thing in the world.

Once I have determined my keeper and the other pups have gone to their homes, I will take the pit balls out of the pool and put a hose in it while the pup watches me. I want the pup to jump in the pool and attack the hose.

This serves two purposes: It gets the pup going into deeper water, and it gets the pup to put his or her face in the water to bite at the hose. I will also stuff hot dogs into hollow marrow bones and drop them into the pool for the pup to retrieve. (Teaching swimming was covered in the October 2025 GAZETTE.³)

Puppyhood is also the perfect time to build retrieving skills, because puppies love to put all kinds of things into their mouths. I never rip objects out of their mouths or chase them to capture what they have—instead, I show them very early on that if they bring me that object, I will trade them for a yummy treat. Some trainers suggest that this will simply create a dog

who purposefully steals things to get a treat—but I have found that that is not the case, especially if one is combining the return of the object with the “come” command.

Once a dog understands this game, I start working on the formal retrieve. If the pup is still teething, I will start with a soft rope, a four-inch foam paint roller, or a canvas puppy dummy, and I will shape the retrieve by first clicking and rewarding for touching the object, then for putting teeth on it, and then for opening their mouth over it.

If one has not discouraged a dog from picking up a variety of objects, this step generally goes fast. The harder part is to teach the dog to hold onto the object until asked to give it up, and there are numerous videos out on the web to help with this process.

Water trials require that the dog be able to stay with you on a beach (which requires attention and engagement work). At the

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lower beach-based levels, the dog needs to mark thrown dummies or placed floating lines and retrieve them, retrieve underwater objects, be calm on boat platforms, and swim with the handler. At the boat-based levels, the dog needs to take its gear (in a bag) to the boat, retrieve dummies from various distances and in a specific order when there are multiples to choose from, retrieve multiple articles before boarding the boat, work with and off other boats, go to and return from shore while retrieving specific objects, and set a buoy ball out some 70–75 feet from the handler's boat. For more information, see the PWDCA Water Manual.⁴

Preserving the PWD's traditional working skills is very important in maintaining the breed itself—a dog that cannot swim, can't jump off boats, or can't retrieve and work with its owner is not going to be a good representative of the breed. Water work is also incredibly fun for the owner and a great

way to spend one's summer! —K.L.

1 Braund, K and D.F. Miller. 1986. *The Complete Portuguese Water Dog*. Howell Book House, NY.

2 Ibid.

3 <https://images.akc.org/pdf/gazette/october-2025.pdf>

4 https://s3.amazonaws.com/amo_hub_content/Association1696/files/Activities%20or%20Events/Water/PWDCA%20Water%20Trial%20Manual%202026.pdf

Portuguese Water Dog Club of America

Saint Bernards

This article is dedicated to Carol Beck, who recently passed away. A longtime member of the Saint Bernard Club of America, Carol was instrumental in Saint Bernard rescue for many years. The following is from a tribute written by a fancier.

REMEMBERING CAROL BECK

Carol Varner Beck passed away peacefully at home on

June 11, 2026, at the age of 87.

A devoted wife, mother, sister, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Carol's family and community were the heart of her life. Her sisters in Beta Sigma Phi brought her decades of friendship, laughter, and purpose.

Carol's journey with Saint Bernards began on Christmas Eve in 1971, when a puppy named Star entered her life. That one puppy sparked a passion that would span more than fifty years. Under the kennel name Star's Saints, Carol proudly bred and exhibited over thirty litters, helping preserve and promote the breed she loved so deeply.

But Carol's greatest legacy wasn't measured in ribbons or championships. It was measured in second chances. In working in Saint Bernard rescue for more than four decades, she opened her home and her heart to the abandoned, the neglected, the abused, the elderly, and the forgotten.

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Carol Beck

The ones who had become “too big,” too old, too difficult, or simply unwanted all found something extraordinary with Carol—a safe place to land and someone who refused to give up on them.

She understood that every Saint Bernard deserved love, dignity, and another chance, and she spent the rest of her life making sure as many

as possible received exactly that.

Today, it’s comforting to imagine what happened when Carol reached the Rainbow Bridge. There must have been thousands upon thousands of Saint Bernards waiting for her—tails wagging, slobbery kisses ready, each one remembering the gentle hands that fed them, comforted them,

healed them, and loved them when no one else would. What a remarkable reunion that must have been.

Carol’s legacy lives on not only through her family and friends, but through every Saint Bernard whose life she changed, every family blessed by one of those dogs, and every rescuer inspired by her example. Her compassion created ripples that will continue for generations.

The Saint Bernard community has lost one of its greatest champions. We are all better for having known her, and Saint Bernard fanciers everywhere will forever be grateful for the kindness, dedication, and extraordinary soul that spent a lifetime saving the gentle giants we all cherish.

Don’t forget that you can donate to the Saint Bernard Club of America Charitable Foundation by contacting Bill Hinchman at nightsky-saints@gmail.com. You can ask that your donation be used to publish the *Saint Fancier* or for Saint Bernard

COURTESY FAMILY

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rescue, or juniors, or any other worthy entity, if that is your preference. Just let Bill know where you want your donation applied.

Until next time, majors to all! —Anna May Fleischli Brown, www.edekweisskennel.com; stedekweis@aol.com

Saint Bernard Club of America

Siberian Huskies

GIVING BACK TO THE SPORT

In my first column for the GAZETTE, I wrote that I had been hesitant to agree to take over the Siberian column but had decided to go ahead and add it to my already full plate because I felt it was important to give back to the sport and the dog show community that I've loved and gotten so much out of for over 20 years.

It's the most important thing any of us in dog sports can do.

Whether it's companion/performance events or conformation shows, the events we love, give up time at work and home for, and

travel around the country for are available to us only because there are people willing to work to make them available—people who give back.

So how can *you* give back?

For starters, join your local all-breed club or breed-specific club. There's an abundance (some say overabundance) of all-breed clubs holding annual shows. So chances are more than good that there's an all-breed club in your city or within a reasonable driving distance.

New to the show scene? There's no better way to gain information and get advice. Join up, and volunteer to help with the club's next show. There's no shortage of tasks that need doing and roles that need filling.

If you're not familiar enough yet with ring procedure to feel comfortable stewarding inside the ring, offer to hand out armbands and check in entries. Offer to pick up judges from the airport, keep the hospitality area clean and stocked with

drinks and snacks, direct parking, or change trash bags in the exercise area and make sure there are pick-up bags available.

There are also administrative tasks—mailing contracts, getting press releases to news outlets—to be completed.

As I said, the list is nearly endless, and all clubs will welcome the help. Not only will you be giving back to the sport, you'll also gain friendship and knowledge.

If you have several years of experience in a breed and as an exhibitor, give back by helping newcomers along. And that doesn't have to be a "handling lesson." It can be as simple as making an obvious newcomer feel more relaxed and enjoy the experience a bit more.

I'll never forget my very first time in the ring with my rambunctious Siberian puppy. I made it around the ring on the first go-around without falling, getting Sunny's lead tied around my legs, or knocking anyone down, so I was feeling pretty

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Siberian Huskies

good about the whole thing. I waited in line for the others to finish their examinations and decided to be nice to the person behind me. I told her, truthfully, that I thought her dog was extremely pretty (the newcomer's ultimate compliment). She looked at me—and not with a pleasant look on her face—and said, “Move up, please.”

Alrighty, then. I was loving

this dog stuff so far.

I did think briefly about just not returning for day two of the show. But I persevered.

Not too many months later, I was waiting ringside to take my dog in and was wearing a new powder-blue suit I happened to really like. I suppose I must have had my pre-show, deer-in-the-headlights look going on, because a random

woman hustling to her own ring with her small dog paused a bit as she passed me and said, “You know, I really like that suit on you.”

I went in feeling like a million, even though I knew she probably just wanted to help alleviate my nerves somewhat.

Two very different experiences, the first making me think about giving up before I'd started, the second

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boosting my confidence and making me feel a part of the community.

All that to say this: What you say and do to other exhibitors, especially new ones—how you respond to questions from them, how you interact with them—can make all the difference in whether they stay in the sport or abandon it.

So at a time when everyone is worried about dwindling dog show entries, being nice is perhaps the ultimate way of giving back. If a newbie's too slow and keeping you from showing your dog at its ideal speed, calmly ask them to try speeding up a bit and explain why, rather than scowling and leaving it at a clipped "Speed up, please."

Offer advice after asking if it's OK. Offer a tip for stacking, some advice on how to hold the lead, or whether the new handler's speed on the down and back was too fast or too slow. Stand with them for a bit, watch the breed in the

ring after yours with them, and explain ring procedure.

You can also support and help spread the word about health initiatives in your breed. Talk with fellow exhibitors about whether or not they're participating in the program and explain that they should, and why. Offer to help spread the word about such programs formally, if you have writing or public relations experience. Donate funds to such programs.

You can also make monetary donations to programs such as Take the Lead or the Southern Handlers Charity League, which provide funds for exhibitors and others involved in the dog show community who are in financial distress or have emergencies.

There are plenty of ways you can play an active role in keeping the sport of dogs and the dog community going. You don't necessarily have to write a column.

—Karla Wall,

[Siberian Husky Club of America](#)

Standard Schnauzers

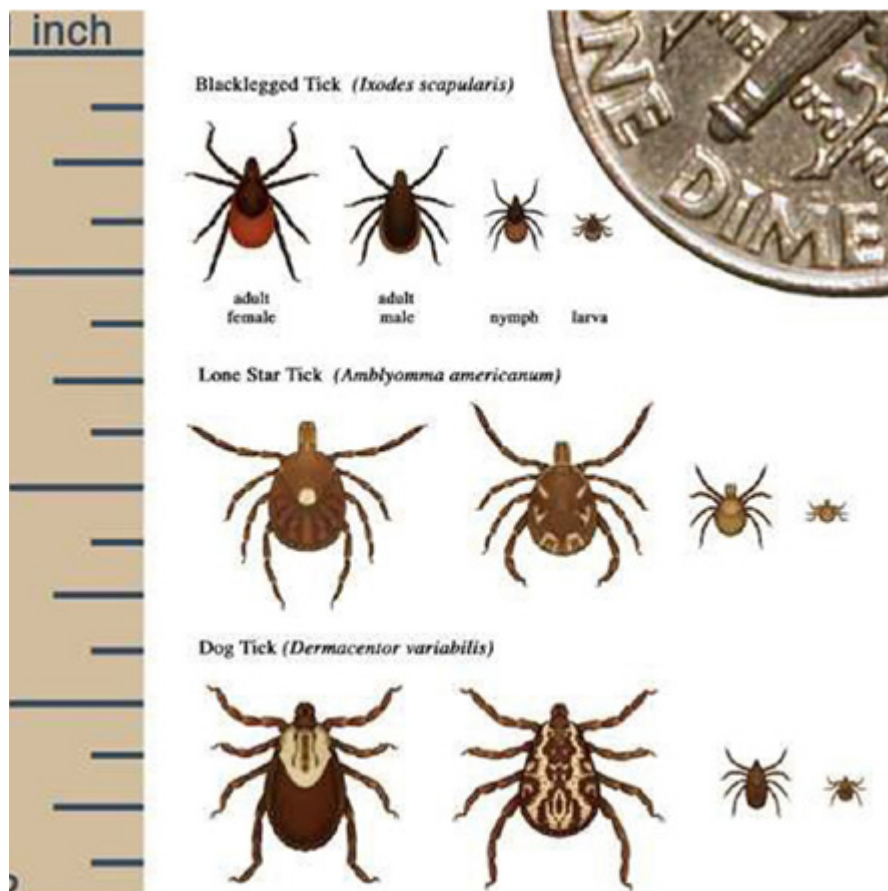
TICK TALK PART 1 OF 3

It's hunting season in parts of the U.S. Some Standard Schnauzers tag along with their humans to enjoy Mother Nature in her autumnal garb and the beautiful but shorter days. *However*, ticks are still prevalent everywhere. Whether walking dogs, camping, or at home, you should know which ticks are near and the diseases they transmit.

This installment discusses ticks and their habitats; your takeaway is recognizing tick species, knowing where and how they live, and learning what diseases they transmit. Part 2 (January 2027) will detail these tick-borne diseases and symptoms, how they affect dogs and humans, and how to treat them. Part 3 (April 2027) will cover prevention: what you can do to prevent tick bites, and how to remove ticks correctly if you find them on your dogs or yourself. *(Disclaimer: I am not a medical professional; these three articles don't*

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substitute for licensed professional medical advice or clinical examination.)

Hard ticks hide in long grass, on or under logs, and on rocks humans sit upon. Ticks shelter on leaves and branches, even in trees—adult ticks can climb five feet (150 centimeters)—lying in wait to bite unsuspecting warm-blooded creatures. Soft ticks emerge at night from rodent nests, unused cabins, barns,

and abandoned structures infested by bats or rodents to feed quickly.

Tick bites transmit a plethora of ugly diseases to vertebrates. Fresh out of grad school, I lived in a duplex with adjoining carports; my neighbor, a devout hunter, hung tick-infested deer carcasses in his. After the carcasses cooled, where did those ticks go? To my dogs and (gaspl!) to me. In the shower, I found a deer tick



SSCA Leading Producer Ch.
Asgard Mesa Mist Wüstefuchs,
CGC CD UCD RA RATN (Emma)

on me; inspecting all of us, I uncovered several more of the nasty critters on the dogs, which I removed safely.

Another time, I noticed the walls shimmering. Looking closer, I saw grooves in the wood panels alive with ticks. With a five-day dog show coming that weekend, I bought 10 fogging bug bombs at the hardware store and dispersed them throughout the house.

Before leaving for the shows, I closed all windows, opened closet and cupboard doors, and set the bug bombs off as I ran for our loaded vehicle.

Upon returning from

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BREED COLUMNS

WORKING GROUP

the shows and opening all windows to air out residual poison, I discovered inch-wide swaths of dead ticks and other bugs lining every baseboard and cupboard shelf. Recalling that sight still gives me the heebie-jeebies.

Ticks and their habitat

Over 800 tick species exist worldwide in warm, humid climates. The oldest known tick fossils found are about 100 million years old (the Cretaceous period). <https://www.geosammlung.uni-bremen.de/en/tick-in-amber/>

Ticks are external parasites feeding on mammal, bird, and sometimes reptile blood. (Hmm, did *T. rex* have ticks?) Because of their blood-ingesting diet, ticks are vectors for many serious (sometimes fatal) diseases affecting humans and dogs. <https://www.cdc.gov/ticks/about/index.html>

Ticks are parasitic arachnids belonging to two families: *Ixodidae* (hard ticks, 750 species whose head, thorax, and abdomen are fused together with mouth-

parts in a beak-like structure at the front) and *Argasidae* (soft ticks, 220 species with mouthparts on the underside of their bodies). The main visible differences: Hard ticks have a hard outer shell, while soft ticks don't; the mouth parts of hard ticks are visible from above, while the mouth parts of soft ticks are not.

Hard ticks live from two months to three years: A female lays a batch of eggs, then dies. Soft ticks live up to 16 years, laying several batches of eggs. Hard ticks bite painlessly, feed for days or weeks, and are responsible for most tick-borne illnesses. Soft ticks (genus *Ornithodoros*), living in sheltered structures (not on vegetation), bite painfully, feed quickly, and transmit *Borrelia* species that cause tick-borne relapsing fevers (TBRF).

Ticks have four life stages: egg, six-legged larva, and eight-legged nymphs and adults. Compare adult tick size to an apple seed, nymph size to a poppy seed, and

larva size to a grain of sand.

Adult hard ticks, approximately 3 to 5 millimeters in length, have ovoid/pear-shaped bodies engorged with blood upon feeding.

Ticks locate potential hosts by sensing odor, body heat, moisture, and/or vibrations in the environment.

Female ticks and nymphs transmit the majority of diseases to humans and dogs. Deer ticks are the most reported, followed by American dog ticks. Lone Star ticks were a distant third place until 2024, when Asian longhorn ticks began to exceed their numbers.

<https://www.ticklab.org/statistics>

Hard ticks: Black-legged ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*, AKA deer tick) spread parasites, bacteria, and a virus in the Eastern and Midwest regions of the U.S. The bite of Lone Star ticks (*Amblyomma americanum*, a large white spot on its back) spreads diseases, viruses, a rash, and sometimes alpha-gal syndrome—allergy to foods of mammal origin—in much of the U.S. American

BREED COLUMNS

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dog ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*, AKA wood tick, *D. variabilis*, or related *D. similis*) spread Rocky Mountain spotted fever and tularemia east of the Rocky Mountains and in limited areas of the Pacific Coast.

Western black-legged ticks (*Ixodes pacificus*) spread anaplasmosis, babesiosis, and Lyme disease along the Pacific Coast and isolated pockets of Arizona, Nevada, and Utah. Rocky Mountain wood ticks (*Dermacentor andersoni*) spread Colorado tick fever, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and tularemia in the Rocky Mountain states and southwestern Canada. Brown dog ticks (*Rhipicephalus sanguineus*), found worldwide, including the entire U.S., spread Rocky Mountain spotted fever in the southwestern U.S. along the U.S.–Mexico border.

Gulf Coast ticks (*Amblyomma maculatum*) spread a form of spotted fever, *Rickettsia parkeri* rickettsiosis, in states along the

Atlantic Coast and Gulf Coast of Mexico.

Asian longhorned ticks (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*), found in Asia and a handful of U.S. states since 2017 and now fanning out to other states, spread anaplasmosis, babesiosis, ehrlichiosis, and rickettsiosis; risk of illness in the U.S. from this tick's bite is still unknown. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/alpha-gal-syndrome/in-depth/tick-species/art-20546861>

Soft ticks: Soft ticks (*Ornithodoros hermsi* and other soft ticks) have soft, leathery bodies, mainly biting rodents but also often a human sleeping in a shelter or cabin having rodent nests, and drink their fill within minutes. <https://mylmedoc.com/soft-tick/>

Soft ticks found at higher altitudes in the Western U.S. and Southwestern Canada spread *Borrelia* bacteria, causing tick-borne relapsing fevers (TBRF) and sometimes alpha-gal syndrome.

Soft and hard ticks, by

biting and sucking blood of humans, dogs, and other vertebrates, carry or transmit over a hundred kinds of pathogens, transmitting multiple classes of pathogens currently linked with many emerging tick-borne diseases worldwide.

In the U.S. between 2004 and 2019, diagnoses of human tick-borne diseases increased from about 22,500 cases to approximately 50,800 cases; in 2025, approximately 476,000 cases of Lyme disease alone were reported. Most tick pathogens are important natural sources of zoonotic diseases, causing common illnesses worldwide.

These tick-borne illnesses in dogs and humans will be discussed in my January 2027 GAZETTE column, and their prevention in my April 2027 column.

—Suzanne T. Smith (Los Alamos, New Mexico), WustefuchsSS@aol.com; www.GoodFoodGreatDogs.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 MEETINGS

The next meeting of the Delegates will be held at the Rosen Centre Hotel, Orlando, FL on **Friday**, December 11, 2026, beginning no earlier than 10:30 a.m. It will follow the Delegate Forum which will begin at 9:00 a.m.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

American Eskimo Dog Club of America

DELEGATE CREDENTIALS

James Albrecht, West Barnstable, MA,
Cape Cod Kennel Club

Dana Dean, Randolph Center, VT,
Woodstock Dog Club

Karen Dewey, Newport, NH,
American Bloodhound Club

Jane M. Engemann, Lawton, OK,
Rat Terrier Club of America

Alfred Ferruggiaro, Burtonsville, MD,
Catonsville Kennel Club

David Fitzpatrick, East Berlin, PA,
Central Florida Kennel Club

Gregg Lonas, Corryton, TN,
Oak Ridge Kennel Club

Idalia C. McConnie, Silver Springs, MD,
National Capital Kennel Club



gazette

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October 2026 issue!



SECRETARY'S PAGES

Dr. Lindsay Morrow, Shreveport, LA,
Bayou Kennel Club

NOTICE REPRIMANDS AND FINES

Notification of fine imposed on a club for late submission of Event Application, *AKC Rally Regulations*, Chapter 1, Section 1.

German Shepherd Dog Club of San Diego County\$150

Notification of fine imposed on club for failure to distribute ribbons within 60 days *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*, Chapter 5, Section 12.

Irish Setter Club of Greater Tulsa\$200

Notification of fine imposed on club for failure to follow all AKC rules and regulations, *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*, Chapter 9, Section 9.

Northstar Irish Wolfhound Club\$100

Notification of fine imposed on a club for late submission of Event Records, *Rules Applying to Dog Shows*, Chapter 17, Section 2.

Irish Setter Club of New England.....\$50

Greater Detroit Afghan Hound Club\$50

Midwest Afghan Hound Club\$50

Afghan Hound Club of Greater Columbus.....\$50

Pilgrim Basset Hound Club\$50

Greater Louisville Training Club\$100

Notification of fine imposed on a club for late submission of Event Results, *Regulations for AKC Hunting Tests for Pointing Breeds*, Chapter 1, Section 18.

Puget Sound Vizsla Club\$100

Notification of fine imposed on a club for late submission of Event Results, *Regulations for Lure Coursing Tests and Trials*, Chapter 10.

Evergreen Basenji Club.....\$100

Notification of fine imposed on a club for late submission of Event Results, *Coursing Ability Test (CAT) and Fast CAT Regulations*, Chapter 2, Section 19.

Del-Otse-Nango Kennel Club.....\$100

NOTICE

As a result of an Event Committee determination the following individual stands suspended of AKC privileges. It should be noted that this determination may still be appealed and may be reversed. Upon expiration of the appeal process, an appropriate notice describing the status of the individual's suspension, if any, will appear in this column:

Ms. Allie Benedict (Kennesaw, GA)
Ms. Ruth Carlin (Seminole, FL)
Ms. Lisa Fogerty (Troy, NY)
Ms. Janis Kreiger (Sylvania, OH)

Ms. Gina Pickett (Linden, MI)

Ms. Denese Wolfson (Lakewood, CO)

NOTICE

Ms. Lynda Barber-Wiltse (Anchorage, AK). Action was taken by the Alyeska Canine Trainers of South Anchorage for conduct at its August 23, 2026 event. Ms. Barber-Wiltse was charged with improper treatment. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the penalty as three-month suspension of all AKC privileges and imposed a \$300 fine, effective September 9, 2026. (Chesapeake Bay Retrievers)

NOTICE

Ms. Rebecca Cross (Gettysburg, PA). Action was taken by the Atlanta Kennel Club for conduct at its April 8, 2026 event. Ms. Cross was charged with conduct characterized by the Staff Event Committee as impairing a club's ability to retain a site and disruptive behavior at an event. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the combined penalty as a six-month event suspension and imposed a \$500 fine, effective May 3, 2026. Ms. Cross appealed the decision to an AKC Trial Board. The AKC Trial Board vacating the classification of the offense as impairing a club's ability to retain a site and modified the penalty to a five-month event suspension and imposed a \$500 fine, effective April 9, 2026. (Multiple Breeds)

NOTICE

Mr. Richard Ellis (Onalaska, WI). Action was taken by the Blackhawk Retriever Club for conduct at its June 6, 2026 event. Mr. Ellis 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. (Labrador Retrievers)

NOTICE

Ms. Veronica Van Zandt (White Oak, TX). Action was taken by the Beaumont Kennel Club for conduct at its July 18, 2026 event. Ms. Van Zandt 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 July 18, 2026. (Multiple Breeds)

NOTICE

Ms. Suzy Weibel (State College, PA). Action was taken by the Tioga County Kennel Club for conduct at its August 15, 2026 event. Ms. Weibel 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. (Bernese Mountain Dogs)

NOTICE

Ms. Sharon Wilson (Asheville, AL). Action was taken by the Conyers Kennel Club for conduct at its June 28, 2026 event. Ms. Wilson was charged with neglect at or in connection with an event by individual. The Staff Event Committee reviewed the Event Committee's report and set the penalty at a three-month suspension of all AKC privileges and imposed a \$500 fine, effective June 28, 2026. (Dachshunds, Cardigan Welsh Corgis)

NOTICE

The AKC's Management Disciplinary Committee has suspended Mr. David Annen (Tipton, IA) from all AKC privileges for five years and imposed a \$1,000 fine, for submission of a false application to register or transfer (not signature forgeries), which affect the Stud Book and submission of application containing a false certification as to the signature of one of the owners (this includes making false complaints), effective August 25, 2026. (Brittany)

NOTICE

The AKC's Management Disciplinary Committee has suspended Ms. Amelia Gonzalez (Lawrence, MA) from all AKC privileges for ten-years and imposed a \$5,000 fine, for violation of AKC's Personal Conduct Policy, effective March 24, 2026. (Multiple Breeds)

NOTICE

The AKC's Management Disciplinary Committee has suspended Ms. Susan Withers (Ashville, OH) from all AKC privileges for twenty-five years and imposed a \$5,000 fine, for violation of AKC's Personal Conduct Policy, effective July 14, 2025. (Chihuahuas)

NOTICE

The AKC's Management Disciplinary Committee has suspended the following individuals from all AKC privileges for five years and imposed a \$1,000 fine, for refusal to make their dogs and records available for inspection when requested:

Effective August 25, 2026:

Ms. Claudia Harris (Garden City, ID) Standard Schnauzers
Mr. Mark Harris (Garden City, ID) Standard Schnauzers

NOTICE

The AKC's Management Disciplinary Committee has suspended Mr. Jorge Navarrete (Auburn, WA) 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 August 25, 2026. (Bulldogs, French Bulldogs)

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 individuals have submitted applications for the breed(s) listed ***but are NOT currently eligible to accept assignments in those breeds.***

NEW BREED JUDGING APPLICANT

Mr. Christopher B Hutter (119361) PA
(724) 612-1544
hutmo@yahoo.com
Bull Terriers, Miniature Bull Terriers

ADDITIONAL BREED JUDGING APPLICANTS

Mr. Larry C. Abbott (20217) TX
(972) 740-4881
larry@abbottusa.com
Balance of Hound Group (Azawakhs, Basenjis, Borzois, Cirnechi dell'Etna, Irish Wolfhounds, Rhodesian Ridgebacks, Salukis, Scottish Deerhounds, Sloughis)

Mrs. Vicki Allenbrand (91374) KS
(678) 429-4609
vicki.allenbrand@gmail.com
Balance of Hound Group (Basset Fauve de Bretagnes, Basset Hounds, Beagles, Bluetick Coonhounds, Grand Basset Griffon Vendeens, Redbone Coonhounds, Rhodesian Ridgebacks, Scottish Deerhounds, Sloughis, Treeing Walker Coonhounds)

Mr. Kurt D. Anderson (18749) CT
(203) 640-6460
kurt.kmander@gmail.com
Australian Cattle Dogs, Briards, Mudik

Ms. Paula Ayers (115205) GA
(770) 905-5622
playerscav@aol.com
Affenpinschers, English Toy Spaniels, Japanese Chin, Pugs, Toy Fox Terriers

Mrs. Jennifer U. Bell (109179) LA

(225) 933-6132

mystang50@yahoo.com

Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs,
Kuvaszok, Tibetan Mastiffs

**Mrs. Katherine Halton Berns (115217)
TN**

(217) 417-4212

khaltonberns@gmail.com

Australian Cattle Dogs, Bearded Collies,
Entlebucher Mountain Dogs, Icelandic
Sheepdogs, Pyrenean Shepherds

Ms. Regina Lee Bryant (105299) CA

(209) 327-8778

catoriaussies@gmail.com

Cavalier King Charles Spaniels,
American Eskimo Dogs, Boston
Terriers, Chinese Shar-Pei, Lhasa Apsos,
Xoloitzcuintlin

Mrs. Judy S. Chambers (25318) OR

(503) 705-7099

judy088@centurytel.net

Nederlandse Kooikerhondjes

Mrs. Diane Collings (94897) CA

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dianecollings@verizon.net

Belgian Laekenois, Belgian Malinois,
Belgian Sheepdogs, Belgian Tervuren,
Cardigan Welsh Corgis

Mrs. Sara Dellorto (117193) FL

(863) 816-2080

sardione@aol.com

Boxers, Cavalier King Charles Spaniels,

Japanese Chin, Russian Tsvetnaya

Bolonki, Silky Terriers, Yorkshire Terriers

Mrs. Beth Downey (102539) MS

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bethdowney539@gmail.com

Azawakhs, Ibizan Hounds, Norwegian
Elkhounds, Sloughis

Ms. Mary Dukes (99597) NC

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putupyr@aol.com

Balance of Sporting Group (Brittanys,
Flat-Coated Retrievers, Labrador
Retrievers, Nova Scotia Duck Tolling
Retrievers, Cocker Spaniels, Welsh
Springer Spaniels, Wirehaired Vizslas)

Mrs. Nancy Eilks (23143) WI

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eilks@gdinet.com

American Hairless Terriers, Rat Terriers,
Scottish Terriers

Mrs. Janet L. Fink (6374) WI

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janetfink@verizon.net

Chinese Shar-Pei, Norwegian
Lundehunds

Mr. Edward A. Fojtik (104757) IL

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efojtik@aol.com

Cairn Terriers, Smooth Fox Terriers,
Irish Terriers, Kerry Blue Terriers,
Russell Terriers, Scottish Terriers

Mrs. Dawn Gabig (103897) FL

(660) 342-6555

dawngabig@gmail.com

Australian Cattle Dogs, Bearded
Collies, Border Collies, Canaan Dogs,
Lancashire Heelers, Polish Lowland
Sheepdogs, Spanish Water Dogs

Mrs. Geri A. Gerstner Hart (6085) WI

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forharts@hotmail.com

Labrador Retrievers

Mrs. Brandy Greenhagen (113965) CO

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brandygreenhagen@comcast.net

Bearded Collies, Belgian Malinois,
Berger Picards, Miniature American
Shepherds, Polish Lowland Sheepdogs,
Swedish Vallhunds

Miss Evalyn Gregory (6130) KY

(502) 777-1969

evjudge@aol.com

Akitas, Great Pyrenees, Newfoundlands,
Saint Bernards

Mr. Gregory Griner (117577) OH

(330) 268-6814

ggriner33@yahoo.com

Portuguese Podengo Pequenos

Mr. David W. Haddock (18846) TN

(615) 430-4773

globalfone@aol.com

Entlebucher Mountain Dogs, Lancashire
Heelers, Mudik, Pumik

Mrs. Sandra Pretari Hickson (50017) CA

(650) 346-9912

sandra.pretarihickson@gmail.com

Australian Terriers, Smooth Fox Terriers,
Wire Fox Terriers, Manchester Terriers,
Russell Terriers, Staffordshire Bull
Terriers

Mr. Jamie Hubbard (80432) IN

(812) 322-7978

ozjamiehubbard@gmail.com

Balance of Herding Group (Australian
Shepherds, Belgian Laekenois, Finnish
Lapphunds, Lancashire Heelers,
Miniature American Shepherds, Polish
Lowland Sheepdogs, Swedish Vallhunds)

Ms. Robin A. Hug (67358) CO

(303) 717-1702

robinahug@gmail.com

Balance of Hound Group (Basset Fauve
de Bretagnes, Basset Hounds, Salukis,
Sloughis)

Mr. Robert E. Hutton (15138) KY

(502) 494-8619

brocairetoo@twc.com

Herding Group (Australian Shepherds,
Bearded Collies, Beaucerons, Belgian
Laekenois, Belgian Malinois, Belgian
Sheepdogs, Belgian Tervuren,
Bergamasco Sheepdogs, Berger Picards,
Border Collies, Bouviers des Flandres,
Briards, Canaan Dogs, Cardigan
Welsh Corgis, Collies, Entlebucher
Mountain Dogs, Finnish Lapphunds,
Lancashire Heelers, Miniature American

Shepherds, Mudik, Norwegian Buhunds,
Pembroke Welsh Corgis, Polish Lowland
Sheepdogs, Pulik, Pumik, Pyrenean
Shepherds, Shetland Sheepdogs, Spanish
Water Dogs, Swedish Vallhunds)

Ms. Karen Justin (64864) NY

(845) 282-4785

impyrial@aol.com

Akitas, Cane Corso, Dogo Argentinos,
Dogues de Bordeaux, Giant Schnauzers

**Mrs. Martha C. Lageschulte (106091)
CO**

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starqst.mcl@gmail.com

Boxers, Bullmastiffs, Standard
Schnauzers

Kathy Lake (115811) FL

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sanrickkennel@hotmail.com

Biewer Terriers, Berger Picards, Swedish
Vallhunds

Ms. Tracey Luty (105151) CO

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taluty@gmail.com

Basenjis, Ibizan Hounds, Pharaoh
Hounds

Ms. Kathryn Madden (92226) NY

(516) 885-4860

madterv@gmail.com

Brittanys, Curly-Coated Retrievers,
Flat-Coated Retrievers, Boykin Spaniels,
English Springer Spaniels, Welsh
Springer Spaniels, Weimaraners

Mr. Dale Meyer (6655) WI

(715) 316-1677

meyerd@tds.net

Bloodhounds, Bluetick Coonhounds,
Grand Basset Griffon Vendeens,
Greyhounds, Plott Hounds, Treeing
Walker Coonhounds

Mr. David R. Miller (5128) OH

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jlaplan488@aol.com

American Staffordshire Terriers,
Australian Terriers, Border Terriers, Bull
Terriers, Cairn Terriers, Cesky Terriers,
Irish Terriers, Kerry Blue Terriers,
Scottish Terriers, Soft Coated Wheaten
Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, West
Highland White Terriers

Ms. Bonnie L. Money (105681) IN

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blmoney@att.net

Anatolian Shepherd Dogs, Cane Corso,
Danish-Swedish Farmdogs, Dogo
Argentinos, Dogues de Bordeaux,
Giant Schnauzers, Newfoundlands,
Rottweilers, Samoyeds, American
Eskimo Dogs

Mr. Richard Mullen (3052) TN

(865) 679-9124

richmullen2@aol.com

American Hairless Terriers, Smooth Fox
Terriers, Wire Fox Terriers, Kerry Blue
Terriers, Russell Terriers, Sealyham
Terriers, Teddy Roosevelt Terriers

Ms. Susan M. Napady (95639) IN

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susan.napady@frontier.com

Pomeranians, Silky Terriers, Boston Terriers, Chinese Shar-Pei, Lhasa Apsos

Ms. Lew Olson (24173) AR

(713) 303-5639

Afghan Hounds, Beagles, Bloodhounds, Borzois, Greyhounds, Otterhounds, Petits Bassets Griffons Vendeens, Pharaoh Hounds, Portuguese Podengo Pequenos, Sloughis

Mrs. Janet Parcel (104351) IL

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westielyd@comcast.net

Balance of Terrier Group (Dandie Dinmont Terriers, Parson Russell Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, Teddy Roosevelt Terriers)

Mr. Steve Patton (118081) TX

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stevepatton.judge@gmail.com

Russian Toys, American Eskimo Dogs, Chinese Shar-Pei, Chow Chows, Lowchen, Poodles

Mr. Tim Peterson (92446) SD

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wynstonekennels@gmail.com

Giant Schnauzers, Samoyeds, Tibetan Mastiffs

Ms. Deirdre Petrie (63937) PA

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American Hairless Terriers, Rat Terriers, Mudik

Mrs. Marilyn Y. Pipes (29634) TX

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willmarpp1@gmail.com

Belgian Laekenois, Miniature American Shepherds, Polish Lowland Sheepdogs, Pyrenean Shepherds

Mr. Adrian Quesada (96331) CA

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Bloodhounds, Petits Bassets Griffons Vendeens, Salukis, Treeing Walker Coonhounds

Dr. Valeria Rickard (92450) VA

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valeria.rickard@joval.us

Balance of Working Group (Boerboels, Chinooks), Afghan Hounds, Azawakhs, Basset Hounds, Beagles, Borzois, Greyhounds, Rhodesian Ridgebacks, Salukis, Scottish Deerhounds, Whippets

Dr. Judi Roller (102261) WI

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Bearded Collies, Bouviers des Flandres, Entlebucher Mountain Dogs, Lancashire Heelers, Old English Sheepdogs, Polish Lowland Sheepdogs, Pulik

Dr. Vicki Sandage (98425) KY

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Doberman Pinschers, Great Pyrenees,

Samoyeds, Finnish Spitz, Keeshonden

Dr. Denise Simenauer (90287) FL

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diorbriards@gmail.com

Australian Shepherds, Belgian Malinois,
Belgian Sheepdogs, Border Collies,
Collies, Pembroke Welsh Corgis

Mr. John Schoeneman (98359) NC

(704) 363-7238

schohaus1@aol.com

Affenpinschers, Chihuahuas, Chinese
Cresteds, Miniature Pinschers,
Pomeranians, Russian Toys, Silky
Terriers

Ms. Ellen W. Schultz (110815) TX

(713) 899-2418

apollogoldens@att.net

Bracchi Italiani, German Shorthaired
Pointers

Mr. Gus Sinibaldi (103241) SC

(954) 614-9308

gus.sinibaldi@yahoo.com

Curly-Coated Retrievers, Flat-Coated
Retrievers, Clumber Spaniels, Vizslas,
Weimaraners, Wirehaired Vizslas

Dr. Donald Sturz (5449) NY

(631) 327-6937

dgs32561@aol.com

Airedale Terriers, Bedlington Terriers,
Border Terriers, Smooth Fox Terriers,
Wire Fox Terriers, Irish Terriers,
Kerry Blue Terriers, Lakeland Terriers,
Manchester Terriers, Miniature

Schnauzers, Russell Terriers, Soft Coated
Wheaten Terriers, Welsh Terriers, West
Highland White Terriers

Mr. Harold "Red" Tatro III (31708) TX

(817) 320-8737

hredtatro@gmail.com

Boston Terriers, Chinese Shar-Pei,
Dalmatians, Keeshonden, Norwegian
Lundehunds, Tibetan Spaniels

Mrs. Nancy Tuthill (6729) MD

(240) 675-1560

cumbrian@myactv.net

Labrador Retrievers, Greyhounds

Ms. Anna M. Vaughn (102565) OK

(918) 906-3776

anna@cme-usa.com

Pointers, Nova Scotia Duck Tolling
Retrievers, English Springer Spaniels,
Wirehaired Vizslas

Ms. Michelle VeuCasovic (17767) OH

(734) 674-5468

info@infinitylabradors.com

American Water Spaniels, Boykin
Spaniels

Ms. Lee Whittier (18526) WA

(802) 369-0380

lepacnw@gmail.com

Barbets, Bracchi Italiani, English Setters,
Gordon Setters, Irish Setters, American
Water Spaniels, Boykin Spaniels, Irish
Water Spaniels, Vizslas, Wirehaired
Vizslas

Mrs. Laura Wright-Smith (107843) CO

(970) 379-7571

brooklyns12@hotmail.com

Cane Corso, Danish-Swedish Farmdogs,
Doberman Pinschers, Dogo Argentinos,
Mastiffs

Mrs. Lisa Young (43070) AZ

(605) 390-1135

youngsongbeagles@gmail.com

Brittanys, Labrador Retrievers, Clumber
Spaniels, Field Spaniels, Weimaraners,
Wirehaired Vizslas

JUNIOR SHOWMANSHIP JUDGING APPLICANTS

Ms. Krista Beal (80354) MD

(301) 525-5244

kristabeal@me.com

JS-Limited

Mrs. Marissa Cheek (119401) SC

marissa.cheek17@gmail.com

JS

Mr. Elliott Wentzel (119283) PA

(724) 328-2464

elliott.wentzel@gmail.com

JS

PERMIT JUDGES

The following individuals have been approved on a **Permit** basis for the breeds listed 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

Mr. Robert Galusha (119051) CA

(951) 297-1532

blackthorna@netscape.net

Rottweilers

Cindy Crawford Gorath (119055) WA

(253) 230-7944

bc65momma@hotmail.com

Boxers, Bernese Mountain Dogs, Old
English Sheepdogs, JS

Mrs. Kirklyn Stacia Ohira Over (118859) HI

(808) 778-0220

staciaohira@gmail.com

American Staffordshire Terriers,
Chihuahuas, Papillons, Pomeranians,
French Bulldogs

Susan Parr (119039) WA

(360) 670-5606

Lhbernese@gmail.com

Bernese Mountain Dogs, JS

Mr. Bryan Porter (119019) CA

(661) 706-7453

goporter@aol.com

Chesapeake Bay Retrievers

Ms. Sara Watson (95456) CA

415205-3582

saraberry@aol.com

Basset Hounds, JS-Limited

ADDITIONAL BREED PERMIT JUDGES

Dr. Azalea Alvarez (97321) FL

(954) 600-5480

minsmere954@yahoo.com

Balance of Terrier Group (American Staffordshire Terriers, Bull Terriers, Smooth Fox Terriers, Wire Fox Terriers, Skye Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, Teddy Roosevelt Terriers, West Highland White Terriers), Cardigan Welsh Corgis, Pembroke Welsh Corgis

Maria Arechaederra (110565) CA

(949) 981-7646

ederrakuv@aol.com

Alaskan Malamutes, Cane Corso, Chinooks, Giant Schnauzers, Leonbergers, Standard Schnauzers

Mrs. Liz Bianchi (55587) VA

(757) 285-4868

chefliz@cox.net

Bullmastiffs, Bulldogs

Ms. Louise M. Brady (67185) CA

(805) 217-4685

Clumber Spaniels, English Cocker Spaniels, English Springer Spaniels

Mrs. Danelle M. Brown (7231) TX

(254) 498-3417

nomadcorgis@att.net

Affenpinschers, Silky Terriers

Mr. Justin Dannenbring (46593) MT

(951) 733-1618

justin.dannenbring@gmail.com

American English Coonhounds,

Bloodhounds, Bluetick Coonhounds, Harriers, Plott Hounds, Redbone Coonhounds

Mr. Mark Darwish (115389) SC

(864) 617-2727

wishmar123@gmail.com

Akitas, Bernese Mountain Dogs, Doberman Pinschers, Great Danes, Rottweilers

Ms. Bonita Fichtenbaum (105541) OH

(937) 620-6480

bmfichtenbaum@gmail.com

Toy Fox Terriers, Chow Chows, Dalmatians

Mrs. Emily Fish (92354) WA

(360) 904-5765

emilypawcific@gmail.com

Basset Fauve de Bretagnes, Beagles, Harriers, Pharaoh Hounds, Salukis, Whippets

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. Junko Guichon (111435) VA

(540) 247-1121

junko@guichonchi.com

Pugs, Yorkshire Terriers

Mr. Jason H. Hoke (92952) WI

(646) 241-5800

jasonhoke@aol.com

Airedale Terriers, American Hairless Terriers, American Staffordshire Terriers, Australian Terriers, Bedlington Terriers, Border Terriers, Cairn Terriers, Cesky Terriers, Dandie Dinmont Terriers, Glen of Imaal Terriers, Irish Terriers, Kerry Blue Terriers

Dr. Cynthia Hutt (95461) CO

(720) 933-8328

lapicfern@gmail.com

Bloodhounds, Greyhounds, Otterhounds, Whippets

Mrs. Pat M. Jenkins (99451) UT

(435) 770-0334

pmj16@msn.com

Brussels Griffons, Miniature Pinschers, Russian Toys, Russian Tsvetnaya Bolonki, Shih Tzu, Toy Fox Terriers, Yorkshire Terriers

Mr. Richard LeBeau (90760) PA

(412) 952-7425

beauprix@comcast.net

Golden Retrievers, Irish Red and White Setters, Clumber Spaniels, Spinoni Italiani

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

Mr. James A. Moses (93094) GA

(770) 329-4768

jmoses0924@aol.com

Balance of Hound Group (Basset Fauve de Bretagnes, Basset Hounds, Dachshunds, Harriers, Peruvian Inca Orchids, Portuguese Podengo Pequenos, Sloughis)

Mr. Shawn Petersen (116127) NV

(775) 315-4727

targhee_gsp@hotmail.com

Berger Picards, Pembroke Welsh Corgis, Pulik

Mr. Stephen Regan (22219) NJ

(732) 814-8741

sregan@lesterglenn.com

Boston Terriers

Ms. Dani Rosenberry (104224) PA

(814) 330-3030

edanhill@aol.com

Chinese Cresteds, Italian Greyhounds

Mr. Michael L. Savage (111869) WA

(509) 999-1800

irishbrook@yahoo.com

American English Coonhounds, American Foxhounds, Basset Hounds, English Foxhounds

Mrs. Diana L. Skibinski (7258) IN

(219) 776-8746

skibinski1@aol.com

Afghan Hounds, Azawakhs, Cirnechi

dell'Etna, Grand Basset Griffon
Vendeens, Greyhounds, Harriers, Petits
Bassets Griffons Vendeens, Pharaoh
Hounds

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 Heelers,
Mudik, Norwegian Buhunds, Pumik

Ms. Judith White (95513) OH

(330) 327-3760
jubilhill@sssnet.com
Dandie Dinmont Terriers, Norwich
Terriers, Parson Russell Terriers, Rat
Terriers

**Ms. Claire Wisch Abraham (100709)
VA**

(571) 318-2768
outlawgwp@aol.com
Balance of Toy Group (Brussels
Griffons, Havanese, Japanese Chin,
Russian Tsvetnaya Bolonki, Shih Tzu)

Ms. Jennifer Payne (119002) WA

(206) 427-3925
jenapayne27@gmail.com

BEST IN SHOW

The following judge, has successfully
completed the required Group
assignments in the first Variety Group for
which they were **approved**, and per their
request has been added to the list of judges
approved to judge Best In Show.

Mr. Bob Busby (38467) NC

(704) 904-4214
didiok9@aol.com

**CONFORMATION JUDGE: RESIGNED
BREED OR JUNIOR SHOWMANSHIP**

The judge below has informed AKC
they wish to resign their judging privileges
for the following:

Ms. Marjorie Martorella
Junior Showmanship-Limited

EMERITUS CONFORMATION JUDGES

Karen Cooper
Nancy Leising

JUNIOR SHOWMANSHIP PERMIT JUDGES

Mrs. Elizabeth Crisp Blake (109212)

CA
(530) 400-9322
ranthombts1970@gmail.com

Mrs. Jennifer Carlson (119031) CO

(719) 200-5433
Jcarlson40@hotmail.com

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:

3 CREEKS – Beagles – Mason Jones

ALWAYS FAITHFUL – Bohemian Shepherds – Courtney L Rogers

BARD – Australian Shepherds – Lindsey R. Serafini

BRICE – Beagles – Moses A. Brice

CHARM CITY – Pomeranians – Ann Coughlin

DOLCE VITA – Coton de Tulears – Elaine E Taylor

FOXGLEN – Basset Hounds – Scott Deans

HIELAND – Shetland Sheepdogs – Liz M. Yoder

INDIGO – Papillons – Jennifer M. Harman

J-BIRD – Russell Terriers – Margaret J Rucker, DVM

LIONHART – Pembroke Welsh Corgis – Debbie Royster

PEBBLES RUN – Samoyeds – Amy Kiell-Green & Andrew Green

PEYTONCREST – Poodles – Laurie A. Smith

ROYAL CHASE – Borzoi – Veranika Bakhur

STONEFIELD – Pomeranians – Heather D. Ishida

WINDSHIRE – Pugs – Aaron E. King

REGISTERED NAME PREFIXES GRANTED

The following applications for a breed-specific Registered Name Prefix have been granted

CAVALMAGNE – Cavalier King Charles Spaniels – Jaqueline M. Cavicchio

CLAN UNDERFOOT – Scottish Terriers – Claudia Waite & Craig H. Garnett

GRACE N – Golden Retrievers – Marlo D. Grayson

GREAT PINES Cavalier King Charles Spaniels – Monica L. Mellroth

LA CHAMPAGNE – Golden Retrievers & Pomeranians – Dana K. Thompson

PRAIRIEWIND – Belgian Sheepdogs – Nancy A. May & Don J. May

STEEL VALLEY – Brittanys – Antonio B. Taibi

STILL POINT – Labrador Retrievers – Dr. Brenna N. Burkett

SOCIAL – Cardigan Welsh Corgis – Mary Sue Olcott & Maggie A. Cannon

VILDE CHAYA – Lagotto Romagnolo – Ariana Lewkowitz-Shpuntoff



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VOM HAZEN – German Shepherd Dogs

– Deanana L. Hazen

WESTERNER – Golden Retrievers –

Thomas A. Wiegard SR



QUARTERLY MEETING OF THE DELEGATES

OF

THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

Gina M. DiNardo, President

PRESENT 265

Airedale Terrier Club of America—*Aletta L. Moore*

Akita Club of America—*Ms. Nancy S. Amburgey*

Albany Kennel Club, Inc.—*Corey Heenan*

American Belgian Tervuren Club, Inc.—*Teresa Nash*

American Brittany Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Terry Hilliard*

American Bullmastiff Association, Inc.—*Howard Gussis*

American Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Club, Inc.—*Richard Alexander*

American Cesky Terrier Fanciers Association, Inc.—*Michael Zywicki*

American Chesapeake Club—*Heidi Henningson*

American Chinese Crested Club, Inc.—*Neil Butterklee*

American Fox Terrier Club—*Connie Clark*

American Lhasa Apso Club, Inc.—*Ms. Barbara J. Wood*

American Maltese Association, Inc.—*Ms. Sandy Bingham-Porter*

American Miniature Schnauzer Club, Inc.—*Barbara Donahue*

American Pointer Club, Inc.—*Mr. Danny D. Seymour*

American Rottweiler Club—*Mr. Peter G. Piusz*

American Sealyham Terrier Club—*Barbara Shapiro*

American Shetland Sheepdog Association—*Marjorie Tuff*

American Toy Fox Terrier Club—*Laura Johnson*

American Water Spaniel Club—*Linda McGrath*

American Whippet Club, Inc.—*Karen B. Lee*

Anderson Kennel Club—*Laura A. Rockwell*

Anderson Obedience Training Club,
Inc.—*Ms. Patricia A. Sample*

Arrowhead Kennel Club—*Deb Phillips*

Ashtabula Kennel Club—*Mr. Vincent P.
Chianese*

Atlanta Kennel Club, Inc.—*Ann Wallin*

Atlanta Obedience Club, Inc.—*Gail A.
LaBerge*

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

Beaumont Kennel Club, Inc.—*Carl Holder*

Bedlington Terrier Club of America—
Howard Solomon

Belgian Sheepdog Club of America, Inc.—
Lisa Leffingwell

Bell Vernon Kennel Association, Inc.—
Mike Kriegel

Berger Picard Club of America—
Jacqueline Carswell

Berks County Kennel Club, Inc.—
Kathleen Kurtz

Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America,
Inc.—*Georgeann Reeve*

Bexar County Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs.
Jennifer Delmer*

Bichon Frise Club of America, Inc.—
Mayno Blanding

Biewer Terrier Club of America—*Deborah
Billings*

Border Collie Society of America—*Lisa
M. Pruka*

Border Terrier Club of America, Inc.—
Mrs. Barbara S. Dalane

Borzoi Club of America, Inc.—*Prudence
G. Hlatky*

Bracco Italiano Club of America—*Allison
Schultz, M.D.*

Briard Club of America, Inc.—*Diane Reid*

Bronx County Kennel Club—*Alexa
Samarotto*

Brookhaven Kennel Club, Inc.—*Marie A.
Fiore*

Bryn Mawr Kennel Club—*Victoria
Glickstein*

Bucks County Kennel Club, Inc.—*Priscilla
Gabosch*

Bulldog Club of America—*Link Newcomb*

Burlington County Kennel Club, Inc.—
Mr. Daniel J. Smyth, Esq.

Butler County Kennel Club, Inc.—

Barbara Ioia

Canaan Dog Club of America—*Pamela S.*

Rosman

Capital Dog Training Club of

Washington, D.C., Inc.—*Dr. Joyce A.*

Dandridge

Cardigan Welsh Corgi Club of America,

Inc.—*David McDonald*

Carolina Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jaimie Ashby*

Carroll Kennel Club—*Mrs. Rachann E.*

Mayer

Catoctin Kennel Club—*Joseph Fitzgerald*

Central Ohio Kennel Club—*Rebecca*

Campbell

Chihuahua Club of America, Inc.—*Tracy*

J. Potts

Chinese Shar-Pei Club of America, Inc.—

Marge B. Calltharp

Chow Chow Club, Inc.—*Margaret*

DiCorleto

Classic Toy Dog Club of Western

Massachusetts—*Dr. Stephen Lawrence*

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*

Conroe Kennel Club—*Jane Bates*

Contra Costa County Kennel Club, Inc.—

Leslie E. Savoye

Curly-Coated Retriever Club of

America—*Leslie Puppo-Rogers*

Dachshund Club of America, Inc.—*Mr.*

John Brading

Dalmatian Club of America, Inc.—*Dr.*

Charles Garvin

Dandie Dinmont Terrier Club of

America, Inc.—*Richard Yoho*

Del Sur Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mr. Mark J.*

Walsh

Del Valle Dog Club of Livermore—*Mrs.*

Sandra McCue

Del-Otse-Nango Kennel Club—*Stephanie*

A. Crawford

Detroit Kennel Club—*Lawrence A. Letsche,*

D.V.M.

Devon Dog Show Association, Inc.—*Meg*

Weitz

Doberman Pinscher Club of America—

Glen Lajeski

Dog Fanciers Association of Oregon,

Inc.—*Patti L. Strand*

Dog Owners' Training Club of Maryland,
Inc.—*Karen L. Keagle*

Durham Kennel Club Inc.—*Linda C.
Wozniak*

Eastern Dog Club—*Frederick R. Vogel*

Eastern German Shorthaired Pointer
Club, Inc.—*Robert Rynkiewicz*

Elm City Kennel Club—*Dr. Gregory J.
Paveza*

English Setter Association of America,
Inc.—*Dr. Brenda J. Parsons, D.V.M.*

English Springer Spaniel Field Trial
Association, Inc.—*Cristy K. Joy*

Field Spaniel Society of America—*Lori
Carver*

Finger Lakes Kennel Club, Inc.—*Margaret
B. Pough*

First Company Governor's Foot Guard
Athletic Association—*Lee Sohl*

First Dog Training Club of Northern New
Jersey, Inc.—*Mary D. Curtis*

Flat-Coated Retriever Society of America,
Inc.—*Neal Goodwin*

Fort Lauderdale Dog Club—*Alejandro
Lima*

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 County Kennel Club, Inc.—*Ms.
Cynthia (Cindy) Collins*

German Shepherd Dog Club of
America—*Dr. Carmen L. Battaglia*

German Shorthaired Pointer Club of
America—*June Johnston*

German Wirehaired Pointer Club of
America, Inc.—*Joan Payton*

Giant Schnauzer Club of America, Inc.—
Steven A. Sansone

Glen of Imaal Terrier Club of America—
Jo Lynn

Glens Falls Kennel Club, Inc.—*Colleen
Kimble*

Golden Retriever Club of America—*Mrs.
Ellen Hardin*

Gordon Setter Club of America, Inc.—
Nance O. Skoglund

Grand Rapids Kennel Club—*Mrs. Carol
L. Johnson*

Grand River Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs.
Cindy Stansell*

Great Dane Club of America, Inc.—*Ms.
Dale Suzanne Tarbox*

Greater Clark County Kennel Club Inc—
Ms. Karen J. Burgess

Greater Collin Kennel Club, Inc.—

Barbara Shaw

Greater Lowell Kennel Club, Inc.—*Susan*

Patterson

Greater Miami Dog Club—*Christian*

Morales-Reyes

Greater Murfreesboro Kennel Club,

Inc.—*Gloria Askins*

Greater Philadelphia Dog Fanciers

Association—*Mr. Jerry A. Berkowitz*

Greater Swiss Mountain Dog Club of

America, Inc.—*Joanne Schottinger*

Greenville Kennel Club—*Sharon Smith*

Greenwich Kennel Club—*Donna Gilbert*

Hatboro Dog Club, Inc.—*Sally L. Fineburg*

Havanese Club of America—*Vicki Gray*

Hendersonville Kennel Club—*Elizabeth*

Ann Brown

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

Illinois Capitol Kennel Club, Inc.—*Terry*

Bridges

Illinois Valley Kennel Club of Peoria,

Inc.—*Dr. Michelle R. Rowland*

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

Kanadasaga Kennel Club—*Christine Cone*

Keeshond Club of America, Inc.—*Richard*

Su

Kennel Club of Beverly Hills—*Mr.*

Thomas S. Powers

Kennel Club of Buffalo, Inc.—*Margaret*

Doster

Kennel Club of Northern New Jersey,

Inc.—*Ms. Lisa J. Giannone*

Kennel Club of Philadelphia, Inc.—*Alan*

E. Welch

Komondor Club of America, Inc.—

Michael Harman

Lackawanna Kennel Club, Inc.—*Steve*

Ostrander

Ladies' Dog Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Arna B. Margolies*

Lagotto Romagnolo Club of America, Inc.—*James Talbert*

Lake Shore Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Diana L. Skibinski*

Lakes Region Kennel Club, Inc.—*Deborah L. Kreider*

Land O'Lakes Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jan Croft*

Lawrenceville Kennel Club, Inc.—*Robert N. LaBerge*

Lehigh Valley Kennel Club, Inc.—*Cindy Meyer*

Leonberger Club of America—*Don James*

Lewiston-Auburn Kennel Club, Inc.—*Sue Goldberg*

Lexington Kennel Club Inc.—*Ms. Mary A. Miller*

Los Encinos Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mr. Desmond J. Murphy*

Louisville Kennel Club, Inc.—*Debra H. Owen*

Manatee Kennel Club—*Judy Seltrecht*

Maryland Kennel Club—*Gary Sarvinas*

Mastiff Club of America, Inc.—*Mary L. Speer*

Mid-Continent Kennel Club of Tulsa, Inc.—*Mr. Marc Crews*

Middlesex County Kennel Club—*John Schreiber*

Miniature Bull Terrier Club of America—*Dr. Marci Cook*

Monticello New York Kennel Club, Inc.—*Barry A. Hoovis*

Morris Hills Dog Training Club, Inc.—*Eleanor Campbell*

Mount Ogden Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Karen Park*

Mount Vernon Dog Training Club (MVDTC)—*Christopher Marston*

Mt. Baker Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jane F. Ruthford*

National Shiba Club of America—*Maggi Strouse*

Naugatuck Valley Kennel Club—*Kathy Kirk*

New England Beagle Club, Inc.—*Blaine Grove*

New England Dog Training Club, Inc.—*Lucy Grant-Ruane*

Newfoundland Club of America, Inc.—*Julie Poulin Siefert*

Newton Kennel Club—*Cathy Murch*

Newtown Kennel Club, Inc.—*Susan Marucci*

Nisqually Kennel Club—*Sylvie McGee*

Norfolk Terrier Club—*Susan Schneider*

North Shore Kennel Club—*Holly E. Johnson*

Northeastern Maryland Kennel Club—*Ann M. Schultz*

Norwich Terrier Club of America—*Marilyn Jacobs*

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*

Olympic Kennel Club, Inc.—*Tim Ufkes*

Onondaga Kennel Association, Inc.—*Glenn E. Glass*

Orange Empire Dog Club, Inc.—*Bradford Yamada*

Otterhound Club of America—*Joellen Gregory, D.V.M.*

Parson Russell Terrier Association of America—*Janine Rose*

Pasco Florida Kennel Club—*Renee L. Popkey*

Pekingese Club of America—*Steven Hamblin*

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*

Plum Creek Kennel Club of Colorado—*Marlene Groves*

Poodle Club of America, Inc.—*Patti Jason*

Port Chester Obedience Training Club, Inc.—*Kathy Gregory*

Progressive Dog Club—*William E. Maseth, Jr.*

Putnam Kennel Club, Inc.—*Berna H. Welch*

Reno Kennel Club—*Jacquelyn Fogel*

Rio Grande Kennel Club—*Mary E. Ferguson*

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*

San Mateo Kennel Club, Inc.—*Harvey M. Wooding*

Santa Barbara Kennel Club, Inc.—*Anita R. O'Berg*

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*

Shoreline Dog Fanciers Association of Orange County—*Susan L. Hamil*

Siberian Husky Club of America, Inc.—*Ricki Silveria*

Silky Terrier Club of America, Inc.—*Leeann Podruch, D.D.S.*

Skye Terrier Club of America—*Brice Wonders*

Skyline Kennel Club, Inc.—*Gloria Shaver*

Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America—*Sally Sotirovich*

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*

St. Croix Valley Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Deborah J. Wilkins*

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*

Taconic Hills Kennel Club, Inc.—*Marylyn De Gregorio*

Talbot Kennel Club—*Ann S. Wallace*

Texas Kennel Club, Inc.—*Dr. Michael Knight*

Tibetan Terrier Club of America, Inc.—*Stacey La Forge*

Tidewater Kennel Club of Virginia, Inc.—*Donald M. Bright*

Topeka Kennel Club, Inc.—*Diana J. Komarek*

Trenton Kennel Club, Inc.—*Marty Smith*

Tri-City Kennel Club, Inc.—*Dawn Sealy*

Trinity Valley Kennel Club—*Debby Fowler*

Troy Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mr. Donald S. Gillett*

Tucson Kennel Club—*Dr. Kenneth H. Levison*

Twin Brooks Kennel Club, Inc.—*Patricia C. Sarles*

Two Cities Kennel Club—*Eduardo T. Fugiwara*

Union County Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jennifer V. Modica*

United States Australian Shepherd Association—*Judy A. Harrington*

United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club, Inc.—*Mr. Carl C. Ashby, III*

United States Lakeland Terrier Club—*Maria Sacco*

Utah Valley Kennel Club—*Kelly D. Reimschiessel*

Valley Forge Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Carol Fisher*

Vancouver Kennel Club—*Jolyne Lea*

Wachusett Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs. Virginia T. Rowland*

Wampanoag Kennel Club, Inc.—*Christine Gonsalves*

Washington State Obedience Training Club, Inc.—*John J. Cadalso, Jr.*

Waterloo Kennel Club, Inc.—*Jan R. Gladstone*

Waukesha Kennel Club, Inc.—*Marthina L. Greer*

Welsh Springer Spaniel Club of America,
Inc.—*Richard Rohrbacher*

Welsh Terrier Club of America, Inc.—
Bruce R. Schwartz

West Highland White Terrier Club of
America—*Rebecca Koester*

Westbury Kennel Association, Inc.—*Peter
J. Festa*

Western Reserve Kennel Club, Inc.—*Mrs.
Ann F. Yuhasz*

Whidbey Island Kennel Club Inc—*Laura
Myles*

Wilmington Kennel Club, Inc.—*Bonnie
Bieber*

Yorkshire Terrier Club of America, Inc.—
Pamela A. Langstein



AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB DELEGATE MEETING SEPTEMBER 15, 2026

Gina M. DiNardo, President in the Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. ET.

(National Anthem played.)

The first order of business was the vote for the Delegate Standing Committees.

(Voting.)

The meeting recessed for the Delegate Forum. The topic was *Easy Ways You and Your Club Can Advocate for Dogs*. It was presented by Sheila Goffe, Executive Secretary and Vice President of Government Relations, and Jennifer Clark, Director of Legislative Outreach.

The Chair called the meeting back in session at 10:30 a.m. ET.

Delegates were reminded to check in at the reception desk for attendance purposes. When Staff prints the green-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; David Jackson, Professional Registered Parliamentarian; Sheila H. Goffe, Executive Secretary; Shari Cathey, the Court Reporter.

Condolences were offered in the recent passing of members of the Delegate Body:

- Dr. Alexander Duane Butherus on September 11, 2026. He was the Delegate for the Delaware Water Gap Kennel Club from July 2008 until September 2026.
- Donald E. Schwartz on June 10, 2026. He was the Delegate for the Durango Kennel Club from October 2017 until June 2026.

The Executive Secretary read the names of Delegates seated since the last meeting:

Colleen Kimble, Saratoga Springs, NY, to represent Glens Falls Kennel Club

William Maseth, Baltimore, MD, to represent Progressive Dog Club

Sharon Smith, Greenville, SC, to represent Greenville Kennel Club

Barbara (Bobbie) J. Wood, Cranford, NJ, to represent American Lhasa Apso Club

The following Delegates, who were attending their first meeting since being officially seated, were introduced from the floor:

Colleen Kimble, to represent Glens Falls Kennel Club

William Maseth, to represent Progressive Dog Club

Christian A. Morales Reyes, to represent Greater Miami Dog Club

Dr. Michelle R. Rowland, to represent Illinois Valley Kennel Club of Peoria

Sharon Smith, to represent Greenville Kennel Club

Barbara (Bobbie) J. Wood, to represent American Lhasa Apso Club

The minutes of the June 9, 2026 Delegate Meeting were published in the online July 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.

Dr. Thomas Davies delivered the Chairman's Report as follows:

Good morning. "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future." These words from President John F. Kennedy feel particularly relevant as I reflect on the year thus far at AKC. This has been a year of transition but also tremendous opportunity. As an organization with 142 years of history, we have a responsibility to honor the

traditions that have made AKC what it is while ensuring we are prepared for what happens next.

As AKC continues to grow, we must also adapt. Our Business-Led Transformation with BDO is giving us the opportunity to examine how we operate, serve our customers and constituents and position AKC for long-term success. This work is not about changing who we are. It's about ensuring our organization is equipped to fulfill its mission for generations to come. Even as this important work moves forward, the strength of AKC Sports remains evident.

In May, AKC experienced the highest level of sport activity in our history with 3,840 events and more than 420,000 entries, 40 percent higher than an average month. It's an extraordinary reflection of the enthusiasm for AKC events and the dedication of our clubs, exhibitors, judges, volunteers and staff. I especially want to recognize our Conformation, Companion and Performance Events teams for managing this historic volume in a timely and efficient manner. Our commitment to purebred dogs and the sport of dogs also extends beyond our borders. This year, AKC has strengthened relationships within the global purebred dog community through mutual collaboration agreements in Australia, New Zealand and Korea. These relationships allow

us to share knowledge, strengthen our respective sports and work collaboratively on issues affecting responsible breeders and purebred dogs.

While our organizations and traditions differ, we share an important responsibility to protect the future of purebred dogs and ensure the sports built around them remain strong.

These international relationships also allow AKC to share more than a century of expertise while learning from organizations facing many of the same opportunities and challenges. Our mission is distinctly American, but the responsibility to preserve purpose-bred dogs and the traditions surrounding them is increasingly global.

That strength of purpose will be on full display this December in Orlando as we gather for the 26th Annual AKC National Championship presented by Royal Canin, the flagship event for the American Kennel Club. The National Championship represents so much of what makes us special. It celebrates exceptional dogs, dedicated breeders and owners, talented handlers, and the commitment beyond every dog that enters the ring. It also allows us to showcase our sports and the extraordinary bond between people and dogs to audiences far beyond our event community.

Championship Week celebrates the breadth of AKC Sports, bringing competitors from across the country and across the world to Orlando for multiple days of competition at the highest level. At its center is the AKC National Championship, the largest dog show in North America, and the only event to crown an AKC National Champion in Conformation. This year we'll also add a new chapter to AKC history with the introduction of the ANC prefix title. Dogs that achieve Best in Show at the AKC National Championship will earn this permanent designation before their registered names, ensuring one of Conformation's greatest accomplishments is forever reflected in AKC records.

A championship of this significance must also inspire what comes next. That is why I'm particularly pleased that we will add Junior Breeder of the Year honor. Responsible breeders are fundamental to the future of purebred dogs, and we must encourage young people interested in carrying that responsibility forward by recognizing young breeders and ensuring knowledge is passed from one generation to the next and to the next. We are investing in the future of our breeds and our sport.

Mahatma Gandhi said, "The future depends on what you do today." That sentiment carries particular meaning for

the AKC. The decisions we make, the knowledge we pass on, and the young people we encourage today will help determine the strength of our sports and the future of purebred dogs.

That is what this year of transition ultimately represents. AKC is evolving, our sports continue to thrive, and we are investing in the people and the systems that will carry our mission forward. We can honor our history while having the foresight to prepare AKC for its next chapter.

There is important work ahead, but I'm confident in our direction and proud of the people, clubs, and communities that continue to make AKC strong. I look forward to seeing as many of you in Orlando as we celebrate the very best of AKC and look ahead to all that's still to come. Thank you.

Ms. DiNardo delivered the President's Report as follows:

I'd like to take a few minutes to elaborate on what Tom mentioned about the work that we're doing with BDO, most importantly where we are headed. We collectively, internally, are calling this work "One AKC." Over many years AKC has developed programs, services, processes, and technology to meet the needs of the different parts of our organization. We are doing this work

because AKC has the opportunity to build on what is working today. We plan to address the complexity that has been developed in our own organization as it has grown and focus on people, processes, information, and technology that in the future will work more cohesively together.

We've completed our initial discovery and have a much clearer picture of the current state. We're now validating what we've learned and designing the future state, developing the roadmap that will get us there. Over several weeks BDO and AKC Staff worked tirelessly across seven areas of the business. The entire company was involved in this process: Registration, Sports & Events, Sponsorship & Ads, Media, Marketplace, Shop, Education, DNA + Health. We looked at how these areas operate today including their business processes, their systems, their information, how information is shared across departments, how information is shared out to the public, and how these teams can work better together.

The work has given us a really great understanding of where we are today but more notably where we have opportunities to improve and set a plan for the future. A key part of this work is the customer experience. Everything that we strive to do will be customer focused and facing. We have to speak to our customers in a way that resonates

with them wherever they are on their dog journey, and we have to make everything very positive in terms of the experience. One of the opportunities we are planning to create is a consistent, connected customer experience rather than requiring people to navigate different systems or provide the same information more than once from different departments. As we move into designing the future state, we're looking into how we can make our systems work together more effectively, share information securely, reliably, and reduce unnecessary manual work processes.

We'll be thoughtful about where we improve, integrate, and modernize, whether we build or buy, and those decisions will be based on what AKC needs and what makes the most business sense for now and the future. We'll be disciplined about our investment decisions, prioritizing the areas that provide the greatest value, managing our risk, and sequencing the work appropriately.

Over the coming months, we will continue to validate the recommendations, establish our priorities, and develop the roadmap. We'll then be able to make informed decisions about what should happen first, what will follow and what business investments will be required. The goal is to create a roadmap for moving

AKC forward into the future while continuing to serve our customers and communities as we do the hard work.

For our Delegates, it is important to understand that One AKC is much more than an IT initiative. It's about how we operate as an organization, how we serve our community, how we give our employees better tools and be the most efficient that we can be in doing our jobs. Ultimately, we want AKC to do business with efficient operations and position us for the future.

There's a lot of work ahead, but I'm very encouraged by what we've learned, and most importantly, about the opportunities in front of us. We will keep you updated every Delegate meeting as we progress through this process, which should take us at least 18 to 24 months. Thank you.

Ted Phillips, CFO, delivered the Financial Report as follows:

Good morning, and thank you, Gina. Before we get into the details, I have a few introductory remarks I'd like to share with you. That starts with good news. AKC is financially at breakeven as of June 30, 2026, and we expect that to continue for the rest of this year. As perspective, the 2025 and 2026 annual revenue is forecasted to be at the \$90 million level. This is 15 percent below where we were in the pandemic years of 2021 through

2024. These revenue changes have required extensive cost management in an inflationary environment. As we all know, registration growth remains one of the most important ways we can all support AKC's mission and programs as we move ahead in this challenging economic environment. For the current period, the results from operations, as I said, are breakeven using a conservative method of our investments on a spend rate basis, similar to a college and university. We're focusing on using the spend rate for donations to our affiliates, CHF, Museum of the Dog, and a few other smaller mission-relevant organizations. The central message of my report today is that although operating revenue remains under pressure, disciplined expense management has resulted in a breakeven position. These results underscore the importance of continued coordination among staff, volunteers, clubs, and Delegates. But this positive result represents a large and meaningful improvement from where AKC stood at the same point last year.

Here are our financial results, which are preliminary and unaudited through the second quarter, ending June 30, 2026. Our total operating revenue was \$43.6 million, compared with \$44.9 million for the same period in 2025. This represents a 3 percent decrease of approximately

\$1.2 million. This is a mixed result, which is comprised of lower registration revenues on lower volume and an increase from recording and service fees. At the same time, total operating expenses were \$44.6 million, as compared with \$48 million from the same period last year, which is a 7 percent or \$3.4 million reduction. These lower expenses reflect the AKC staff reorganization in 2025, and the ongoing work across the organization to evaluate the highest costs associated with business operations. Please note, after applying the spend rate, the year-to-date result was a positive \$485,000, which is compared to a loss last year in the same period of \$2.6 million. As we look at our primary sources of operating revenue, you'll see that registration and event fees, which, again, remember this is a combined number that we'll break out as we go forward, totaled \$29.9 million, which is down 2 percent, or \$536,000. As we peel that apart, we'll see that the registration and related revenues totaled \$20 million, which were \$2 million, or 10 percent lower than the prior year on equivalent decreases in units. Recording and service fees totaled \$8 million on comparable entries, and this was 25 percent or \$1.6 million above the same period in 2025. Advertising, sponsorship, and royalty revenue was approximately \$7.9 million, down about 5 percent, or \$434,000, due to lower advertising

revenues and challenges in the sponsor market as sponsor customers continue to evaluate their ability to provide brand support.

Let's dive deeper into each of the major revenue areas. When we look at registrations and related revenues, it continues to be a mixed bag and an important area of focus as the post-pandemic contraction settles out. Dog registration was approximately \$10 million in total, which was 6 percent below the prior year, and litter registration was \$5.2 million, or 12 percent below the prior year. Pedigree revenue was approximately \$2 million, which was a decrease of 12 percent over the prior year period, and other registration related fees totaled \$2.3 million, which is 7 percent below. The underlying volumes show a similar pattern. Through June 2026, AKC recorded approximately 208,000 dog registrations compared with 233,000 through the same period last year, and litter registrations were approximately 100,000 as compared with 112,000 in the corresponding period. Each of you has an opportunity to broaden the participation in our registration by sharing the value of it with your clubs and with your voice. We know together we can drive registration higher as we transform business operations. We thank you for your tireless work that you have already provided,

and always from my perspective, I remind folks that I meet who are not in the AKC world, your trusted voice and personal outreach are important, and we appreciate your partnership. Looking at sports and events, the results were more favorable in several major categories, and this presentation is designed to focus on major program groups. As you see, Conformation event revenue increased by 24 percent, reaching \$3.6 million. Companion event revenue increased by 15 percent, reaching approximately \$3.8 million, and Performance event revenue increased by 20 percent, reaching \$2.2 million, and Family Dog saw a decrease of about 9 percent. Looking at overall activity, both metrics show that change is minimal in opposing directions when we see our events and entries. Number of events increased to 15,367, while the number of entries decreased to 1.84 million. In other words, AKC supported a larger number of events, while the total number of entries was modestly below the prior year.

Turning to a critical area of revenue – sponsorship, advertising and royalties. Our sponsorship revenue was \$4.7 million, which was 6 percent lower from the prior year. As I mentioned earlier, briefly, the sponsorship market continues to be challenging as corporate partners continue to carefully evaluate

their marketing commitments and their level of financial support they provide to all brands, including AKC. We're continuing to focus on retaining valued sponsor relationships while pursuing additional and new opportunities that align with our mission, our audience, and our programs. Advertising revenues were \$2 million, and about 7 percent lower. They reflect the broader commercial environment, as well as track with registration activity. This affects the size of the audience available for certain registration-related communications and advertising opportunities. So overall, this area generated \$7.9 million of revenue, which was about 5 percent below the corresponding period in 2025. The important piece here is to remember that we work to continue to diversify our revenue streams while strengthening registration activity and engagement that supports our value.

Let's turn to the other side of the P&L, which is our operating expenses. This area shows a substantial improvement because it has been very closely looked at, and we can speak to specific reasons. Staff expenses are about 6 percent below the prior year. This is a good time to remind everyone that our staff complement today is the same as it was in 2019. While we have weathered through the changes since 2019, let's remember

that the health care costs and certain labor costs have experienced significant inflation. We evaluate these health care costs annually with the use of a broker. We went to market last year and, in order to protect the organization, maintained a solid benefit package with a reasonable increase, which is shared with staff. That said, we're delivering today's programs and services in a substantially higher cost environment at the same staffing level we had before the pandemic. Professional and service fees are approximately \$7.1 million. They were comparable with 2025, and this is a significant area of expense reduction that we're looking at and constantly focusing on. These costs are needed to include outside expertise that we would not otherwise hire as staff. We'll continue to evaluate these expenditures carefully. Everybody, including the accountants in the room, loves talking about insurance, rent, and depreciation, so we'll make this one quick. But there's a point here that relates to our business transformation project. One of the things that happens in this area is we continue to look at the impact from internally developed software, because that's a depreciable asset. We see that change as we move forward. On the positive side, donations are approximately \$2.3 million. As I mentioned earlier, \$1.4 million is supported by the prudent use of our investment assets. The remainder

is a representation of in-kind support provided to our affiliates, which is time and service allocated from AKC staff.

Finally, our balance sheet. AKC's standalone balance sheet is approximately \$279 million. This is a 4 percent increase since December 31, 2025. Investments are in the major asset category at 208 million and have increased since December 31, 2025, due to positive market performance. Remember that the balance sheet also reflects \$68 million in retirement plan and lease obligation assets. In closing, there's three points I'd like you to take away. First, we're at breakeven, and we expect to stay that way through the rest of the year. Second, the positive result was the prudent use of our investment assets related to our philanthropic activities. Third, the revenue remains lower, particularly in the registration area due to lower activity as we continue working across AKC to align our operating activities with the needs of today and in the future. If you have questions, I'm available. My last slide always has my information. I think I've handed out enough business cards. You should be able to find me. You can always contact us through the website. Thank you very much for your time.

The first vote was on the proposed amendment to **Article XIV, Section 1** of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American*

Kennel Club. It 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. This 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.

The Chair recognized John Ioia, Delegate from the Southern Adirondack Dog Club, who spoke as follows:

Good morning. Dr. John Ioia, Southern Adirondack Dog Club and a member of the Bylaws Committee. I speak for myself, but having queried several of our members, I speak for them also. For those who did not come to our Bylaws meeting or haven't contacted me, there's a couple of points I'd like to make. The first is, why did this come about? It came about because we were contacted by a number of show chairs and clubs regarding the need for this in what was perceived as an increase in the number of meaningless or frivolous bench show hearings. This did not come about quickly. It actually took two years to craft. The language in it is very, very specific and has been gone over repeatedly, including by attorneys on our committee. Two major concerns

that are always brought about. One, this will not impair the ability to anybody who makes a meaningful complaint. That would include anything involving dog or personal injuries, legal events, judges, show personnel, AKC officials, anything meaningful will not be subjected to a fee. Second, about the amount of the fee. This was crafted. You do not want a fee structure placed in your Bylaws. This should be part of your policies and procedures. This should be, as all other fees, determined by the Board of Directors. So, we purposely did not put a fee in here. This is determined by your Board. If anyone has any questions, I'd be very happy to answer them, but I think that's the best that I can do.

There was a two-thirds vote in the affirmative and the amendment was adopted.

The proposed rule changes to **Chapter 11, Section 8**, and **Chapter 11, Section 8-D** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* were voted as one amendment.

The proposed amendment to **Chapter 11, Section 8** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* –Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dogs Affecting Eligibility, inserts clarification and identifying language, revises format, and relocates text involving change of appearance to Chapter 11, Section 8-D.

This amendment was proposed by the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee and brought forward with the approval of the AKC Board of Directors.

The Chair recognized Cindy Stansell, Delegate from the Grand River Kennel Club, who spoke as follows:

Cindy Stansell, Grand River Kennel Club, Chair of the Dog Show Rules Committee. Our primary objective in this rule change was to allow surgically altered dogs to compete in any other sport other than Conformation. Our secondary goals were to have gender-neutral language, more consistent language. For example, we added a definition of blindness to make it clear, and that definition was from the *Obedience Regulations*, used bullet points for ease of reading, simplified language, and grouped like items together. Please note for those who want changes to the italic portion, the italics are Board policy language. It is not subject to amendment. Only the Board may change the italics. The strike out and underline in the italics are only because they were moved from one section to another section. In the process of developing this rule change, we had a surprise. We had a big surprise. There is an exemption for procedures that would not be subject to a DQ for alteration. We found that the exemption did not include cropping. It included

docking, and the removal of dewclaws for breed standards, but it did not protect cropping. We wanted to make sure that we protected cropping. We also had some surprises after we did this. We did not expect the explosive internet Facebook objections to a portion of this that has been in the rules since at least 1984. Because of our objective of grouping like items, we moved parts of Chapter 11, Section 8 to Chapter 11, Section 8-D. Frankly, we did not take a good look at what that language was. Remember, it's been in existence since at least 1982. And please note, if this amendment is defeated, that the language that seems to be objectionable still remains, because it's already in the rules. We feel strongly we need to pass this immediately to protect cropping, and we found we were unable to delete that sentence. We thought we could just delete it, but that's out of scope. We have done due diligence and found that this particular offending language that's currently in the rules has never been applied. If we withdraw this amendment now to make the changes to the existing language, it's going to be another year, and that makes cropping vulnerable during that year. We have worked with staff and the parliamentarian to determine what amendment we may do. We unanimously voted to propose an amendment that would make the offensive existing language to Section 8-D

a little clearer to understand. So, I make a motion.

Ms. Stansell moved to amend Chapter 11, Section 8-D by deleting the phrase "except subject to the provisions of such laws" and inserting "unless the applicable law specifically provides an exemption that allows exhibition of such dogs."

The Chair asked that the proposed amendment be displayed for the Delegates. The motion was seconded.

The Chair recognized Carl Holder, Delegate from the Beaumont Kennel Club, who spoke as follows:

Are we voting just on this change?

The Chair confirmed that the vote was on Ms. Stansell's proposed amendment to Chapter 11, Section 8-D and that approval required a majority vote.

There was a majority vote in the affirmative, and the amendment was approved as amended.

The Chair called for discussion and a vote on the proposed amendments to Chapter 11, Section 8 and Chapter 11, Section 8-D, as amended.

The Chair recognized Cindy Stansell, Delegate from the Grand River Kennel Club, who spoke as follows:

Cindy Stansell, Grand River Kennel Club. The Dog Show Rules Committee

has made a commitment that once this has passed, we will look at this section to craft it better. We do feel that timeliness is important to protect cropping and so we ask for your support. Thank you.

There were no further questions or discussion.

There was a two-thirds vote in the affirmative, and the amendments were adopted as amended.

The Chair called on Jill Zapadinsky, Senior Director, Call Center & Customer Service, and Kelly Ellis, Director of Training and Contact Center Support to give a presentation on Customer Service Excellence. They spoke as follows:

Good morning. My name is Jill Zapadinsky. Again, I'm the Senior Director of AKC Customer Service and just a little bit about me to start out with. I've been with the AKC for over 32 years. About 20 years ago, I got my first Boxer and fell in love with the breed and then eventually my daughter ended up showing Juniors, and we now have a Grand Champion who runs Fast CAT® and we have a puppy that is working on his championship. It's been a really exciting journey for us. We've also joined the Raleigh Kennel Club and the Cary Kennel Club, and it really gave me full perspective on what you all do and how hard it is to put on a dog show, much less

clean up after one. So, thank you for all that you do. We truly appreciate it. Within my responsibilities at AKC currently, I'm in charge of Customer Service, Customer Registration Support, DNA Operations and the AKC Good Dog Helpline. I'm now going to turn it over to Kelli to introduce herself.

Hi, everyone. I'm Kelli Ellis, the Director of Training and Contact Center Support, and I've been with AKC a little over 10 years now, and I actually started my career with AKC as a customer service agent. I've been on the front lines and understand the complexity and the work we need to do to help everyone with their registration and other AKC questions. Today I lead our training, knowledge management, quality management, and customer experience programs for our call center, and we collaborate across different departments. You heard a great presentation from Government Relations, and we work closely with them to integrate education for customer service practices. This allows us to provide comprehensive solutions and accurate information when people call in with questions or concerns. Outside of work I am also a Whippet owner. I have volunteered and participated at various Fast CAT® events for about three years now, which finally prompted me to get involved myself. The dog on top there is

my 11-year-old Whippet, and we finally got a BCAT in Fast CAT® when he was 10. It took us a minute, but you *can* teach old dogs new tricks! – meaning both me and him! The puppy down at the bottom is my first Conformation dog, and I showed him just two weeks ago at the Raleigh Tar Heel Cluster. It was my very first time in the show ring and his first time in the show ring. (Applause) Thank you. I really understand the value of working pockets now. Later in this presentation I'll be walking you through the journey of what it takes to onboard a customer service agent because it's a fascinating and complex investment and experience. For now, I'll turn it back over to Jill.

Ms. Zapadinsky: The AKC primary call center is when you call the 919-233-9767 number. We're available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Our department is completely remote. We have a mix of full and part-time agents and on staff we actually also have a workforce manager who helps schedule all these agents. We have to look at lunches, breaks, vacations, make sure everybody's where they need to be taking their interactions. We also have four remote supervisors, and Kelli leads our amazing training team. We're here for the entire AKC community. Here's some of the various areas of people that we may

talk to. We may talk to breeders, puppy owners, and puppy buyers. We do like it if people call us before they buy the puppy so we can help them through that journey and navigate and hopefully not fall victim to a scam or something. We may talk to exhibitors. We may talk to someone from clubs. We may just end up having to forward a call to a particular area. We also internally work with Registration, DNA, Marketing, Sports & Events. We have to stay in contact with everybody throughout the AKC because when that phone rings you never know what you're going to get. I jokingly call it a box of chocolates. You just don't know. We do want to be the trusted first source as I mentioned for puppy buyers and for breeders. We want to be there to help them and guide them through the process to make sure they have the correct answers and they're able to get the puppy they need. They're able to register that dog, and they understand for litter owners about the records they need to keep and those types of information. We also support Marketplace as well as online accounts so if someone needs help adding pictures or logging in, we're there to help them out. We do think that every customer interaction gives us an opportunity to build that lifelong relationship with the customer. If we have the chance to share more about AKC with them on the phone, we definitely do that. That's a picture of my daughter with our

Boxer Zola. She was our first champion.

These are our metrics for 2025. We are extremely busy. As you can tell we took over 311,000 calls. We do work really hard on first-call resolutions. Our hope is that if you call us and ask us for help we're able to resolve that the first time, and you don't have to call us back two hours later. We also answered nearly 60,000 emails, and for our phone calls what we do when someone calls in is we document that call in a program called Salesforce. That way if the person calls back in the next day or a week later to ask the same question, we see that they called in, but also if they've been having problems logging in, we can see that they've called several times so we understand why they're frustrated, and we want to be extra sympathetic and help them out and make sure we can resolve it. We also have a chat bot on our registration pages. I'm not sure how many of you have seen it but it's been very successful. It answered nearly 24,000 chats last year and only about 10 percent were escalated to a live agent, so we're really proud that that worked out so well. The great thing with the chat bot is it can help people 24/7, and it doesn't even want vacation time. We also handle inquiries for the AKC shop. We help out with any website feedback we get, and we answer private Facebook messages. You may wonder why all these people do

call us because 311,000 is a lot of calls. It primarily has to do with registration, and if you think about it there are a lot of registration options that people have, so we can walk them through that. About 8 percent of our calls are for assistance with Marketplace and MyAKC account logins. We transfer about 9 percent of our calls to various departments like Club Relations, or Sports & Events. We also get about 3 percent of calls for DNA and about 5 percent are for the order desk, and that's primarily ordering DNA kits. I mentioned earlier that we did have a chat bot that's worked very successfully. We now have Agentic AI, which is more conversational. I'm not sure how many of you have had any experience with it. I found out that my doctor's office had it, so I called to see how it worked. It said, "How can I help you?" I said, "I don't know." It must have thought I really had a problem. "Perhaps you're feeling unwell today. Do you need an appointment?" It was like I was talking to a person, and they just really thought I forgot. We are transforming. It's going to be for our call center. The product is Cognigy, and it is going to help our customer service agents. It's not there to replace them at all so I don't want anyone to worry they're not going to be able to talk to a live person. That's not the case. We're implementing this program to help us with the basic tier one questions. This is more for somebody who says, "I bought

a dog and I didn't get papers. What do I do?" Or "I lost my paperwork. What do I do?" It will be able to answer those kinds of questions. It won't be connected to our registration system so, it's not going to be able to get into the nitty gritty of really helping somebody complete an application. Our first phase is just going to be where it actually goes through and asks you how it can help when you first call AKC. So instead of having to press one for Registration or two for Marketplace or five for DNA, you can actually just tell it so you don't have to sit there on your cell phone and try to get to the keypad to hit your buttons. We're going to do that first and then we'll roll out the next part of phase one which will be answering those tier one type inquiries. I do really want to emphasize this is not to replace our agents. This is to help us provide a better customer experience and help our agents to have time to focus on those customers who do need our help and do need detailed instructions or need completion of a correction or an application.

One thing that we started in 2023, was upselling of pedigrees to become more of a value center. We found that when people call us and they need help registering their dog, especially a first-time dog registrant, they don't understand what an AKC pedigree is. Our agents have

actually started educating our customers. It's not a hard sell or anything like that. We're just telling them about a product that we all know and love and have used for years. It's been really helpful to us and as you can see over the years, we've been very successful in upselling pedigrees and it gives the agents something to be really excited about and to share with their co-workers. Hey, I've upsold a pedigree on this one. Last year we started registering dogs over the phone and I don't want anyone to feel nervous about that aspect of it. It's very similar to if you give your puppy buyer the paperwork and they do it online. We are asking for the PIN codes. They have to verify the limited PIN in order to get the full registration, and we do play a disclaimer that they have to agree to. But the great thing is when we register dogs over the phone, people are so happy. They add on products very easily. I think they're just happy we did it for them, but we found that our point of sale for the dog registration when we go through that is much higher. That's been really exciting for us and honestly sometimes it's easier than trying to get them to navigate it depending on which device they're on or what technology they have. Next, I'm going to turn it over to Kelli in just one moment to talk about our training program.

Ms. Ellis: You've heard about BDO.

You've heard about our phone registration and really everything we've talked about comes down to training and the people answering the phone. As somebody who started in customer service and understands the complexity of it, how do we train our agents and how do we continue training and coaching our agents over time? Because when someone calls about a registration, our agents aren't just processing paperwork. They are problem solving. They are working through that dog and litter registration. They're figuring out what's needed, handling exceptions, and we're doing everything we can to help them complete that dog or litter registration today. That is why we've invested so heavily in training – because over the last six years, we've been busy building this learning program. I like to joke that it all started with Post-it notes that evolved into a Word document and now we have a full-fledged training program over time that we needed because AKC has evolved. We've needed to adapt to that and make sure that our customer service agents are up to date and ready to answer the questions that are relevant to you today. So that's why we've built a knowledge base in Salesforce. Jill talked about Salesforce and how we're documenting those interactions. We also have a full knowledge base library so that when the agent types in the subject of a call, it's actually going to suggest

related articles for that agent to reference. Additionally, we have formatted email responses, so if a customer is asking for a procedural documentation, our top one, by the way, is *sire owner approval for a litter*, we can pop that into an email and send that to them so they have that documentation right while they're speaking with us on the phone. It's allowing agents to find the information they need quickly and deliver those consistent answers. We're increasingly using that same knowledge outside of the contact center as well, and that's through webinars and videos. If you've been in Breeder Toolkit – how many of you all use Breeder Toolkit? That's pretty good. If you've seen the how-to videos, that's actually going to connect to our AKC YouTube page where my team and I have created a bunch of five-minute videos on how to use the various tools within Breeder Toolkit, including prepaid, setting up your online account, etc. We've also done a couple of webinars, and we have another one coming up on September 30, for prepaid if you're interested in joining us for that. Through all of these tools and self-service resources, we're also trying to help customers find answers on their own along with the chat bot that Jill spoke about, and we're using our knowledge articles to also feed that to update it with the information that's needed. What started as a training program has grown

into a knowledge ecosystem that supports our agents, other AKC teams, and of course all of you and our customers.

Why does it take eight weeks to onboard a customer service agent? It's a lot of information. To give you a sense of what it takes to prepare a new agent, I'm going to walk through some of the tools and the resources that are needed for them to just get on the phone and answer phone calls. We start with three weeks focused on AKC Foundations, who we are, what we do, and all of the different areas of AKC. We bring in Breeder Development, Government Relations, the DNA program and we have them present to customer service about everything that they do so we can share that information with you all and the customers who are calling us. But that's also including more than 355 pages of an intro to AKC training manual. That's what evolved from my Post-it notes when I started out as an agent. That's just for onboarding. We also are learning more than 50 forms and understanding those forms and how to apply those forms and more than 20 different registration pathways. I like to describe it as an if-then-else. It depends on what your situation is in terms of what your registration pathway is going to be today. But success isn't about memorizing these things. There's simply too much to memorize. We're building those resources

and making those readily available because our real goal is helping our agents understand the rules well enough to recognize the customers' situation and guide them to the right solution.

Now once that onboarding foundation is in place, we move on to application. For the next two weeks, our agents are learning all the different AKC applications and systems that they're going to be using while they handle calls. You've heard about the number of different proprietary applications that AKC has. Well, they need to learn all of those in order to be able to perform their job function and document those calls. They're learning about all the different types of dog and litter registrations, corrections, any account changes, an intro to the online account system, payments, the order desk, and so much more. They're also learning to navigate more than 13 different systems at the same time. Sometimes that happens on the same interaction depending on the tiers that our agents are supporting because we do have a lot of proprietary systems and that is necessary for them to learn those before they can begin taking calls. This is really where training is going to shift from learning information to solving problems.

Now, of course, when you learn how to do it in training, it's very different than when you have a customer on the phone,

and it's a live interaction. That's why our final three weeks are spent double jacking, which means virtually sitting together with another agent, they're sharing screens, they're listening to that phone conversation, they're seeing how that tenured agent is handling the call, where they're going, and which resources they're using. That's the first week. The second week we're shifting gears. Now our trainee is on the phone with that tenured agent looking at their screen, using their phone connection to share coaching tips and also using Teams. They're always supported in that journey. The third week is putting it all together in the training class to take those calls and handle those interactions.

Next, we move into independent calls. We are about to graduate. The puppies are leaving the litter. After that, once the agent transitions into taking independent calls, it's scary. They're scared. They want to make sure that they do the best job they can do, but there is so much to know. Independent doesn't mean that they are alone, because my training team is monitoring those calls live. We're sending Teams chats to them. We're still making sure that they feel completely confident and supported as they begin taking those phone calls. We also have a supervisor line that they can call. We have Teams chats with our supervisors. We put them in what we call puppy pack chat, for tier

one basic intro questions, and they receive more one-on-one support as they're learning their new roles. Eight weeks is going to get an agent ready to take calls independently, but really that's just the beginning of their journey with us in customer service.

We've made it to eight weeks, but now the agents are on their own. How do we measure how they're doing? We have a quality management tool in place where we are listening to and reviewing agents' calls, and we can see their screen. We can listen to the recording. We have a customized evaluation form, and we're providing them that immediate feedback, and all of our agents have QM evaluations that we do every single month, and that's really helping us determine, is this agent ready for the next level of training? Are we identifying coaching opportunities? Do we have knowledge gaps? Or sometimes is it just our systems and processes? What are we learning about that? What are we learning about how we're doing things? Are there ways that we can improve those things? We really see strong results. We're really proud that our QM score year to date is 98.2 percent against a 95 percent goal. It's really important to us that we please our customers, and we resolve your issues, and our feedback tells us that we're doing a good job. Also, efficiency matters. It's not just

about quality; it's also about efficiency. We know customers don't want to wait, but faster isn't always better, right? We need to make sure that we're solving that problem, that we're listening to what the customer needs, because a shorter call has little value if it results in a transfer to another department, or a callback, or a mistake that creates work later on, and that's going to increase frustration. That's why we're balancing efficiency along with our quality program, and ultimately, we're focusing on the outcome for the customer. Did we solve the problem? Did we solve it the first time that they called? What did they tell us about their experience? The goal is really the intersection of all three of these things, the right resolution, the right experience, and the right amount of time. Because just as an AKC championship requires success under multiple judges, customer service excellence isn't measured by a single metric. One of the things that we're especially proud of is that we've created opportunities for agents' career growth within customer service. We have a three-tier career path that's allowing agents to take on additional roles and responsibilities. Everyone starts out at tier one, and they live there in tier one for about six months. It truly takes about six months before a customer service agent feels very comfortable and ready to move on to that next level, because

there is a continuous learning curve after their onboarding experience. Level two or tier two is where we're introducing online support. Anybody who's logged in or anyone who's used Marketplace or Breeder Toolkit, these are the agents that are supporting you. This is where most of our agents are at this point. That is about another 450-page training manual and additional resources and tools to get them ready for that. It's very complex, and they do a great job with it. Then finally, we have tier three. These are agents who are ready to move into that leadership role, supporting our supervisors, supporting other agents. Oftentimes, these are some of the tenured agents we're using to double-jack with our new hires to bring them into their customer service role.

This is all important because it's helping us to retain talent. We've invested in these agents, and we want them to stay with AKC. We want to provide career growth for them. One of the other things I joke about is usually there's somebody in a training class that by the time we're done, they're getting a purebred dog, which is outstanding because as they're learning about the breeds, and we make them go to the breed pages on AKC.org, and we make them go to Marketplace so that they understand all of the tools our customers have, we're getting them on board with the purebred dogs, which is great. They're

passing that on to their customers, that enthusiasm.

Ultimately, we have to ask, how do our agents feel about this? Well, we sent out an employee survey, and the response was overwhelmingly positive. We saw a 96 percent employee satisfaction rate, which is fantastic. We have a lot of people in our customer service team who've been here for 10, 20 years. They stay with us, and we continue supporting and training them. But I think the comment on this slide really says a lot, "I have never worked with such an amazing team, all the way up the ladder. Everyone is so supportive and encouraging. I can honestly say I love my job." Right from one of our agents. It's wonderful to get that feedback because sometimes we don't hear about all the good things. We hear about everything that's wrong. We're really pleased that our agents feel supported. At the end of the day, where does this all come together? What are we looking at? All of that investment has to tell us something, and it has to show up in the customer experience.

Here are our metrics. When we create our Salesforce case and we close it, an automatic survey is sent out by a third-party provider called Medallia. If you've interacted with us, you may have received one of these surveys. The customer can rate us on a scale of one

to five stars about their experience. How was your experience today? It's going to continue to ask a couple of different questions. Our star rating is 4.9 out of 5 stars. That's amazing, with 99.2 percent positive feedback. 98.2-percent are telling us that we resolved their issue the first time they called. That's what we want. We're helping them to complete their registrations or resolving their issues. 84.3 is our net promoter score. We added something interesting at the end of our survey within the last year, and that's a customer confidence score. That is, how much do you trust that AKC is going to do right by you? Well, look at that score. It's 9.28 out of 10. Our customers tell us once they interact with us, they love what we're doing for them, and they appreciate how we're helping them. All of these results are really meaningful because we are aware of our wait time, we are aware that that can create frustration, and we know we need to improve access and get customers connected with us faster. Jill talked about the Cognigy chat bot that's coming along. That will help us as well. All of this tells us that once they reach us, they're receiving the level of service that they expect. We see this reflected in our customer comments. These are directly from our post-call surveys: "Customer service has always been superb." "After today's interaction, I'm very impressed." As we focus on creating more capacity

and reducing wait times, our goal is simple. Let's improve access without sacrificing the quality and the expertise that our customers value.

Now another fun thing about customer service, and I guess I joked that we get people into purebred dogs when they come through the training class. Well, they also get out there and they volunteer in our community. They love that opportunity when they can come help out at shows and they stay connected to AKC well beyond their day jobs. They're volunteering at events, they're supporting educational programs, you see the art contest here. They also help out with CGC, Trick Dog, and My Dog Can Do That! It all brings them to better understand the people that they're serving and share that enthusiasm when they're speaking to everybody on the phone. That's really valuable because it strengthens the connection between our employees, our customers, and AKC's mission. Lastly, every interaction is an opportunity to build and strengthen someone's relationship with AKC. That is what we are here to do. Thank you. We appreciate your time.

Dr. Tom Davies recognized the AKC Delegates who served for 25 years:

- Jaimie Ashby, Carolina Kennel Club
- Marie Fiore, Brookhaven Kennel Club

- Nancy Fisk, Hockamock Kennel Club
- Link Newcomb, Pacific Coast Bulldog Club/Bulldog Club of America
- Roberta "Bobbie" Norkus, Marion Kennel Club
- Mary Lou Olszewski, American Bloodhound Club

(Awards presented.)

Dr. Tom Davies recognized the clubs celebrating 100 years of membership with the American Kennel Club:

- English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association, Inc. – Delegate, Cristy Joy
- Irish Wolfhound Club of America – Delegate, Eugenia Hunter
- Portland Kennel Club, Inc. – Delegate, Joan Savage
- United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club, Inc. – Delegate, Carl Ashby
- Westbury Kennel Association, Inc. – Delegate, Peter Festa

(Awards presented.)

The Chair called on Mari-Beth O'Neill, VP, Sports Services, for a presentation on behalf of AKC and the Junior Task Force Committee, in support of 4-H Canine Clubs. She spoke as follows:

Good morning. Once again, we wish to acknowledge the efforts that some of our clubs have made in working with 4-H in their communities. First is Canadian Valley Kennel Club in Oklahoma. They've

held a Junior dog judging competition for the past three years, focusing on involving 4-H and FFA students as well as AKC Juniors. They are the club who started offering My Dog Can Do That! event for the 4-H students allowing youth to try out a variety of different sports with their dogs. Most recently they held a booth at a large statewide 4-H event telling over 700 students about dog jobs, activities, and projects they could do with their pets. Is there a Delegate here from the Canadian Valley Kennel Club?

The second club we're recognizing is Idaho Capital City Kennel Club. Their members serve as leaders, volunteers, judges, and fair superintendents for 4-H in multiple counties in their area. They've introduced Rally to the state's 4-H program as well as holding training clinics for youth, parents, leaders, and volunteers to coach them on basics of the sport. Is there a Delegate from Idaho Capital City?

They still deserve a round of applause. I hope we can acknowledge some new clubs in the future, so go seek out your 4-H groups.

The Chair called on Dr. Charles Garvin, Delegate from the Dalmatian Club of America, AKC Board Member and AKC PPB Chair, for a donor update. He spoke as follows:

I appreciate the opportunity of sharing

a couple of items from the American Kennel Club Purebred Preservation Bank. First, on September 3, we sent out an email to the Parent Club Officers of low-entry breed clubs, and yesterday we found out that the vast majority of those emails ended up in junk or were somehow not delivered, so we're instead turning to an old-fashioned way of messaging. We're going to talk to you instead. For the Parent Club Officers, and this applies to all clubs, the AKC Purebred Preservation Bank is pleased to be celebrating our five-year anniversary, and we're proud of the substantial progress that's been made to ensure the long-term viability of our purebred breeds. We've already received donations of frozen semen from more than 45 different breeds, but there's still a significant opportunity for the Parent Clubs to provide breed-specific parameters, questions for donors, and criteria for prospective recipients that AKC PPB will use when considering an application for donation for any future distribution. We have created an easy to complete checklist that can facilitate Parent Club discussions. It's now on the website, as well as examples of what other clubs have done to define their own parameters, so we really made it as simple as possible for the clubs. What we found is most clubs that have had success in developing their parameters have generally assigned the task of drafting the

parameters to an existing committee, like a health committee, a research committee, or create a new ad hoc committee of knowledgeable and enthusiastic breeders. The final steps include approval by the club Board and then submission to PPB. PPB is happy to work with the Parent Clubs to guide them in developing their breed-specific parameters, and you can contact us.

Now, coming up in 2027, PPB will be offering an award to Parent Club National Specialties for low-entry breeds. The winner of the stud-dog class will receive a certificate for complementary semen collection at an approved facility, with the intention that two breeding units will be donated to PPB. This is similar to what PPB offers for the winner of Bred-by-Exhibitor Group 1 at the AKC National Championship in December. We thank the many individuals and clubs that have strongly supported AKC PPB. We always welcome any questions or comments.

The second item is that we want to help encourage further donations, and we want to show our appreciation for those who have donated already. We've created a special certificate to give to those who have contributed to our 87 total donations. We found that there are at least nine Delegates that have donated so far. I believe several of them are here today, and

if they will come forward, we would like to present these certificates to them.

- Dr. Carmen Battaglia, German Shepherd Dog Club of America
- Connie Brown, Ventura County Dog Fanciers
- Mary Lou Cuddy, Saratoga New York Kennel Club
- June Guido, Forsyth Kennel Club.
- Kelly Lease, Clumber Spaniel Club of America
- Joan Payton, German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America
- Sandra Schumacher, Papillion Club of America
- Robin Stansell, French Bull Dog Club of America
- Betty Winthers, Pasanita Obedience Club

The letter accompanying the award says: Congratulations. Your generous donation of frozen semen to AKC Purebred Preservation Bank is a substantial and significant step toward ensuring the long-term viability of your breed. You've set a wonderful example for others to follow. For that, we thank you very much. As a commemoration of our appreciation, we enclose a certificate of donation suitable for framing.

It is formatted much like an official championship certificate. If you have any questions, let us know. Certificates will

be mailed to the Delegates who are not in attendance.

The Chair called on Bob Rynkiewicz, Delegate from the Eastern German Shorthaired Pointer Club to provide an update on the AKC PAC. He spoke as follows:

Good morning, all. Bob Rynkiewicz with the Eastern German Shorthaired Pointer Club, also representing the AKC PAC. Everyone always asks, does my vote count? The answer is yes. They also ask, does my dollar count? Truly, the answer is yes. Currently, we're coming upon midterm elections. It's critical that we support our legislators that are supporting our dog interests. It's extremely important. What we're asking, and on a personal note, I'm challenging each and every one of you to make a recurring donation of one entry per month. If it's \$30, if you can only afford \$5 a month, all that money goes toward helping legislators see our interests, understanding, and more importantly, supporting our interests. AKC as an entity cannot support. Corporations do not support. Your local club cannot support. Individuals support. So besides yourselves, I ask you go back to your club members. Ask them to support the PAC. We're preserving, we're advocating, and we're caring for our dogs. If there's questions, I'll be at the back table. If

you wish to make a donation, we're also selling the tickets. And for each and every one of you, I'm going to give you a special offer. They're \$25 a ticket. But just for you, 5 for \$100. Thank you.

The Chair called on Ernest Obubah from KPMG to read the Teller's Report results on the vote for the Delegate Standing Committees.

Mr. Obubah: Good morning. Here's the Teller's Report. My apologies if I mispronounce any of the names.

For the All-Breed Clubs Committee, the following three candidates were elected for three-year terms:

- Mark Crews
- Nancy Fisk
- Jeff Ryman

For the Bylaws Committee, the following four candidates were elected for three-year terms:

- Gretchen Bernardi
- Eugenia Hunter
- Pamela Rosman
- Frederick Vogel

For the Companion Events Committee, the following three candidates were elected for three-year terms:

- Eleanor Campbell
- Mike Kriegel
- Larry Wilson

For the Dog Show Rules Committee, the following three candidates were elected for three-year terms:

- Nancy Amburgey
- Barbara Shaw
- Ann Wallace

Also, for the Dog Show Rules Committee, the following two candidates were elected for one-year terms:

- Dr. James Davis
- Sandy Bingham-Porter

For the Field Trial and Hunting Test Events Committee, the following four candidates were elected for three-year terms:

- Gloria Askins
- Neal Goodwin
- Laura Myles
- Nance Skoglund

For the Parent Clubs Committee, the following three candidates were elected for three-year terms:

- Karen Burgess
- Douglas Johnson
- Helen A. Prince

Also, for the Parent Clubs Committee, the following candidate was elected for a one-year term:

- Katie Campbell

The Chair called on the Executive Secretary to read the names of the

Delegates who will serve on the Committees that did not require a vote.

Ms. Goffe: Delegates who self-nominated and will serve on the Canine Health Committee are:

- Eddie Dziuk
- Dr. Marty Greer
- Joellen Gregory
- Isabel Ososki

Delegates who self-nominated and will serve on the Delegate Advocacy and Advancement Committee are:

- Jane Bates
- Marge Calltharp
- Marile Waterstraat

Delegates who self-nominated and will serve on the Herding, Earth Dog, Coursing, and Scent Work Events Committee are:

- Don Adams
- Jennifer Delmer
- Lisa Pruka

Delegates who self-nominated and will serve on the *Perspectives* Editorial Committee are:

- Florence Duggan
- Marlene Groves
- Sharyn Hutchens
- Monica Henderson Stoner
- Margaret "Peggy" Wolfe

The Chair called on the Executive Secretary to give an update from the Nominating Committee.

Ms. Goffe: At the July 2026 meeting, the Board of Directors appointed the following Delegates to the Nominating Committee to select three (3) candidates for the Class of 2031:

- John Ioia, Chair – Southern Adirondack Dog Club
- Marge Calltharp – Chinese Shar-Pei Club of America
- Connie Clark – American Fox Terrier Club
- Joellen Gregory – Otterhound Club of America
- Steven Sansone – Giant Schnauzer Club of America

Alternates:

- Jacquelyn Fogel – Reno Kennel Club
- Robert (Bob) Rynkiewicz – Eastern German Shorthaired Pointer Club

The recommendations of the Nominating Committee must be submitted by October 15, 2026.

The Chair calls on Dr. John Ioia, Delegate from the Southern Adirondack Dog Club and Chair of the Nominating Committee. He spoke as follows:

Hi, good afternoon. If you have short attention span, I was up before. I've represented Southern Adirondack since

1982, which means I should have learned better, but I accepted the position as Nominating Committee Chair because I thought it was important. I was gifted with a fabulous committee of great people to work with, and we concluded our interviews for the potential candidates yesterday. The committee will be meeting in the next few days to make our decisions on the proposed slate. The question is, why am I bothering you? Well, because we only had five applicants. I expected more than that, and it may be due to two reasons. First, people may have seen that in the past it was easy and successful to be nominated from the floor. The second reason, and I hope not, may be members have lost interest in this Delegate Body and are not coming forward. I know many of you have ideas, you have opinions. I know because I read the posts in the Delegate e-list. Once we announce our slate later this week or early next week, if you don't agree with us, if you think we could do a better job, if you think you could do a better job, I urge you. As Teddy Roosevelt once said in 1912, "Throw your hat in the ring, show us what you're made of, show us what you could do." That's it, folks.

The Chair informed the Delegates that the December 11, 2026 Delegate Meeting will be held in Orlando, Florida at the Rosen Centre Hotel. Hotel information

was previously emailed and posted on the Delegate Portal. Other meeting details will be provided as they become available.

Lunch was served following the meeting's conclusion on the Terrace.

Delegates were not required to turn in badges. Delegates were given the option to recycle the badge holder and lanyard in the box provided.

The organizational meetings of the newly elected Delegate Standing Committees were scheduled to begin at 1:30 p.m. in the Passaic meeting room.

The following Delegates spoke during New Business:

Sue Goldberg, Delegate from the Lewiston-Auburn Kennel Club and new AKC Board Director, shared positive early impressions of Board service while noting the significant preparation required. She described reviewing extensive monthly Board materials, including a 283-page Board Book, and arriving at her first meeting with 17 pages of notes and questions. Goldberg recognized AKC staff for their detailed departmental reports and strong commitment, noting that employee anniversary responses reflect pride in the organization. She said Board meetings are thorough and respectful, with members engaging in informed discussion,

department updates, issue review, and votes as needed. Goldberg expressed confidence in the Board, staff, and AKC's Business-Led Transformation with BDO, asking attendees for patience as positive changes continue.

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 Don Hanson, Doug Ljungren and Donald Schwartz, VMD.

Hearing no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

(One sharp rap of the gavel.)

(Proceedings concluded at 12:23 p.m. ET.)

The opinions expressed by the speakers may not necessarily reflect those of The American Kennel Club.



**AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB, INC.
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
DOUBLETREE NEWARK AIRPORT HOTEL
128 FRONTAGE RD, NEWARK, NJ
SEPTEMBER 15-16, 2026**

The Board convened on Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at 1:43 p.m. Eastern Time.

Present at this meeting (Newark, NJ): Dr. Thomas Davies (Chairman), Dr. Michael Knight (Vice Chairman), Ms. Gina DiNardo (President & CEO), Dr. Carmen Battaglia, Mr. Dominic Carota, Ms. Sally Fineburg, Mr. Eduardo Fugiwara, Dr. Charles Garvin, Ms. Sue Goldberg, Mr. Steven Hamblin, Mr. Dan Smyth, and Mr. Robin Stansell.

Absent: Mr. Jason Hoke, Ms. Sylvia Thomas.

The Executive Secretary, Ms. Sheila Goffe, and the Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Ted Phillips were also present.

July Minutes

Copies of the July 13-14, 2026 Board Meeting minutes had previously been provided to all Directors for review.

Upon a motion by Dr. Battaglia, and seconded by Ms. Fineburg, the Board VOTED (unanimously; Absent: Mr. Hoke, Ms. Thomas) to approve the July 2026 Board Meeting minutes.

PRESIDENT

President's Update

Ms. DiNardo introduced the AKC Board to Julia Russell, AKC's new Executive Vice President of Customer Strategy & Growth. Ms. Russell has been with AKC for more than one month and will oversee several key areas, including Registration, Marketing, Customer Service, and Education. In her role, she will work closely with the executive team to advance initiatives focused on operational efficiency, business process improvements, and enhancing the overall customer experience.

AKC continues to expand international outreach and mutual cooperation agreements around key areas that impact dog enthusiasts worldwide.

As AKC works to improve business and technology practices, we continue to advance educational initiatives and best practices for canine care. AKC is releasing a new document and poster entitled *Dog Sense at AKC® Events: Best Practices for the Care and Well-Being of Dogs*. The poster will be displayed prominently at every AKC dog event is a reminder of key

components of safety and responsibility including: temperature and environmental safety, crating and housing, grooming area safety, supervision and daily care, and health and emergency preparedness.

Revered dog expert and long-time staff member, Mari-Beth O'Neill, VP, Sport Services announced her retirement, effective early 2027.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was an EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss business matters. Nothing was reported out of this session.

Legal Update

Heather McManus, VP & General Counsel, and Patricia Hines, Corporate Counsel – Litigation, participated in this portion of the meeting.

The Board reviewed the Legal Status update as of August 31, 2026.

Business Transformation Update:

Jill Zapadinsky, Senior Director, Call Center & Customer Service and Tim Pursell, Senior Director, IT, participated in this portion of the meeting. Ms. Zapadinsky and Mr. Pursell provided an update on use of Artificial Intelligence solutions to improve operational efficiency, enhance customer experience and enable staff to focus on higher-value activities. By automating common interactions in customer service, the AKC

can improve service levels while allowing customer service staff to focus on more complex inquiries requiring expertise and judgment.

Quarterly Update on Communications, Social Media & Digital Content

Brandi Hunter Munden, VP, Public Relations and Communications, and Melissa Olund, Senior Director, Digital Marketing, joined this portion of the meeting. Ms. Munden and Ms. Olund presented an update highlighting the collective achievements of the Communications, Social Media, and Digital Content teams in Q2.

Unique Clips Evaluated in Q2: 10,000
(+ 14% from 8,759 in 2025)

Q2 Totals Comparison

Year	Clips Evaluated
2023	5,946
2024	6,502
2025	8,759
2026	10,000

* Numbers and values provided by media monitoring platform Notified.

Communications/PR Activities

Media Coverage Highlights Resulting from Proactive Pitches:

Date	Media Outlet	Subject
4/22	<i>The New York Post</i>	Rarest dog breeds
4/24	<i>Chewy.com</i>	Most Popular Breeds
5/6	<i>Associated Press</i>	National Animal Disaster Preparedness Day

5/30	<i>Good Housekeeping</i>	AKC expertise
6/25	<i>Patch</i>	AKC MOD cooling center for dogs

Q2 Performance Highlights

- 4.34% increase in media relations and press coverage in Mandarin language and Spanish language publications; 2% in Portuguese
- 5.03% increase in the media visibility of AKC Chief Veterinary Officer
- Media coverage of AKC Affiliates (AKC Reunite, AKC MoD, AKC Humane Fund and AKC CHF) on par with Q2 2025

IT Transformation Plan – Update

Since the October 2025 update, AKC's IT Transformation program has moved from planning into formal execution. Following a competitive evaluation process, AKC selected BDO as its transformation partner. The contract has been fully executed, the program kickoff has been completed, and structured interviews and discovery activities with leadership and key stakeholders are now underway.

FINANCE

Preliminary Financial Statements (Unaudited) through July 31, 2026

Ted Phillips, Chief Financial Officer, reported on preliminary financial statements for the period ending July 31, 2026. AKC's July year-to-date results demonstrate continued financial stability.

Through July 2026, AKC generated \$788,000 of net operating income equal to 1.6% of operating revenue which totaled \$52.9 million. While registration revenues and units remain below prior-year levels, improved expense management and growth in recording and service fee revenue have substantially strengthened financial performance compared to 2025. Total expenses were \$52.1 million, approximately \$636,000 (1%) below forecast and \$4.2 million (7%) below the prior year period.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Mari-Beth O'Neill, VP, Sport Services, joined this portion of the meeting.

Board Meeting Dates for 2027 & 2028

The Board approved the following Board and Delegate Meeting dates for 2027 and 2028.

2027 Board Meetings

January 11, 2027*
February 3-4, 2027
April 12-13, 2027
May 10-11, 2027 (Raleigh)
July 12-13, 2027
August 9, 2027*
October 11-12, 2027
November 8-9, 2027

* One-day meeting via videoconference.

All meetings are at AKC Headquarters in NY unless otherwise specified.

2028 Board Meetings

January 10-11, 2028

February 7-8, 2028

April 10-11, 2028

May 8-9, 2028

July 10-11, 2028

August 7-8, 2028

October 9-10, 2028

November 13-14, 2028

2027 Delegate Meetings

The 2027 March, June and September Delegate Meetings are scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month, with the Delegate Committee meetings held the Monday before. The December Delegate meeting is set for Friday, December 17, 2027 (Delegate Committee meetings on December 16), to be held in conjunction with the AKC National Championship.

2028 Delegate Meetings

The 2028 March, June and September Delegate meetings are scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month, with the Delegate Committee meetings held the Monday before. The December Delegate meeting is set for Friday, December 15, 2028 (Delegate Committee meetings on December 14), to be held in conjunction with the AKC National Championship.

Government Relations Update

Second Quarter 2026

Sheila Goffe, Executive Secretary and VP, Government Relations, provided an

update on activities and accomplishments of the GR Department in Q2, including legislative and regulatory activity, policy trends, Congressional policy briefings, major projects, other significant activities, and legislative successes.

The AKC GR team is currently monitoring more than 1,980 legislative bills that could impact responsible dog ownership, the health and wellbeing of dogs, the rights of dog owners, and/or the interests of the sport and the American Kennel Club.

AKC GR is also monitoring 718 actively pending proposed regulations (administrative or implementing changes to dog laws) at the state and federal level.

In the second quarter, the team published 35 legislative alerts, which are delivered via geo-targeted emails to impacted constituents, the AKC GR legislative action center, and social media. Staff provided written or oral testimony on 30 measures.

Parent Club Request to Retire Momentum, Sonnenschein & Ingebar

The Giant Schnauzer Club of America has requested the retirement of the kennel names: "Momentum", "Sonnenschein" and "Ingebar" on behalf of the owners. Staff recommends that the Giant Schnauzer Club of America, request to

retire “Momentum”, “Sonnenschein” and “Ingebar” be granted.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hamblin and seconded by Ms. Fineburg, the Board VOTED (unanimously; Absent: Mr. Hoke, Ms. Thomas) to waive standard procedure and consider the request immediately.

Upon a motion by Mr. Hamblin and seconded by Ms. Fineburg, the Board VOTED (unanimously; Absent: Mr. Hoke, Ms. Thomas) to approve the request to retire the Momentum, Sonnenschein & Ingebar kennel names.

New Breed for Foundation Stock

Service® – Seppala Siberian Sleddog

Ms. O'Neill reported that the Foundation Stock Service® (FSS®) Committee has approved a petition for the Seppala Siberian Sleddog to be accepted into the FSS program with an effective date of 60 days after the board meeting of September 15, 2026.

Veterinary Outreach 2026 Update

Ms. O'Neill provided an update to the AKC Board on the accomplishments of the Vet Outreach program from 2025-2026. This included:

Meet the AKC Presentations: 21 presentations conducted in 2025 with a total of 1065 students attending. In 2026 13 presentations were conducted

during the Spring Semester to a total of 535 students. The schedule for the fall semester is still being coordinated with 3 confirmed including the new vet school at Rowan University in New Jersey.

Tours of Dog Shows or Other AKC Events: Staff coordinated tours for veterinary students at 8 dog shows or other AKC events within a close proximity to the veterinary school.

Conferences Attended: AKC had informational booths at 5 veterinary conferences.

CUSTOMER STRATEGY & GROWTH

AKC Education Q2 Review

The Board reviewed a quarterly update provided by the Education department. Key accomplishments included: continued expansion of AKC Canine College, development of educational pathways designed to introduce new audiences to AKC programs and sports, growth of youth and public education initiatives, improvements to Library & Archives access and operational efficiency, and strategic expansion of the AKC Groomer Program.

The department also advanced new revenue opportunities through industry partnerships and program optimization within the grooming community.

COMPANION & PERFORMANCE

Doug Ljungren, EVP, Sports & Events joined this portion of the meeting.

Judging Privilege Approval for Former Employees

The Board considered a proposal to establish a formal process for the reinstatement of judging privileges of former employees whose judging privileges were placed on inactive status due to full-time employment with the AKC. The new policy sets forth conditions and requirements applying to former employees seeking reinstatement of judging privileges. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear, consistent and transparent process that protects the integrity of AKC's judging program while ensuring that the former employees are treated equitably.

Upon a motion by Dr. Battaglia and seconded by Mr. Fugiwara, the Board VOTED (In favor: Dr. Davies, Dr. Knight, Dr. Battaglia, Mr. Carota, Ms. Fineburg, Mr. Fugiwara, Ms. Goldberg, Mr. Hamblin, Mr. Smyth, and Mr. Stansell. Opposed: Dr. Garvin. Absent: Mr. Hoke, Ms. Thomas) to waive standard procedure and consider the request immediately.

Upon a motion by Mr. Fugiwara and seconded by Dr. Battaglia, the Board VOTED (In favor: Dr. Davies, Dr.

Knight, Dr. Battaglia, Mr. Carota, Ms. Fineburg, Mr. Fugiwara, Dr. Garvin, Ms. Goldberg, Mr. Hamblin, Mr. Smyth. Abstained: Mr. Stansell. Absent: Mr. Hoke, Ms. Thomas) to approve the new policy setting forth conditions and requirements applying to former employees seeking reinstatement of judging privileges.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was an EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss business matters. Nothing was reported out of this session.

The Board recessed for the day at 5:35 p.m.

The Board reconvened at 8:05 a.m. on Wednesday, September 16, 2026.

Present at this meeting (Newark, NJ): Dr. Thomas Davies (Chairman), Dr. Michael Knight (Vice Chairman), Ms. Gina DiNardo (President & CEO), Dr. Carmen Battaglia, Mr. Dominic Carota, Ms. Sally Fineburg, Mr. Eduardo Fugiwara, Dr. Charles Garvin, Ms. Sue Goldberg, Mr. Steven Hamblin, and Mr. Robin Stansell.

Mr. Dan Smyth joined the meeting at 1:21 p.m.

Absent: Mr. Jason Hoke, Ms. Sylvia Thomas.

The Executive Secretary, Ms. Sheila Goffe, and the Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Ted Phillips were also present.

CONFORMATION

Doug Ljungren, EVP, Sports & Events, Tim Thomas, VP of Conformation, and Mari-Beth O'Neill, VP, Sport Services, joined this portion of the meeting.

Multiple All-Breed or Limited-Breed Shows in One Day

The Multiple All-Breed or Limited-Breed Shows in One Day Program defines the criteria for holding two All-Breed or Limited-Breed shows back-to-back on the same day. The Board discussed a staff proposal requiring the judging schedules for two All-Breed or Limited-Breed shows held in one day to: a) account for a minimum allowance of 45-minutes to one hour for rest or meals when a judge's cumulative assignment on the day is more than five hours of judging; and b) that a special attraction group competition may only be offered at the second show.

Upon a motion by Dr. Garvin and seconded by Mr. Hamblin, the Board VOTED (In favor: Dr. Davies, Dr. Knight, Dr. Battaglia, Mr. Carota, Ms. Fineburg, Mr. Fugiwara, Dr. Garvin, Ms. Goldberg, Mr. Hamblin. Abstained: Mr. Stansell. Absent: Mr. Hoke, Mr. Smyth, Ms. Thomas) to approve the new board policies.

This policy is effective October 7, 2026.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was an EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss business matters. Nothing was reported out of this session.

Junior Task Force Update

Ms. O'Neill provided an update on the activities of the Junior Task Force, which has been meeting regularly since July 2025. Highlights of activities include:

- Recognition of clubs that actively support 4-H Canine Activities: Three clubs have been honored to date.
- AKC National Championship 2025: Task Force members gave each Junior competing in all events a special lanyard recognizing their participation.
- AKC National Championship 2026: On track for an entry of 150 in Juniors competition.
- Junior Regional events: Nine clubs have been selected or already completed Regional Junior competitions in 2026. Eight more have been selected for 2027.

Other accomplishments include special educational initiatives, Juniors clubs, Junior showcase events and special outreach initiatives through *Family Dog Magazine*.

Conformation Point Schedule – Three-Point Major Requirements

Staff provided a memo informing the Board of a request received to modify how the point schedule is calculated. No

further action was taken.

Fines and Reprimands

Staff updated the Board on recent fines and reprimands.

Events & Entries

Staff updated the Board on event and entry numbers for the eight months ending August 25, 2026.

([See Appendix A.](#))

EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was an EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss business matters. Nothing was reported out of this session.

JUDGING OPERATIONS

Tim Thomas, VP of Conformation, joined this portion of the meeting.

Foreign Judges

The Board reviewed a memo presented by staff concerning foreign Exempt Judges.

This will be discussed further at the October Board meeting.

Mandatory Ramp Examination – American Water Spaniel

The American Water Spaniel Club, Inc. (“AWSC”) has requested that the Board of Directors mandate the use of a ramp for the examination of the American Water Spaniel through all levels of Conformation competition. Currently, American Water Spaniels may be judged

either on the ground or the ramp at the discretion of the judge.

Staff recommends the Board approve the AWSC’s request for the American Water Spaniel to be added to the list of breeds required to be judged on the ramp through all levels of Conformation competition.

Upon a motion by Dr. Davies and seconded by Ms. Goldberg the Board VOTED (unanimously; Absent: Mr. Hoke, Mr. Smyth, Ms. Thomas) to waive standard procedure and consider the request immediately.

Upon a motion by Mr. Carota and seconded by Ms. Fineburg, the Board VOTED (unanimously; Absent: Mr. Hoke, Mr. Smyth, Ms. Thomas) to approve mandatory use of the ramp for examination of American Water Spaniels in Conformation competition effective January 1, 2027, as sufficient notice must be provided to superintendents to ensure inclusion in all premium lists.

Recertification Exam Update

In November 2020, the AKC Board of Directors revised the Judging Approval Process to establish continuing education requirements for Conformation Judges. In 2025, the Board directed staff to restructure the exams. The revised exam uses single-answer multiple-choice questions, lowers the passing score from

85% to 80%, groups similar question types together, and replaces scenario questions that used icons to mimic the Best of Breed class with questions based on a marked judge's book page.

As part of ongoing restructuring for judges exams, staff provides the Board with updates on pass/fail rates and other key findings for the period that covers the period of April 22, 2025 through August 12, 2026.

<i>Since April 22, 2025:</i>		
854 judges have completed (pass or fail) at least one version of the recertification exam		
661 judges (77.4%) satisfactorily completed the requirement (passed)		
Exam	# Passed	Average Score
A	508	84.7%
B	123	82.6%
C	30	82.0%

Category/Date	Exam A		Exam B		Exam C		Overall	
	9/18/25	8/12/26	9/18/25	8/12/26	9/18/25	8/12/26	9/18/25	8/12/26
Eligibility and Assignments	85.3%	87.9%	77.7%	80.9%	89.1%	86.0%	84.1%	85.0%
General Procedures	90.9%	91.2%	91.4%	91.9%	89.1%	87.2%	90.5%	90.1%
DQs/Excusals	86.7%	88.9%	84.6%	81.4%	89.4%	84.1%	86.8%	84.8%
NOHS	68.3%	70.7%	65.1%	62.8%	78.3%	72.8%	70.6%	68.8%
Conflicts of Interest	77.3%	79.2%	86.3%	85.5%	86.8%	80.0%	83.5%	81.6%
Multiple Entries	77.4%	75.6%	58.7%	60.6%	76.0%	68.9%	71.6%	68.9%
Exhibitor Protests	79.3%	81.7%	89.2%	85.6%	84.4%	82.3%	83.9%	83.1%
Measuring & Weighing	86.6%	88.3%	92.2%	93.3%	83.4%	78.3%	87.1%	86.1%

CLUBS

The Board reviewed a request for AKC Membership, member club bylaw amendment approvals and newly licensed clubs.

Request for AKC Membership

American Eskimo Dog Club of America

Households: 150

1st Licensed Show: March 8, 1996

Bylaws: Acceptable

Recommendation: Publish in October 2026 and November 2026 Gazettes

Report on Member Club Bylaws

Approved in July and August

Connecticut River Working Group Association, Hartford, CT (2008)

Ingham County Kennel Club, Ingham County, MI (1943)

Yorkshire Terrier Club of America (1958)

Report on Newly Licensed Clubs

Approved in July and August

Cane Corso Club of South Florida, Lehigh Acres, FL (including all communities south of Route 70), 20 total households, 12 local.

Clearwater Beagle Club, Patterson, MO (including communities north to DeSoto and south to Piedmont, in proximity to Route 67), 19 total households, 8 local.

Erie Canal Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club, greater Syracuse, NY (including communities north to Argyle, south to Norwich, west to Rochester, and east

to NY/MA/VT state lines), 21 total households, 12 local.

Mid MO Retriever Club, greater Tebbetts, MO (including communities east to Warrenton, west to Boonville and south to Camdenton), 26 total households, 14 local.

Rutherford County Coon Hunters Association, Rutherford County, NC, 15 households, 9 local.

Pacific Northwest Miniature Bull Terrier Club, Portland, OR (including communities north to Puyallup, WA, south to Molalla, OR in proximity to Interstate 5), 22 total households, 12 local.

COMPLIANCE

Heather McManus, VP & General Counsel, and Bri Tesarz, Director of Compliance and Inspections, participated in this portion of the meeting.

Staff Event Committee Report of Actions Taken

The Board received a report of actions taken.

Summary of Actions by Management Disciplinary Committee – Charges Preferred – Non-Inappropriate Actions

The Board received a report of charges preferred.

Summary of Actions by Management Disciplinary Committee – Charges Preferred – Inappropriate Actions

The Board received a report of charges preferred.

Summary of Finalized Disciplinary Actions as of August 26, 2026

The Board received a report of finalized disciplinary actions as of August 26, 2026.

(Final Board Disciplinary actions are reported on the Secretary's Page.)

Compliance Status Report – Second Quarter 2026

The Board received a report of Compliance quarterly statistics for the second quarter of 2026.

Inspections Status Report – Second Quarter 2026

The Board received a report on inspections statistics for the second quarter of 2026.

CONSENT

Upon a motion by Dr. Battaglia, seconded by Mr. Carota, the Board VOTED (unanimously; Absent: Mr. Hoke, Mr. Smyth, Ms. Thomas) to approve the following Consent agenda items.

American Bulldog – Recommendation to Advance to Miscellaneous Class

The American Bulldog has met the

requirements of the Recognition of New Breeds Policy approved in January 2004 by the Board of Directors. Requirements include an active Parent Club, with serious and expanding breeding activity over a wide geographic area, and documented club activity.

The Board VOTED to approve a staff recommendation that the National American Bulldog Club become the Parent Club for the breed and the American Bulldog be approved to advance to the Miscellaneous Class.

This change is effective June 30, 2027.

Dutch Shepherd Eligibility to Compete in the Herding Group

The American Dutch Shepherd Association submitted a petition seeking acceptance into the AKC Stud Book and for the Dutch Shepherd to be eligible to compete in the Herding Group.

[\(See Appendix B.\)](#)

The Board VOTED to approve the Dutch Shepherd breed standard and eligibility to Dutch compete in the Herding Group.

The breed will be moved from the Foundation Stock Service into the Stud Book of the American Kennel Club on June 30, 2027.

Parent Club Designation for Appenzeller Sennenhund Club of America

The Board VOTED to approve the request of the Appenzeller Sennenhund Club of America to be designated as the Parent Club representing the Appenzeller Sennenhund with the AKC.

Junior Showmanship Regulations, Section 5 – Criteria to Advance to Open Class

The Board VOTED to approve the revision of the *Junior Showmanship Regulations*, Section 5 – Classes and Divisions (A) Novice Class. This expands the addition of Reserve Best Junior with competition to count towards the eligibility to move from the Novice Class to the Open Class.

[\(See Appendix C.\)](#)

This is effective immediately.

Mandatory Ramp Examination – Welsh Springer Spaniel

The Board VOTED to approve the request of the Welsh Springer Spaniel Club of America, Inc. (WSSCA) to mandate the use of a ramp for the examination of the Welsh Springer Spaniel through all levels of Conformation competition. Currently, Welsh Springer Spaniels may be judged either on the ground or the ramp at the discretion of the judge.

This change is effective January 1, 2027, as sufficient notice must be provided to superintendents to ensure inclusion in all premium lists.

Premium Lists – Rules Applying to Dog Shows Chapter 6, Section 2

The Board VOTED to approve the recommendation of the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee to amend Chapter 6, Section 2 of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* to require the following publications in premium lists: (1) notice and broadcast information of any commercial or club-sponsored recording and/or electronic transmission of the event, and (2) notice of any club-imposed recording restrictions.

The proposal will be read at the December 2026 Delegate meeting and voted on at the March 2027 Delegate meeting. If approved by the Delegate Body, the effective date will be July 1, 2027, to ensure publication in the premium list for any affected events.

English Springer Spaniel Field Trials – Frequency of Judging

The Board VOTED to approve the request of the English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association (ESSFTA), that testing judges be allowed to judge four field trials in a twelve-month period instead of three. This is a loosening of a restriction on frequency of judging.

This is a change to the *Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Spaniels*. The change would appear in an italicized section, which may be made by a vote of the Board.

This change is effective September 21, 2026.

Retriever Field Trials – Maximum Distance for Retired Guns/Throwers

The Board VOTED to approve the proposed change to the *Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedures for Retrievers* so the maximum distance a retired gun or thrower can travel is 15 yards. The Delegate Field Trial and Hunting Test Events Committee was briefed at their June 2026 meeting and had no issues with this amendment. ([See Appendix D.](#))

This change is effective May 1, 2027.

CAT and Fast CAT® – Clarification Updates

The Board VOTED to approve nine clarification updates made to the *CAT and Fast CAT® Regulations*. These updates offer better clarity for exhibitors and host clubs.

These are changes made to the *CAT and Fast CAT® Regulations* and may be made by a vote of the Board. ([See Appendix E.](#))

The changes are effective November 1, 2026.

Beagle Field Trials – Five Changes from the Beagle Advisory Committee

The Board VOTED to make five changes to the *Beagle Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedures*; 1) allow clubs the option to combine Field Champion Only classes either by sex or by height, 2) allow clubs the option to pre-measure hounds prior to the start of their small pack trial, 3) if a tracking collar is worn it must match the same color as the assigned collar or be black, 4) judges must choose either the 10-7 or 5-4 scoring system, 5) hounds trailing deer is to be considered a serious fault deserving of elimination and when trailing other game shall be given a demerit at the judge's discretion.

([See Appendix F.](#))

The first listed change regarding Field Champion Only Stakes is a rule change which requires approval of the Board and Delegate Body.

The proposal will be read at the December 2026 Delegate meeting and voted on at the March 2027 Delegate meeting. If approved by the Delegate Body, the effective date will be May 1, 2027.

All other recommendations are Standard Procedures and can be made by a vote of the Board.

The changes are effective November 1, 2026.

Pointing Breed Hunting Test – Change to Judging Requirement

The Board VOTED to reduce the number of qualifying legs an approved pointing breed hunting test judge must have earned while handling a dog at the test level to be judged, or at a higher level, from three qualifying legs to one qualifying leg. This change would be a two-year pilot trial. ([See Appendix G.](#))

This is a change to the *Regulations for AKC® Hunting Tests for Pointing Breeds* and may be made by a vote of the Board.

The changes are effective November 1, 2026.

Delegate Approvals

Rylee Carlon

To represent Richland Kennel Club

Published in *AKC Gazette*: July, August 2026

Dr. Lisa A. Connor

To represent Great Pyrenees Club of America

Published in *AKC Gazette*: June, July 2026

Anna K. Gracie

To represent Petit Basset Griffon Vendeen Club of America

Published in *AKC Gazette*: July, August 2026

Spencer Guynup

To represent Puyallup Valley Dog Fanciers

Published in *AKC Gazette*: June, July 2026

Laurie Isaacson

To represent Santa Clara Dog Training Club

Published in *AKC Gazette*: July, August 2026

Debra Lindsay

To represent Trap Falls Kennel Club

Published in *AKC Gazette*: July, August 2026

Ashley Maas

To represent Central Iowa Kennel Club

Published in *AKC Gazette*: June, July 2026

Walter Sommerfelt

To represent Tennessee Valley Kennel Club

Published in *AKC Gazette*: July, August 2026

Sebastian Steele

To represent Des Moines Kennel Club

Published in *AKC Gazette*: June, July 2026

Susan Swords

To represent Magic Valley Kennel Club

Published in *AKC Gazette*: June, July 2026

Lauren Westover

To represent Fayetteville Kennel Club

Published in *AKC Gazette*: June, July
2026

Tina Winston

To represent Miniature American

Shepherd Club of the USA

Published in *AKC Gazette*: July, August
2026

Katherine A. Wright

To represent Montgomery County
Kennel Club

Published in *AKC Gazette*: June, July
2026

NEW BUSINESS

Promoting Breeder Education

Resources

The Board discussed promoting and informing clubs about AKC's extensive resources and educational materials for breeders.

Conformation Group Judges

The Board discussed concerns regarding a shortage of qualified group judges for Conformation events.

Next Meeting of the AKC Board

The next scheduled meeting of the AKC Board of Directors is October 12-13, 2026 at AKC Headquarters in New York City. The following meeting is scheduled for November 5-6, 2026, at the AKC Operations Center in Raleigh, NC.

Adjourned: Wednesday, September 16,
2026 at 2:48 p.m. Eastern.

Attest: _____

Sheila H. Goffe, Executive Secretary

PARENT CLUB LINKS



SPORTING GROUP



American Water Spaniel



Barbet



Boykin Spaniel



Bracco Italiano



Brittany



Chesapeake Bay Retriever



Clumber Spaniel



Cocker Spaniel



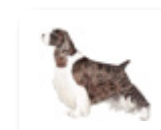
Curly-Coated Retriever



English Cocker Spaniel



English Setter



English Springer Spaniel



Field Spaniel



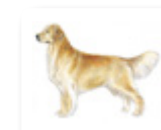
Flat-Coated Retriever



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



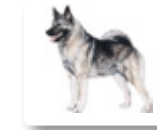
Harrier



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



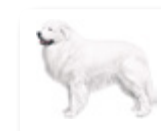
German
Pinscher



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



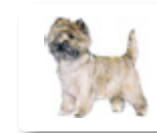
Bedlington Terrier



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



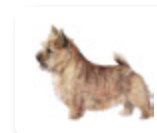
Miniature Bull
Terrier



Miniature
Schnauzer



Norfolk Terrier



Norwich Terrier



Parson Russell
Terrier



Rat Terrier



Russell Terrier



Scottish Terrier



Sealyham Terrier



Skye Terrier



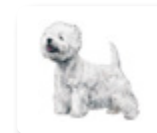
Soft Coated
Wheaten Terrier



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



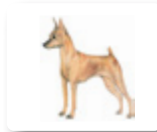
Japanese Chin



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/>