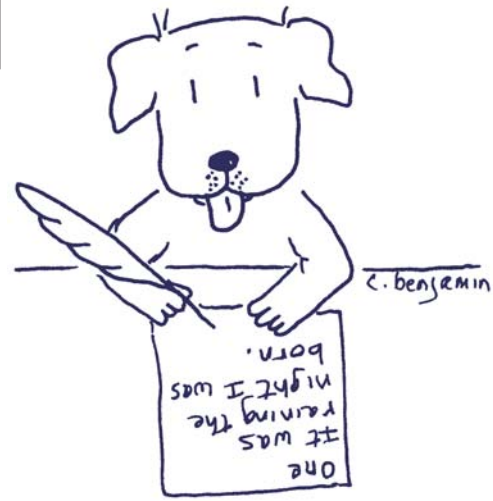


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October 2008

Choo-Choo -- All Aboard the Election Expresss!



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Ruff Drafts: The Voice of DWAA™

DOG WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, INC.
FOUNDED 1935



Frankie, a paralyzed Dachshund, strikes a pose after she wins 1st place in a German-Fest costume contest.

Frankie is owned and adored by new DWAA member Barbara Techel. Barbara and her husband work together to educate the public about disabled animals and their ability to live a quality life when given a chance.

The Techels are certainly on the "right track" to education -- Barbara's children's book, Frankie, the Walk 'N Roll Dog is getting rave reviews. You can learn more about Frankie, read more about Barbara's book, and watch Frankie's inspirational videos at Barbara's website, www.joyfulpaws.com

President's Message - Carmen L. Battaglia

I thought that you the members would like to know what has been going on since I became your new president. Sometimes when there is change, rumor and gossip usually follow and people begin to wonder if what they heard is true, close to the truth, or just the things that people say when change occurs.

So far, I think that the members can feel good about DWAA and your board of directors. They are responsive and willing to step up to the plate when the situation dictates. As most of the members now know, Chris Walkowicz was president of DWAA from February 29, 2008 to July 28, 2008. Because of a personal situation she had to resign. Normally, the VP would set-up and carry on but in this case the VP was not able to take on the job and she asked the board to find someone who would serve as president. During all of this I was serving as a DWAA board members and had no knowledge of these events because they were handled in a delicate manner. The board voted without my involvement and to my surprise I was asked to serve as president. Since I have been on the "job," the first order of business was to review our finances, insurance, and the status of our committees and immediate problems. The first order of business was to appoint a bylaws committee to address the old and, in some cases, outdated bylaws. Next was to assure ourselves that the contest was on course and that the planning for the annual meeting and awards banquet were in place. They are both moving along as planned thanks to Liz Palika and Pat Santi. The Hall of Fame committee has done its work and the other committees are on schedule. One disturbing issue is the cost of running DWAA. We have very low dues and there has not been a dues increase since the 1980s. I have asked the treasurer to make a recommendation about this so the board can consider if we need an increase at this time.

Now I would like to list the workers of DWAA so that everyone will know them. A thank you to these workers never hurts.

Officers

President

Dr. Carmen L. Battaglia, GA effective August 1, 2008, cbattaglia@mindspring.com

Vice president

Susan Ewing, NY, dogwriter@windstream.net

Secretary

Pat Santi, PA, rhydowen@aol.com

Treasurer

Rue Chagoll, NY, rchagoll@capital.net

Board members

Honorary Board Member

Mordecai Siegal, MA: mordecai@mordecai.com

Class of 2009

Patricia Cruz, NY: lacruz928@optonline.net, and Dr. Joel Gavrielle-Gold, NY: DrjoelGold@aol.com

Class of 2010

David Frei, NY: e-mail: david@wkcpr.org, Elaine Gewirtz, CA: egewirtz@west.net

Class 2011

Dr. Caroline Coile, FL: baha@hughes.net, Charlotte Reed, NY: char@charlottereed.com

President Emeritus

Ranny Green, WA: rannygreen@hotmail.com

COMMITTEE - CHAIR AND MEMBERS

By-laws:

Ida Estep, NC, iwestep@earthlink.net

Committee members

Rue Chagoll, Deb Eldredge, Patricia Cruz and Pat Santi

Hall of Fame

Ranny Green, WA, rannygreen@hotmail.com

Committee members

Patricia Cruz and Ida Estep

Annual Banquet

Pat Santi, PA, rhydowen@aol.com

Committee members

Charlotte Reed and Deb Eldredge

Annual Awards Contest

Liz Palika, CA, lizpalika@gmail.com

Publicity

Charlotte Reed, NY, char@charlottereed.com

Junior Scholarship

Lee-Ann Germinder, NJ, lgerminder@germinder.com

DWAA/ Cat Writers Liaison

Marion Lane, NY, marion@aspc.org

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Web Master/Graphic Designer

Kim Townsend, MO, kimtowntsend@hughes.net

Chat List

Dr. Stephanie Smith, TX, lambkennels1@juno.com

This year there will be several members running for the board and I hope that everyone will read their bios and VOTE.

Save the date for the Annual meeting and the Awards banquet: February 8, 2009, Affinia Manhattan Hotel, New York City. I hope to see you all there.

The official DWAA list is at http://dwaa.org/mailman/listinfo/dwaa-group_dwaa.org. It's simple to sign up and join our conversations! To post a message to all the list members, all you do is send email to dwaa-group@dwaa.org. This list is a fast way to network with your DWAA colleagues, ask questions about writing or dogs, and learn as well as share tips that make a dog writer's life easier and more profitable.

The Secretary has received the following slate and bios from the Nominating Committee for the coming election: The Appointed Committee by President Carmen Battaglia was: Ranny Green, Chairman, Patricia Cruz and Charlotte Reed. At a vote of the Board of The DWAA of 8 yes and 3 abstains the following slate is presented.

President: Dr. Carmen Battaglia

The newly installed president holds a PhD and master's degree from Florida State University. He is a breeder, author, researcher and lecturer. His professional career has included assistant dean at Emory University, adjunct faculty at DeKalb College and the University of Tennessee Space Institute. At the time of his retirement, he was the regional administrator for the U.S. Department of Education with the responsibility for eight southern states. Battaglia has authored many books and articles that have appeared in the AKC Gazette, Dog World, Canine Chronicle and Dog News, plus publications in Canada, Hungary, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland. In addition to serving as the current president of DWAA, Battaglia is also an American Kennel Club board member and past president of the AKC's Companion Animal Recovery program, past president of the German Shepherd Dog Club of America and its delegate to the AKC.

He has bred or owned German Shepherds, Portuguese Water Dogs, Pembroke Welsh Corgis, Long-haired Dachshunds and Springer Spaniels.

Vice President: Su Ewing

Our present vice president has been writing professionally since 1964 and is the author of the following books: "The Pembroke Welsh Corgi: Family Friend and Farmhand," "A New Owner's Guide to Pembroke Welsh Corgis," "The Pug: The Dachshund Bulldogs for Dummies," "Poodles for Dummies," "German Shepherd Dogs," "Cavalier King Charles Spaniels" and others.

"Bulldogs for Dummies" was nominated for a DWAA Maxwell award. In 2007, she was awarded the Cat Writers' Association Muse medallion for an article on training cats.

Ewing has written for the AKC Gazette, Family Dog, Bloodlines, German Shepherd Dog Review, Good Dog!, Pet Odyssey, Dog Fancy, Dog World, Puppies USA, Kittens USA, Cats USA, Cats magazine, the national Schipperke Club newsletter and other publications. From 1986-1990, she owned and operated a boarding kennel for cats and dogs in Canastota, N.Y.

In addition to being a DWAA member, Ewing is a member of Cat Writers' Association, of which she was treasurer for four years, and is a supporting member of the International Association of Animal Behavior

The Slate for new Board Members

Consultants. She lives in Jamestown, N.Y., with her husband Jim and two Corgis.

Secretary: Pat Santi

DWAA's long-time secretary has an incurable love for animals, which has led her to such arenas as conformation, breeding, performance events and teaching obedience, Canine Good Citizen and Therapy Dogs International evaluator. As a registered nurse and then the holder of a PHD in Psychology, she became highly aware of the problems of people and dogs and today puts a major emphasis on working with dogs with behavior problems in addition to placing rescue dogs.

A corgi breeder, she wrote her first book in the 1980s and is in the midst of writing an updated version. Much of her emphasis today is on therapy work with dogs and handicapped and pre-school children. Santi has written for the AKC Gazette and lectured to various kennel clubs and groups on improving breeding through genetics. She has served as president, secretary, treasurer, show chairman, newsletter editor and trophy chairman of numerous organizations, and is the recipient of several Gaines Medals for Good Sportsmanship. In 2003, she was presented the DWAA Distinguished Service Award.

Treasurer: Rue Chagoll

This nominee for treasurer has been a DWAA member since 2002. Dogs have been his lifetime passion, though he adds, "I can only categorize myself as a certifiable 'dog nut' the past two decades" During that time, he has actively campaigned and titled his Golden Retrievers in American Kennel Club obedience and hunt tests.

"Thanks to the lady in my life," Chagoll says, "I now also share a home with Bernese Mountain Dogs and can claim a Tibetan Spaniel in our extended family." He has been an active member and elected to office in regional breed specialty and training clubs, plus volunteers in various capacities with golden retriever rescue.

Though he received a degree in journalism, a career as a marketing executive restricted his writing pursuits to promotional, technical and trade-oriented work. Assuming the position as a local newsletter editor about 15 years ago, Chagoll seized the opportunity to write about dogs, leading to his involvement and membership in DWAA. Subsequently, with the guidance and encouragement of fellow members, his work as a professional freelance writer has appeared in numerous regional and national publications. He has been honored with numerous DWAA-related awards in recent years, including: DWAA Maxwell Award (five times), AKC Club Publication Excellence Award (twice), AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Publication Award and the prestigious DWAA President's Award.

Board nominees for the Class of 2012

Arlene Klein

This Floridian's dogs have all been formally obedience trained through the years. She has exhibited in breed conformation since 19082, owner-handling her first show dog to a specialty show win and to his American championship. Deeply concerned for the millions of animals that are neglected, abused, lost and abandoned, she produced a video, "A Day in the Life of a Dog," which earned a nomination in 1991 for a Maxwell Award.

She has served on the board of Morris Animal Foundation since 1991 as a trustee and canine vice president. She was elected to the honorary position of Trustee Emeritus in 2000 and continued to serve the foundation. She was re-elected as a trustee in 2005 for a three-year term and again in 2008 for another three-year stint. She is also a member of the Latham Foundation, Yorkshire Terrier Club of America and many animal-related organizations. She and her six Yorkies participated in the Latham Foundation's video, "Canine Good Citizen," which was awarded a DWAA Maxwell for Best Video in 1993. She is currently writing "The Grandfather of Possibilities," an inspirational biography.

Dr. Joel Gavriale-Gold

Gold was nominated to fill the board position held by Dr. Battaglia when he assumed the DWAA presidency. He has been re-nominated to a complete term in the class of 2012.

A psychoanalyst and psychologist, he has twice been the recipient of the prestigious Gradiva Award in psychoanalysis for his work on the human-canine bond. He is the author of "When Pets Come Between Partners," a volume describing the psychological relationships of owners and their pets. Gold serves as vice president of the Metropolitan Dog Club of New York and has previously held positions with Dog Fanciers Club, Pets Alive Sanctuary and Bouvier des Flandres Rescue. He lives in New York City with his two Bouvier des Flandres.

According to the By Laws

Article V section (b)

The report of the Nominating Committee shall be received by the secretary in time to be published in the October Newsletter.

Article V section(c)

Any Member in good standing may petition to run for a specific office if he sends to the secretary, before November 1, a petition signed by ten (10) members in good standing. (Adopted 1997)

Article V section (d)

On or about December 1, the Secretary will mail a ballot to each member in good standing. If feasible, the Newsletter can be used to contain the ballot.

The election is held during the annual meeting in February in New York.

Early Bird Registration

The early bird catches the worm. Early bird registration for The Business of Pet Writing conference will end October 31st. During October, the cost will be \$125.00. After November 1, the price will be \$150.00. A complimentary lunch will be provided by the Radisson Martinique. New agents and editors are still signing on so check the website (www.petwritingconference.com) for updates. This conference is not sponsored by DWAA.

Pet Pro Cruise in the Caribbean

January will be here soon, business will be slow and the weather will chill you to the bones. So, why not take a vacation and join the Pet Pro 2009 Cruise in the Caribbean? The featured speaker, trainer Sarah Wilson, will conduct two informative seminars. Carnival Destiny sets sail in Miami on Jan. 3rd for five fun-filled days in the sun visiting the Cayman Islands and Jamaica before returning Jan. 8. Prices start at \$549 per person. See http://www.barkleigh.com/jamaica_grand_cayman.asp for details.

A highlight of this trip is an optional excursion tour in Jamaica to Chukka Cove Farms, home of the only Jamaican Dogsled Team. These sleds have wheels, and good ol' mutts from the Jamaica SPCA pull them. Then on to Dunn's River Falls, a scenic national park, and lunch at Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville.

Petitioners for Election

Several people have decided to run for office independently of the Board's slate. The following people have submitted petitions to run as candidates, plus Eve Adamson for Class of 2012.

Debra Eldredge, DVM, running for president

I am writing to you as a candidate for President of DWAA, and I would like to share my vision of DWAA with you and give you my background. First, you need to know why I am running from the floor by petition. In July the DWAA Board approved Nominating Committee of Bardi McLennan, Elaine Gewirtz and Phyllis DeGioia asked me to run for President. After ascertaining that Vice President Su Ewing was not interested in running and after careful deliberation, I accepted the nomination.

Early in August I was unofficially informed that the Board had rejected the slate leading to the resignation (at least in part due to these actions) of President Chris Walkowicz. Acting President Battaglia (who had agreed to run for Board position of 2012 on the original slate) then terminated the original committee and appointed a new committee to go into effect August 8 – past the August 1 deadline in our bylaws. No reason was given for these actions. An independent legal opinion has verified that these actions violate our bylaws. A change in presidency does not allow for the bylaws to be ignored. Repeated requests by me and other members for an explanation and asking for adherence to the bylaws have gone unanswered. Since this situation is unlikely to be resolved by election time, I was urged to run by petition and the necessary signatures were quickly volunteered.

DWAA is a good organization with the potential to be a GREAT organization if we utilize the outstanding talents of our more than 600 members. We all work to enlighten, educate and entertain – some of us with words, others with artwork or photos. We are united by the love of our canine companions and our desire to share their importance in our lives. Some of us are nationally recognized award winning writers while others toil quietly writing shelter newsletters to improve the lives of dogs in their area.

Not only is DWAA an organization of dog fanciers, but also an organization of writers and communicators. We enjoy the long tradition of Freedom of the Press and strive to provide accurate information to our readers. Unfortunately, in recent months I have heard rumors of loyalty oaths, vows of secrecy on Board business and censorship of our newsletter content. I have been informed (can't verify this as the proceedings are now secret) that the Board voted to change the bylaws to allow all proceedings and votes of the Board on selected matters to be secret, with Board members to be "punished" if they even discuss their votes with others. DWAA is an organization of over 600 members, not merely a handful of board members. Repeated requests by members for information on votes and procedures have been ignored, as well as any suggestions offered.

As President I will run the organization openly. I will follow the guideline that officers and Board members are responsible to the membership that elected them, not vice versa and I will tap into the many members we have with outstanding talents who have so far been left on the sidelines. I pledge to run an open presidency and stay in touch with all members via the

newsletter, lists and forums. I realize that this will require a fair amount of time and energy but I am willing to make that effort. I feel that Board votes can and should be made public in virtually all cases and that member input should be sought on major decisions. I would like to add more committees and work to make DWAA membership an asset for members.

I approach this challenge with a varied background. From my first dog-writing job for a Pennysaver type newspaper where I was paid a pie a week, I have gone on to write or co-author six books on dogs, columns for GoodDog! and Dogs In Review and articles in Dog World, Dog Fancy, agilityaction.com, dogcentral.com, Your Dog and various other publications. I have been a member of DWAA since 1993. I have won two Maxwells, two Muse Medallions and had numerous nominations for additional awards as well as having won awards for service and writing from veterinary organizations.

I have served on various committees, worked as a contest judge and been a Board member for DWAA. I am also an active member of various local, regional and national dog clubs serving on national committees for juniors and health as well as working on multiple national specialties. I run an active dog 4-H club in my county.

I am a veterinarian, graduating from Cornell in 1980 and was the first recipient of the Gentle Doctor Award. I have been primarily in private practice since then but was the veterinarian for the Humane Society of Huron Valley for two years and have covered for the Utica Zoo. My dogs have included an ex research dog, a shelter adoptee, an adult rehome and purebreds from reputable/responsible breeders.

Continued on next page

Petitioners for Election

I have participated in almost all dog sports including therapy work, freestyle, obedience, agility, herding, tracking, rally, carting, weight pull, water work, sledding and skijoring. I currently live in upstate NY with 6 dogs, 1 cat, 2 donkeys, 1 mini horse, 4 normal size horses, 11 sheep, 1 goat, 14 ducks and 3 primates – my husband Chuck, daughter Kate and son Tom.

If you'd like to contact me, make suggestions, ask questions or just talk dogs or writing, I can be reached at debme15@hotmail.com. I hope that you will choose to vote for me as a candidate committed to improving DWAA and opening up the organization to all members. I look forward to working for and with you!

Liz Palika, running for secretary

In July, I was contacted by the DWAA Nominating Committee and asked if I would run for the office of secretary. I said yes. In August, I was told that the slate which included my name was rejected by the board although no reason was officially given as to why that action was taken. Although I give the present secretary, Pat Santi, huge kudos for the work she has done over the time that she has served, this is a national election year. I feel it's important that the members of DWAA have at least two people running for each office. This way the members can vote and have a choice as to who will serve them. Therefore, I have gathered the petitions and signatures required to submit my name again for the position of secretary in the upcoming election.

I have been a professional member of DWAA since 1985. I have served as contest chair many times; this year is – I believe – my seventh year although not all have been consecutive. I have served with many different dog organizations, from local dog training clubs to national breed organizations. I served as newsletter editor for the Papillon Club of America and for the National Association of Dog Obedience Instructors. I have served as training director for a couple different dog training clubs and a search and rescue group, as well as President of a search and rescue organization. I have been very active in Papillon and Australian Shepherd rescue, as well as reptile rescue.

I am a professional writer and am the author of more than 60 books on dogs, cats, birds, and reptiles. I stopped counting magazine articles, columns, and essays after 1,000 had been published. I have been published in Dog Fancy, Dog World, The AKC Gazette, Cats, Cat Fancy, Reptiles, Women First, Newsweek, and the

Saturday Evening Post, to name a few. I also do a considerable amount of Internet work. Through the years, my work has won many awards, from three Maxwells from DWAA, to special awards from Cat Writers, and several nominations from San Diego Book Writers. My photography has also won awards in the past. You can see more of my work at www.lizpalika.com.

I am also a Certified Pet Dog Trainer and a Certified Animal Behavioral Consultant and have been working with dogs and their owners for 30 years. I own Kindred Spirits Dog Training in Vista, CA. We specialize in family pet training with classes for puppies on through advanced training. We also do therapy dog training, fun agility, carting, and more. You can see more about our training at www.kindredspiritsk9.com.

I am married to Paul Palika; we'll celebrate our 35th anniversary this year. We share our home with 3 Australian Shepherds: Riker, Bashir, and Archer. (And yes, we are Star Trek fans!) My husband and I and our dogs have been involved in many dog sports, including agility, carting, conformation, flyball, Frisbee, herding, obedience, search and rescue, tracking, and therapy dog work. I am the founder of Love on a Leash, a therapy dog group that began in San Diego but is now nationwide. We also have three cats: Zena, Squash, and Pumpkin. In the backyard, we have a 25 year old leopard tortoise, Pearl, a 100 plus year old Gulf Coast box turtle, Onyx, and several other box turtles and reptiles.

If elected as DWAA's secretary, I would work with the other officers and board members to divvy up the work that Pat is now doing all by herself. Many members have asked to be involved and I would like to help them become a vital part of this organization by giving them a job and some responsibility. I can be reached at lizpalika@gmail.com. In this election year, I urge you to get out and vote, both for our nation and for DWAA.

Susan McCullough, running for Vice President

I am running as a candidate to DWAA vice president. Here's some information about me, why I decided to run for this office by petition, and my commitments to you if you allow me the privilege of serving you.

My decision to run for the vice presidency came about for the same reason and in the same way that Deb Eldredge's deci-

sion to run for DWAA president evolved. Like Deb, the Nominating Committee approved by the DWAA Board of Governors named me to its official slate—in my case, as a member of the Board of Governors class of 2012. Deb has ably and succinctly explained what occurred after that slate was named.

Unfortunately, what occurred after the slate was named were simply the latest in a series of recent events that reveal an apparent lack of interest by at least some on the Board of Governors in adhering to the Bylaws and in truly serving all DWAA members. Indeed, some members have been treated with great disrespect by some of their representatives on the Board. Such ways of doing business need to change. I'm running to help bring about that change—and I greatly appreciate the support I've received from the many members who submitted petitions enabling me to run.

I've been a DWAA member for 10 years. I was the contest Special Awards Liaison for two years and a contest judge every year from 1999 through 2006. I've won three Maxwell Awards and the 2001 Eukanuba Canine Health Award, and am a 15-time Maxwell nominee. My articles have appeared in Dog Fancy, Dog World, Popular Dogs, AKC Gazette, AKC Family Dog, Your Dog and many other outlets. I'm also the author of four books, including Housetraining For Dummies, Senior Dogs For Dummies and Beagles For Dummies. I live in Vienna, Virginia, with my husband, Stan Chappell; our daughter (when she's home from college), Julie Chappell; and our Golden Retriever, Allie.

As DWAA Vice President, I would be committed to:

- Adhering to both the letter and spirit of the DWAA bylaws;
- Reviewing the bylaws to ensure that the credibility of the Association is restored and maintained;
- Representing the interests of all members, not just those of one sub-sector or another;
- Working with other organizations in the best interests of all companion animals and the people who write about them; and
- Keeping members better informed and more involved in the organization than has been the case up until now.

I'm happy to answer any questions about my candidacy, about the art of dog writing, or just shooting the breeze. My email address is susan.mccullough1@verizon.net. I hope you'll grant me the privilege of serving you.

Dog Writers Needed to Build a Bridge for AKC - By Kathryn Monroe

Perhaps the concept of the AKC as an investment is the one that bears the most examination. Rather than direct capital, breeders invest their puppies in the AKC, and from these puppies-as-capital the AKC generates its income. Breeders also, to a large degree, invest their credentials, granting the AKC verification of the integrity of their breeding choices. Breed clubs entrust maintenance of their stud books to the AKC, as well as the conferring of championships indicating quality superior to the competition.

How do these various roles conflict? Within any tradition lies the temptation to continue doing what one has always done. Within any committed group of people lies the desire to do more, sometimes to the loss of resources for the core mission.

Core mission: The maintenance of the integrity of stud books. Promotion of the value of the dogs so registered. Supporting efforts that maintain that value, such as health research and standards of care. Recognition of superior conformation that adheres to breed standards in order to maintain the “predictability factor.”

At the confluence of quality and quantity is always turbulence. If the AKC puppy is to be “the Gold Standard,” as Mr. Menaker indicates, it is unlikely that quality will be achieved by mass production.

The structure of the AKC, in which the “club” portion of the title is composed of member breed clubs, recognizes that fact. Breed clubs are responsible for maintenance of breeds. As both stockholder/investors and customers, breed clubs support the AKC’s core mission, and they and their members support AKC events. This is not completely altruistic loyalty, as they also receive direct services, such as archiving club records and historical documents.

To serve the breed clubs well, the AKC must focus on issues of importance to them, even at the expense of limiting its desire to directly serve all dogs.

In recent years, the AKC Board has found itself at odds with its own delegate’s body. As Mr. Menaker reported, the AKC sees the need to expand its registration base, and has promoted the Petland contract, retail outlets, and large scale breeding operations. The breed clubs, composed primarily of smaller breeders, see the need to promote the added value of puppies that are well socialized, individually placed on values less tangible than ability to pay, the conformational quality of breeding stock, and more. They see dichotomies: the AKC’s prohibition on establishing health standards for registration, or the AKC calling for use of model purchase contracts but unwilling to help en-

force those contracts unless civil action has been taken first. As a result, rather than taking advantage of Limited Registration, breeders elect not to issue papers for all puppies produced.

In sum, the members of the AKC, and their members in turn, are at odds with the direction that Mr. Menaker indicates that the AKC will follow. Is this necessary? Is the direction Mr. Menaker outlined the only or best alternative?

There is a rather obvious Catch-22 in that approach: Other registries are not offering the same level of services, so there has to be something other than services that some find attractive about them. And Catch-23 may be that any attempt to maintain superiority of the AKC puppy through increased inspections and compliance will simply accelerate the loss of registrations to other bodies without such requirements.

Those who own purebred dogs are frequently sensitive to the charges that they are seekers of prestige, snobby, and more. Perhaps one part of the solution is to recognize that preference for purebred is a choice of value to the chooser that does not diminish the choice of another. Within that solution lies not choosing to pursue the greatest numbers but rather actively pursuing a greater buy-in from those whose values are the same.

The implications of that choice are vast; most of them are unfortunately unexplored. But if the AKC wishes to achieve buy-in from its present natural constituency, with the attendant vigorous support that will provide, then it must examine three questions:

1. Are all the services that it provides essential to its core mission? Is archiving club magazines important? Are the banner/flyer programs effective? What can be scaled back? What can be eliminated?

2. Are there other services that would strengthen support from the AKC’s natural constituency? Is a strong, loyal, and active constituency for the AKC more likely to be found in the breed clubs and stronger registration from their members or through the one-time registrations obtained from retail outlets? How can the AKC achieve more buy-in from its member clubs, and from their members in turn?

3. What values are met by the direction Mr. Menaker outlined? Clearly, the continued existence of the AKC is the goal. But what of other values? What are values important to the breed clubs and the individual dog owners who participate in AKC venues? What steps has the AKC taken to discover and examine those values on a broad basis? Where do those various values intersect?

Where do those values intersect? At a time when 39% of households in the USA own

dogs and 40% of those own more than one, it seems that registering even a small portion of those animals could allow the AKC to continue to grow. A smaller share of a larger market can still be growth, and can be more loyal, more resilient, and more effective as well. The solution may not lie in trying to maintain the position as the biggest, which will eliminate support from those who believe in being the best. The solution may be in returning to the core mission and the values it represents, in defining being “the premier” registry as one in which no apologies are made for the choice of being selective, and encouraging, supporting, and growing the natural constituency who feels the same way.

The decisions that face the AKC, and ultimately those of us who write about the dog world, are decisions about change and how well we react to it. As Mr. Menaker noted, many large institutions who attempted to meet the challenges of a changed world with assumptions based on those of the past are no longer with us. Standard Oil, a leader and a symbol among oil companies, attempted to continue to control the market based on old economic principles, and it did not survive. Royal Dutch Shell opened dialogue with its natural constituents and adopted an approach based on common values. It opted not to attempt to control the market but to more efficiently provide a higher level of its role and, therefore, reliability and security for those who were dependent on it. It is now the second largest private sector oil company in the world.

In the world of journalism and creative writing, we dog writers concentrate on one small part. We find within that part an infinite number of variations and opportunities to do what we do better. We have something to say—about dogs. If we believe that our subject is enriched by the presence of purebred dogs, it seems that the current and future state of the AKC is a topic of importance and discussion, especially for those who write for the dog fancy.

The dog world as we know it is changing; the responses that we make as writers—along with our traditions, our services, and our personal investment in turn—deserve wide reflection.

I do not have an answer. I do not believe that any single one of us does. I do believe in collective wisdom and the role of writers in raising issues so that widespread deliberation occurs. From such broad participation usually come the best solutions, or the single solution that is informed by many perspectives. The long-term solution addresses long-term values – such as reliability, scarcity, quality – and devolves programs from them, not the other way around.

I think our job as dog writers is to write about this topic in a way that challenges the assumption, “So what?” I hope we will do so.

Why I Wrote a Book Called "The Healing Power of Dogs" - By Sharon Sakson

When I trace back my interest in the healing power of dogs, I have to start at the beginning, which takes me back to age twelve. In that year, my mother took to bed with an unexplained illness. I assumed she had a lingering case of flu and sighed with annoyance whenever she asked me to look after my three younger siblings.

It was a confusing time. In an excess of sympathy and caring, no one wanted her children to know that she was dying. Instead, they continuously tried to cheer us up. Their strategies worked because we had been trained to believe what adults say.

Our maternal grandmother, Kay, took us to Robert's Pet Shop, on a corner of Warren Avenue near her apartment in Trenton. I exhumed a copy of Dog World magazine from a book rack. A Wire Fox Terrier graced the cover, and his beauty and stature took my breath away. Turning the pages, I fell totally under the spell of purebred dogs. With this magazine in hand, I was able to leave the memory of our mother, hooked to oxygen and intravenous fluids in the hospital, and think about something else. In that split second in the pet shop, a future opened before me that I had not contemplated, a future filled with beautiful dogs.

My father was cold, distant, and preoccupied, but he was roused by my insistent prodding to drive us to Merrybrook Kennels in Long Valley, New Jersey, where I chose a Wire Fox Terrier with the guidance of the great breeder Mrs. Franklin Koehler.

If someone asked me now which breed would be best at consoling a child over the loss of her mother, a Wire Fox Terrier would be low on my list. Bonnie did not like to sit still. She would absorb only a few minutes of hugs and kisses before demanding to be set free. She was always busy chasing small animals or barking at passersby. Like most terriers, she ab-

stained from making direct eye contact. But when my mother died, Bonnie was the only physical being who offered me any kind of comfort. She didn't lower her standards because of my grief and allow me more cuddle time. She just made it clear that she didn't see the point. There was a big world out there to explore. When the leash was snapped to her collar, we walked endlessly through Cadwalder Park. Down to the freezing cold creek where she lapped a drink while I hopped from rock to rock. Across to the playground, where she refused to ride the swings or the wheel but let me push her down the sliding board.

In the weeks after my mother's death, everyone was consumed inside their own grief. I wanted to shut the door of my bedroom and never come out again, but I couldn't do that because of Bonnie. She felt like my heart, the only part of me that carried on. She was unfailingly lively, cute, sweet, and beautiful in my eyes. I had to carry on with my life because she did.

Entering high school. Passing through teenage years. The black depression of my mother's death settled over me like a cloud and many, many nights I decided that the only way out was to die. I spent a lot of time considering various methods of suicide. The problem with all the methods was the absence of a guarantee that they would work. And there was one lingering detail: There would be no one to take care of Bonnie. No one in the family felt about her the way I did. There is a dose of genetic material that separates a dog lover from a non-dog lover and no amount of explaining can ever cross the divide. Bonnie was the sole reason I never pressed the razor blade to my wrists or dropped in front of a speeding train. She needed me when no one else did.

It was not apparent to me then that I was

witnessing the healing power that a dog can bring to a person's life. If I thought about it at all, it was the other way around. I was devoting my life to make her happy. It took the distance of adulthood to see the truth; Bonnie kept me on this earth. She didn't heal me, but she provided the possibility that I would still be alive to be healed some day. Her presence was the antidote that defused the pain of petty insults from other children and all the times I was forgotten by my father. She comforted me with her wild spirit, but often, it was her physical nearness I craved. The healing power of another being pressed against your skin came only from Bonnie. She loved me enthusiastically and didn't care at all about the heavy grief I carried around inside.

Trenton had one of the largest and grandest dog shows in the country. On the grounds of the Lawrenceville Armory, I walked past elegant Greyhounds, highly brushed Collies, yapping Chihuahuas, funny Dachshunds, and felt strangely at home. With dogs, you always knew where you stood. I liked their clarity. If they loved you, they gave you everything. When they were unhappy, they lay in a corner. They never held a grudge nor dwelt on past mistakes. They didn't pretend to like you; they either liked you, or they didn't. There was no gray area. Everything was the present. Their lives were both pure and simple.

In the past 15 years, scientists the world over have established beyond doubt the therapeutic value of dogs. An American study of 92 patients hospitalized in coronary care units for angina or heart attack found that those who owned pets were more likely to be alive a year later than those who did not. They must have felt as I did, that taking care of your pet is an important responsibility. You can't count on anyone else to do it. You've got to show up every day.

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Seeking Radio Guests

Shawn Messonnier, DVM, is always looking for guests for his award-winning radio show, Dr. Shawn-The Natural Vet, on Martha Stewart Radio Sirius 112, Tuesday night from 7-9 PM CST. Members can send him copies of their books or products with a brief pitch letter to 2145 W Park, Plano, Texas, 75075.

As I write this, the future structure and health of our country, our economy, and our peace lay in question. In the midst of such weighty questions of change tinged with concern about natural disasters such as Hurricane Ike, Ron Menaker of the AKC launched his September Chairman's Report.

Perhaps in this context it is understandable that his words have evoked such little response. Perhaps the erosion of support for the AKC has already reached such an extent that his message is seen as just another lad crying "Wolf!" From the perspective of our daily lives and the subject to which we as dog writers have dedicated ourselves, however, his message contains seeds of great impact.

Mr. Menaker wrote of "enormous challenges," of "an alarming rate" of decline that "will fundamentally change our organization going forward. Make no mistake, the very future of the AKC and our sport is at risk." His proposed solution is to pursue "retail outlets" while "vigorously enforcing our policies."

Will it work? What exactly would we lose if the AKC were to close down? Should we, too, be alarmed? Is this a negotiation, a power play, or simply a statement of fact? Are there other facts? What is the AKC today, and does it serve a unique or useful purpose?

I see the AKC as having three identities. It is an institution, a service organization, and an investment. At the intersection, perhaps the collision, of those three identities, the crisis has arisen.

As an institution, the AKC has traditions, presence, and symbolic value synonymous with the concept of purebred dogs. Those traits have apparent benefits and drawbacks that can slow methodical change as well as provide a benchmark from which to evaluate reactions to crisis. At the fundamnet lies perspective on the importance of purebred dogs.

The question of purebred dogs is separate from the question of dogs at all, an issue being battled legislatively and socially throughout our country. It should go without saying that a mixed breed dog is just as much a dog as a purebred, just as capable of a somewhat miraculous connection with humans, just as worthy of care, respect, and inclusion in our lives.

Within the narrower topic of purebred dogs, however, lie some benefits to humans and all dogs that are not often considered. Even with today's heady advances in genome mapping, the ability to trace the presence of genes backwards through generations substantially aids health research on heritable diseases. Traits such as low dander and non-shedding are of paramount concern to folks with allergies. Probability of size is crucial for good matches. And more. Suffice to say that purebred dogs, along with a registry with high standards of reliability, have value worth preserving.

As a service organization, the AKC reflects its structure. It provides events, public education, and services to both the public and its member breed parent clubs. It promotes and funds canine health research. It provides sport in performance venues. Lately, the AKC has attempted to present a legislative voice in defense of all dogs, not successfully (or popularly) with PAWS (the Pet Animal Welfare Statute), more successfully this year in California.

These are weighty, perhaps divergent, responsibilities, with attendant financial commitments. In short, the attempt to be all things to all dogs is in itself a quixotic trek.

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