

TO: Board of Directors of the American Rottweiler Club

SUBJECT: Delegates' Report for June 2009 meeting (Raleigh, NC)

FROM: Peter Piusz, Delegate

Sunday June 7

Educational Sessions

1. **The Future of Obedience.** Presentations by the AKC Staff on recent and pending changes in the sport. See email forwarded to Board after the session.
2. **Canine Legislation.** Seminar on working with legislators to facilitate positive change in legislation.

Monday June 8

A. Tour of AKC Headquarters

B. Parent Clubs Conference 2010 Meeting

See summary posted in Parent Clubs Committee Meeting.

C. Parent Clubs Meeting.

1. Parent Club Donor Advised Funds: Review of the problems with the individual financial statements raised at the last meeting. Major points: (1) no administration fees; (2) all "lost" balances will be restored by the recovery of the stock market by year end; (3) "nothing has changed"; (4) Publishing their 990 on line; (5) Admission that there was no finding from IRS, only "caution" by CHF to protect its funds. There is still real dissension between the clubs and CHF, as many want their money in a secure fund and not in stocks. There were also real heated arguments about the meaning of "matching funds". Clubs will have to be careful dealing with CHF and be sure that all commitments are in writing. There were great claims made by CHF people that in spite of what was said, nothing will really change in the selection and funding of grants. It was stated that the Rottweiler Club needs to talk to them separately about questions on our statement. NOTE: the day after this meeting, the President of CHF called me to admit their errors and said a corrected statement will be sent out immediately.

2. Group Realignment: John Nielsen stated the Group Realignment proposal will be the topic at the Caucus with a question and answer session. There will also be discussion at the Delegate meeting and it will be voted upon at the September meeting. Composition of the groups will be determined by the AKC Board.

3. Dock and Crop: The topic of discussion will be Opposition of the AVMA Policy. The agenda will include which parent clubs have and haven't written a letter since the AVMA Annual Convention is in July. The Utah VMA has filed its own resolution to try to change the AVMA policy that is to be voted on at the annual meeting. Also on the agenda is the New York state law to ban docking, the new Pennsylvania HB 39 law on cropping and docking, and the change in the Soft-Coated Wheaten standard on tails.

4. Parent Club Code of Ethics and By-Laws Updating Project: Karen Spey gave an update on the project. She and Connie Butherus have heard from 67 clubs. They are making an analysis of what they have received. This is an on-going project and clubs can still submit their information.

5. Parent Club Conference 2010: Peter Piusz stated we are still working on a conference for 2010. We do not yet have a date but are asking clubs to start budgeting for it for next year. There will be one attendee allowed per parent club with a \$150.00 charge to attend. That will include room, board and transportation from the airport. Anyone who has topics they would like addressed should contact Peter.

6. Invitational Show – Parent Club Specialties and Supported Shows: Pat expressed her thanks to the more than 100 clubs who will be holding either a specialty or supported show with the Invitational. There are additional clubs who will be coming in. Gina DiNardo explained that this year's medallion pledge will include BOB, BOS, WD, WB, and Best Bred-By at a cost of \$125.00. Clubs who wish have the opportunity to donate their parent club medallions as additional prizes.

7. Meet the Breeds at Javits Center: Gina asked for parent club support for the Meet the Breeds event at Javits Center October 17th & 18th. To date 85 clubs have signed up. AKC is providing a stipend to help the clubs with their expenses. Each participating club will receive a donation to help with the cost of participants' travel expenses such as parking and gas. Hotels will be available outside the city and Paula Spector is working to get a discounted rate. Legislators have been invited to the event to see what we do. This is a test case. If it is successful it could be expanded to other parts of the country. Gina asked that delegates get back to their clubs to encourage them to sign up. Pat will post a list of participating clubs on the delegate and parent club lists.

8. Meet the Breeds at Long Beach: Gina explained there would not be any booth space for the FSS breeds at the Invitational. They may be included in the future when we have a larger site that can accommodate additional booths. Miscellaneous breeds will be included.

9. Transportation of Dogs on Trains: Richard Glenn expressed an interest in restoring train travel for dogs. In the early days many exhibitors traveled by train with their dogs. In 1976 the railroads decided pets would no longer be allowed. With the airlines charging so much more for excess baggage, Richard is asking AKC to address this issue in hopes they can lobby AMTRAK to change their position in time for the Invitational when it moves to Florida.

10. Registration Pledge Challenge: John Lyons introduced a member of their consulting firm, Patty Munchen, who has been working on the Registration Pledge Challenge. The fancy is doing a great job in registering their litters. The problem is that the dogs that are sold to pet homes are not getting registered. Across all litters, about 24% of the puppies are registered. The fancy does better in registering 55% of their puppies, but we can do better. To accomplish this, AKC needs your help. We need to change our habits on not following up with our puppy buyers to ensure that they actually do send in the blue slips. AKC is appealing to member clubs to get their individual members to commit to do whatever they can do get these dogs registered. Members will sign a form that states, "As a responsible owner of purebred dogs I pledge to encourage, assist and follow up with my puppy buyers to ensure that 100% of the puppies I produce are AKC registered." At the December Delegate Meeting it will be revealed which clubs have taken the pledge. This is not just a matter of revenue, but how much money can be given to the AKC/Canine Health Foundation, how much money can be expended to fight anti-dog legislation, and other worthwhile endeavors. The program involves a contest to make this project more fun. Details of the contest will be sent to the president, secretary and delegate of each member club. At the June Delegate Meeting there will be a \$1,000.00 prize given to the winner in each of four categories.

11. Mentor Program: Andrea Lane, Manager of Public Education, explained the New Exhibitor Mentor Program. We don't have a problem attracting people to the sport but we do have a problem with keeping them. After an average of six shows we lose about 1/3 of the people we bring in. There are a lot of reasons for this. They may have a mediocre dog that is not handled well, fellow exhibitors may be rude, or someone may say something unkind about them or their dog. You need tenacity to stay in this sport and it is felt that those who are fortunate to have a mentor are more likely to stay. AKC has developed a program to match up mentors with people new to the sport. They want to bring people into the program who would make great mentors. They do not have to be in the same breed, but be able to teach about the sport and be encouraging. This program originated with the superintendents' organizations as a result of people wishing to be mentored. There is a large influx of interest during Westminster and the Invitational. Mentees need to be informed about some of the unwritten rules of etiquette. The public is finding out about the mentor program and Andrea is receiving more and more requests to be mentored.

There is a list of qualifications. A mentor must have been deeply entrenched in the sport at least six years, have bred two champions, have a firm understanding of what goes on at a dog show and also be a

member of a club in good standing with AKC. A club officer must sign off on the mentor application. Andrea distributed copies of the application that is also available on-line. There is also a flyer that is downloadable. Peter Piusz suggested the information be made available for club newsletters. Ruth Ann Naun felt AKC should spotlight this program for the Meet the Breeds event being held at the Javits Center. Karen Spey suggested this program be expanded to cover Juniors since many of them do not come from dog families. Andrea explained that they had made the decision to exclude Juniors since they should not have contact with a stranger. However, they might be able to work through the parents. It was also suggested that the Canine Experience would be the perfect venue to recruit new mentees.

12. Pembroke Welsh Corgi Specialty: Judy Hart sent information to Pat that the first “altered” competition was held at the Golden Gate Pembroke Welsh Corgi Specialty as a non-regular class. It was a big success and other Corgi clubs are planning and approved to hold this event next year. This is a non-regular class competition that is available to parent clubs.

13. German Shepherd Dog Club of America Letter: Pat Laurans explained the communication this committee received from the German Shepherd Dog Club of America expressing great concern regarding declining registrations.

D. Delegates’ Caucus.

Group Realignment. Entire meeting was discussion of Group Realignment. Opposition seems focused on small all breed clubs and the added expense. Also, Parent Club concerns that the Board will not address where they want to go.

E. Dock Crop Meeting.

1. Opposition to AVMA policy on Dock Crop.

- Goal is to show broad based opposition to the AVMA Dock & Crop policies from all docked/cropped breed Parent Clubs. Need to distribute materials to the decision makers and provide as much to the general delegates as we can get out before the vote on the Utah proposal.
- Discussion of which parent clubs had written letters of opposition. At this point, only 11 clubs have written. Poodles and Giant Schnauzers came in here. Peter Piusz agreed to send email letters to each Parent Club (delegate, President, Secretary) with email addresses supplied by AKC.
- Utah referendum at AVMA Convention. This caught everyone unaware. No one realized that this was even possible and no one seems to know the group from Utah. While their wording is an improvement, it is still not what we want. Discussion of how best to support their effort.
- Talked about American Rottweiler Club letter and its purpose and background. Copies were emailed to all attendees.
- Beyond writing, we attendee should have contacted their state’s AVMA branch to find out who is attending the annual Convention and to find out their stance on the issue.
- Email to AVMA convention Delegates. Several people are working on a list for this emailing. Most people are working off old Delegate lists. If anyone has a better suggestion, please contact Peter.

2. Legislation

- New York Assembly A7218. This bill is dead for this year. The introducer did not issue the needed paperwork to move the bill through the Agricultural Committee. A group of people (Ann Lettis, etc.) met with her to discuss her effort. They do not expect her to reintroduce the bill next year.
- Pennsylvania HB 39. No one seems to know the status of this bill in the chaos of the animal bills in the Pa legislature.

3. Schipperke Club Proposal (Jo Patrick). Since Jo Patrick could not attend the meeting, Peter Piusz read a proposal that was submitted by the Schipperke Club. The Schipperke club was surprised to learn that the veterinary schools do not teach any form of docking. The banding of tails is a painless

procedure without blood loss. The club proposes making a DVD showing the banding of the various breeds that docks tails. This DVD would be distributed to every veterinary college in the U.S. A veterinarian would do the banding procedure for the DVD. The DVD would also include a listing of each breed club and the health tests regularly used in clearing each dog and bitch for breeding. Comments regarding this can be directed to Jo or Peter. Comments on this were overwhelmingly negative.

4. **Standard Revision of Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier.** Standard read: "Tail is docked and well set on, carried gaily but never over the back." This is typical of most AKC standards for docked tails. New Standard reads: "Docked tail is preferred. Whether docked or natural, the tail is to be carried upright 90° from the back, either straight or with a slight curve forward. Any deviation from the ideal is to be penalized accordingly."
5. **Article on identifying genetic mutation in short tailed dogs.** Reference Marjo Hytonen, Journal of Heredity, 10/14/2008.

Tuesday June 9.

Delegates' Forum.

AKC Website Tour and Instructions on Use. Long and Short Versions are available for distribution. Send Peter an email.

Delegates' Meeting.

1. The President's report.

Dire consequences for AKC as registrations continue to decline.

By now, you might be asking yourself where Dennis is going with this. I'll tell you exactly where. We are going to stem the registration decline and then grow that core business which requires a team with many players. By the way, you are all on the team so drop any passing thought of sitting on the sidelines and watching the rest of us. We are one -- what happens anywhere in our organization, Rally, Herding, or Conformation, matters to all of us.

With the Board's encouragement, staff has set in motion initiatives to improve registrations. Some are recent, others soon to be launched including:

- an AKC Registration Pledge which John Lyons presented at yesterday's Parent Club and All-Breed Club Committee meetings and which will be presented to you today.
- Other launches have received positive initial reaction. For example, the Online Record Keeping Service which is complimentary to all breeders with a *My AKC* account. Using this free service, every breeder can assist in improving our numbers while maintaining mating, whelping, and registration information and viewing litter registration data for all puppies in your litters. A very important benefit of this service is that it allows you to verify that each puppy you sold has been individually registered or follow up with the new owner to do so.

A turn-around will not come to fruition in the first days or first months, but it will continue, endure and succeed. The sport has learned to thrive with adversity; more times than not, we have turned it into success and we will continue to do so.

2. June Financial Report (Jim Stevens).

- Our total 2009 revenues through the end of May were \$3.4 million or 12% less than the previous year. Some good news is that our total expenses for five months were 3% lower than the same period in 2008.
- Total registration revenues for 5 months were \$2.2 million less than last year. For all of last year, litter registrations were 10% lower than the prior year. For the first five months of this year, litters were 15% less than 2008.

- This year's rate of return on our investments compares very favorably to the major stock market indices as you can see here. We only trail the NASDAQ, which has had an unbelievable run so far this year.
- With the benefit of these positive investment results, our bottom line for the first five months of this year was \$2.4 million. This was approximately \$500,000 better than the prior year.

3. **Noreen Baxter to retire.** Extended honorarium.

4. **Comments on Group Realignment.**

- To better group breeds that are similar in conformation or function.
- Improve judges' education by building on these similarities.
- Improve spectator understanding of dog shows.
- Group size is growing with the addition of new breeds recognized. The realignment will help decrease the size of five of the Groups.
- Increase participation by offering an additional twelve Group placements.

I would also like to review with you, the estimated cost of Group Realignment. As with all projects, there are two types of costs. The most easily definable cost is the actual monetary expenditures for the program. These would include printing and discarding obsolete publications. The actual expenditures related to Group Realignment is estimated to be \$65,000

The more difficult cost to define is the opportunity cost. This is the cost of time existing employees will spend working on this program that could be used on different programs. Although this is not an additional expense since they are employees, the existing staff members, time spent on Group Realignment will delay other programs that could produce more income. If the deferred programs were determined to be more critical they would require overtime or contract labor in order to meet all of the requirements. We have estimated the value of these hours to be \$150,000.

5. **The AKC Humane Fund's first Breed Rescue Grant.** This \$1,000 grant is presented to the Silky Terrier Rescue Charitable Trust. This 501c3 organization is supported by the Silky Terrier Club of America.
6. **AKC CAR.** AKC CAR is pleased to announce the creation of the Diane Albers Memorial Disaster Relief Award to be known as the "Albers Award." The Albers Award will be granted to either an individual member of an AKC club or to the AKC club itself. Honorees will receive a plaque and their club will receive from \$1,000 to \$5,000 to further volunteerism in connection with disaster preparedness and/or relief efforts within their community. Nominations will be accepted throughout the year and awards may be granted once every quarter. First recipient is Deb Hoff and the Fargo-Moorhead Kennel Club on their efforts during this year's flood. A check for \$5,000 will be sent to the club to continue their good works in this area.
7. **AKC Registration Pledge Challenge.** Discussion of this new program. Separate materials already sent to ARC Board and for ARC newsletter.