



TODAY'S BREEDER

A Purina Pro Plan Publication Dedicated to the Needs of Canine Enthusiasts

Issue 101



HIGH-POWERED VIZSLAS
Red Mesa Kennel

- CANINE MENINGIOMA
- WESTMINSTER WINNER 'SIBA'
- DOGS' BODY LANGUAGE



Your Pet, Our Passion.

ST. CHARLES KENNEL CLUB MOVES ITS ALL-BREED SHOW TO PURINA FARMS

Convenience and courtesy prevailed when officials of the St. Charles (Missouri) Kennel Club elected to move their all-breed dog show to the Purina Event Center at Purina Farms. The club, founded in November 1973, hosted its 77th and 78th shows, respectively, Jan. 25 and 26, 2020, at Purina Farms.

Summing up the new venue, show chair Connie Harrison says, “The Purina Event Center is a lovely facility with so many special touches that are custom-made for dog shows. The staff is friendly, helpful and accommodating. Importantly, exhibitors enjoy showing here because everything is close and handy.” ■



Clockwise from top: Liz Keimon of Wright City, Missouri, grooms “Mate” (CH Sunlit Miyagi’s Mate), a 3-year-old male powderpuff Chinese Crested, in the Gateway Hall benching area. Becky McDaniel of Lebanon, Illinois, rinses her 4-year-old female Australian Shepherd “Inde” (CH McMatt’s Miss Independent) in one of six stainless tubs in the Dog Bathing Room. Full-service parking for 74 RVs is just outside the Purina Event Center building, plus parking for 47 RV’s is available northwest of the facility. At the *Pro Plan* Hospitality Room, exhibitors can pick up prizes and ask experts questions about *Pro Plan* nutrition.

Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Missouri, is located about one hour from St. Louis. It is home to the Purina Event Center and outdoor competition areas used for herding, tracking, lure coursing, earthdog trials, barn hunt, and outdoor dog shows. For information, please contact Kaite Flamm, Purina Farms Senior Manager of Programming, at 888-688-PETS (888-688-7387) or by email at kaite.flamm@purina.nestle.com.

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Burr Oaks Born Again ("Toby") is a 3-year-old male Vizsla bred and owned by James L. Gingrich and professionally trained and handled by Brian Gingrich of Red Mesa Kennel. See story on page 12.

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Dogs express how they are feeling through their body language. This friendly Border Collie is relaxed and engaging. See story on page 9.



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Bill Etling, Vice President

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The fifth Standard Poodle to win Best in Show in the 144-year history of the Westminster Kennel Club, “Siba” is the first black Standard Poodle and the first Standard Poodle bitch to capture top honors.

WESTMINSTER WINNER ‘SIBA’ IS A STAR

The magical journey of a Standard Poodle called “Siba” started with a dedicated breeder. Next came a warmhearted handler who excels at artistic poodle grooming and a family to love, especially a 2-year-old boy. The puppy whom they all agreed could be something, indeed, became something.

Winning her 57th Best in Show at the 2020 Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, MBIS/MBISS GCHP Stone Run Afternoon Tea granted their dreams of a lifetime. Her trademark bow before the down and back, powerful movement, desire to please, and electrifying reaction to audience clapping made her a natural-born show dog.

High in the bleachers of Madison Square Garden, far from glimpse range, Stone Run Standard Poodle breeder-owner Connie Unger of Northampton, Pennsylvania, took in the surreal experience of watching her homebred Siba win the show. “I am just a normal person without a kennel or kennel assistants who

loves poodles,” Connie says. “I research pedigrees and study movement to match the best dogs to breed. With careful breeding, breeders can produce dogs that are able to do anything.”

When Siba’s litter of seven puppies was 8 weeks old, Connie took them to Hanover, Pennsylvania, to be evaluated with Paul and Chrystal Murray-Clas. Puppies were stacked on the grooming table and videotaped as they trotted down the driveway. “We could see Siba’s potential in her head and eyes and the way she gazed at you,” Paul recalls.

Second-generation poodle fanciers, Paul grew up in Frederick, Maryland, where his mother bred under the Clas Haus prefix, and Chrystal, whose mother bred Brielle Standards, is from Guleph, Ontario, Canada. Their paths crossed as junior handlers, though it was not until 2010 when grooming side by side at York (Pennsylvania) Kennel Club’s Celtic Classic that they became acquainted. In 2014, they were married, merging two successful

all-breed handling businesses and their love for showing dogs. Their son, Aiden, born in 2018, would become a playmate for Siba, with favorite games of peekaboo and chase amusing everyone.

Shown in a puppy clip at her first dog show at 6 months and 1 week of age, Siba won Best of Breed at the Pocono Mountain Kennel Club show in Macungie, Pennsylvania, with Chrystal at the end of the lead. “Chrystal walked out of the ring and said, ‘I think we have something special here,’” Connie says.

Although Paul and Chrystal usually switch off handling the dogs they campaign, it became apparent that Siba and Chrystal clicked. “They have similar personalities — both are calm and orderly,” Paul explains. “I was like the substitute teacher.”

Chrystal brought out Siba’s natural ability. “She knows this is her job, so she stands there and stares at me,” she says. “I’ve never had to stack her or fuss with her coat in the ring. The more clapping, the better it is, as she lights up from the energy.”

At the end of every show, Chrystal lets Siba run free. Not only does running help to build muscles, it resonates with Connie’s belief that Standard Poodles are athletes and should have great movement.

“I like dogs that run like stallions,” says Connie.

Her search for the right sire to breed to Siba’s dam, “Ruby” (Stone Run Girl Reaction), was a consummate process. Not only was she looking for males that passed their health clearances, Connie, a retired professor of education and literacy, was researching pedigrees to find kennel prefix matches in the



A big mover in the ring, Siba graces Madison Square Garden with handler Chrystal Murray-Clas.

sire’s and dam’s lines through the fourth and fifth generations. “I like to ‘interview’ males by spending time observing their temperament and watching them move,” she says.

Ruby was sired by “London” (GCHP Jaset Satisfaction), the top-winning black male Standard in history with more than 100 Bests in Show. He won the 2011 AKC National Championship and the 2012 Poodle Club of America (PCA) National Specialty, handled by Ann Rairigh of Louisville, Kentucky. Ruby’s dam, “Tessa” (GCH Longleat Black No Sugar), is Stone Run’s foundation bitch. She represents Connie’s ideals of a strong Standard bitch with beautiful movement and a calm, sweet, loving temperament.

“One year at Westminster, we were benched not far from Ann (Rairigh), and we got to talking about London’s beautiful movement,” Connie says. “Ann said, ‘Tessa has beautiful movement, too. We need to get those two together.’”

Ruby was from the first of two London and Tessa litters. “I knew that Joseph Vergnetti’s Dassin males go well with my bitches related to London,” Connie says. After spending a few hours interviewing “Lazarus” (CH Dassin Hillwood Lazarus), a black male owned by Vergnetti and Ellen M. Charles, Connie knew she had found the right match for Ruby.

Siba’s career stats reflect the rightness of the breeding. The 2-year-old began her specials campaign in the summer of 2018 by winning multiple Bests in Show, Reserve Bests in Show and Groups Firsts — enough to make her the No. 1 Standard Poodle in 2018. William Lee from Taipei, Taiwan, became co-owner to help support the campaign.

At the 2019 Westminster show, Siba won the breed and placed fourth in the Non-Sporting Group, rocketing her to the No. 1 Non-Sporting dog in the country. She won three Bests in Show at the March Madness Cluster in Edison, New Jersey, and took Best in Specialty Show at PCA in April. The wins came steadily. At year’s end, Siba won Reserve Best in Show at the AKC National Championship.

“I was ready to retire her after that,” Connie says. “Chrystal said, ‘Let’s take her to Westminster.’”

When Westminster Best in Show judge Robert H. Slay of Cary, North Carolina, chose Siba as his pick out of a stupendous lineup, it was a dream for the team. “How could I not choose the Poodle? She was elegant, exquisite and had an air of distinction to be recognized,” he said.

Chrystal’s happiness shined through in media interviews. “Siba is my heart dog, and we are so fortunate she is retiring to sleep on our bed.”

That is, except for time out to be bred and whelp a couple of Stone Run litters. “Siba put a stamp on what I’m doing, though I’ll never have another Siba,” Connie says. “She was a magical mix, and everything came together.”

Indeed, the little black Standard Poodle puppy bitch who could be something became something wonderful.

Congratulations, Team Siba! ■

A FRIEND FOR LIFE

NURTURING THE

HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND

A symbolic, sentimental comeback fared well for Katie Shepard Bernardin of Chaplin, Connecticut, and her beloved sidekick, the Giant Schnauzer “Ty,” at the 2019 AKC National Championship. Uncertainty whether the dog would show again was linked to whether he would heal properly following months of rehabilitation after surgery in 2018. An accident incurred while he was running in the yard caused severe injuries to the supportive ligaments of his left front leg.

The miraculous return to the ring, taking Working Group First at the largest dog show

“He taught me how to get serious and command his attention. He also taught me to be a stronger person. I found myself with ‘Ty.’”

Katie Shepard Bernardin,
professional dog handler

in the U.S., was befitting for the charismatic 6 ½-year-old male. The No. 1 all-breed show dog in the country in 2017, Ty charmed his handler while on what she describes as “the ride of a lifetime.”

MBIS/MBISS GCHG Ingebar’s Tynan Dances With Wildflowers started out as a special in 2016 handled by Katie’s husband, Adam Bernardin, an experienced handler of the powerful working breed. The switch in handlers came in late July 2016 at the Steel Valley Cluster in Canfield, Ohio. The unbearable summer heat with 100-degree temperatures shut down the black-coated



Katie Shepard Bernardin and Giant Schnauzer “Ty” formed a close bond that took him to the top as the No. 1 all-breed dog in the country in 2017.

dog, his ears droopy and his enthusiasm withered — until Katie took the lead at Adam's suggestion.

Adam watched ringside as Ty transformed into his classic rugged Giant Schnauzer stance. "You showed him like a rock star," he told Katie. "I'm done. He's your dog."

With a background in handling sporting dogs and sight-hounds, Katie began to transform into a handler of a working dog. Along the way, she and Ty formed a close bond. "I needed to learn how to show him," she says. "In early 2017, we traveled to shows in Portland (Oregon) and northern California, just him and me. We stayed in hotels, watched TV and just hung out. He taught me how to get serious and command his attention. He also taught me to be a stronger person. I found myself with Ty."

"The human-animal bond is about having a close relationship with an animal," says Cynthia M. Otto, DVM, PhD, DACVECC, DACVSMR, professor of working dog sciences and sports medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. "A true team works in a partnership that evolves with trust and compassion and translates into a special connection that feeds the soul."

Founder and executive director of the Penn Vet Working Dog Center, Dr. Otto is a longtime researcher of the relationships between working dogs and their owners. She was deployed at Ground Zero as a member of the Federal Emergency Agency Pennsylvania Task Force 1, helping to care for the search dogs looking for victims of the 9/11 attacks. In 2018, she was honored by the American Veterinary Medical Association with the Bustad Companion Animal Veterinarian of the Year Award for her work to preserve and protect the human-animal bond.

Teamwork is the essence of retriever field trials. At the 2014 National Amateur Retriever Championship in Roseburg, Oregon, Martha Russell of Gainesville, Texas, and her 5-year-old black male Labrador Retriever "Tubb" calmly came to the line in the 10th series exuding level-headed confidence. One of 20 Finalists out of more than 100 starters, Tubb locked in as Martha sent him on the first of four difficult retrieves.

"It was a very hard test," she says. "The first mark was in a unique spot. Other dogs had gone to the left or the right of the mark. I pointed, off he went and came back. It was as though he said, 'OK, I can do this. I got it.'"

To those watching, Martha and Tubb had performed flawlessly as they clinched the highly coveted National Amateur. "The ones that survive to the Final series thrive on competition," Martha says. "I noticed that Tubb's enthusiasm was building and he seemed happier and happier to be there."

The sole trainer of NAFC-FC-AFC Texas Troubadour, named for Ernest Tubb and his Texas Troubadours, Martha early on cast a spell on the talented, laid-back retriever. "We have a dog-person relationship I never had before," she says. "Before Tubb, I was more demanding. I learned to be more patient and give him a chance to figure things out."



Martha Russell prepares to send "Tubb" on a retrieve at the 2014 National Amateur Retriever Championship. They share a special relationship unlike any she has known in more than 40 years in the retriever sport, she says.

"The bond between a dog and handler is most evident in people who work with their dogs," Dr. Otto says. "Spending time training builds a connection and understanding that enhance teamwork."

Going from single-mark retrieves on bumpers to multiple and blind retrieves, Tubb progressed rapidly under Martha's training. "He was a competitor from day one," she says. "His tremendous marking ability coupled with a keen desire to retrieve and a willingness to do whatever you want him to do make Tubb a special retriever."

When Tubb was 2 years old, Martha's retriever partner and husband, John Russell Jr., winner of the 2003 National Amateur with NAFC-FC Adams Acres Cherokee Rose, urged her to enter

A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL & DYNAMIC BOND



According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, the human-animal bond is a mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors that are essential to the health and well-being of both.¹ Dr. Cynthia M. Otto of the Penn Vet Working Dog Center, who is renowned for her work in human-animal bond interactions, offers these reflections.

- The bond between a dog and handler is most evident in people who work with their dogs, as spending time training builds a connection and

understanding that enhance teamwork.

- Dogs are naturally good at reading or understanding humans, but the more a person works with an individual dog, the better he or she learns to read the dog.
- A true team works in partnership, a relationship that evolves with trust and compassion and translates into a special connection that feeds the soul.

¹Ng ZY, Pierce BJ, Otto CM, et al. The Effect of Dog-Human Interaction on Cortisol and Behavior in Registered Animal-Assisted Activity Dogs. *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*. 2014;159:69-81.

Tubb in a field trial. “I told John that Tubb wasn’t ready. We entered, messed up and didn’t finish,” she says. “I said to him, ‘See, he’s not ready.’ I entered him in a second trial, and Tubb placed third. John said, ‘See, he’s ready.’ After that, Tubb won three amateur trials in a row.”

As a precocious 3-year-old, Tubb was a Finalist at the 2012 National Open Retriever Championship in Montgomery, Texas. Sired by FC-AFC Weezer Retreezer, a Finalist at the National Open in 2007, 2008 and 2010 and at the National Amateur in 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008, Tubb was out of NFC-AFC Candlewood’s Something Royal, owned by breeders Ken and Brenda Neil of Cairo, Georgia. “Windy,” his dam, was a Finalist at three National Opens and won in 2007 handled by Ken Neil, an amateur. She was a Finalist at the National Amateur in 2007, 2008 and 2011. In 2014, Windy was inducted into the Retriever Hall of Fame.

Meanwhile, Ty, the Giant Schnauzer, was bred by the late Maryann Bisceglia of Ingebar Giant Schnauzers in Pittsburgh, who saw his potential as a puppy, handling him to Winners Dog at the 2014 Giant Schnauzer Club of America National Specialty from the Bred-By class. Not her first Giant Schnauzer

to be the No. 1 dog in the country, Bisceglia bred CH Galilee’s Pure of Spirit, the top dog in 2008, owned by Mary and Pat Hayes and Joe and Carla Sanchez.

Carol Mann of West Greenwich, Rhode Island, fulfilled a promise to Bisceglia to continue Ty’s campaign as his owner. After Katie and Ty won the Working Group at the 2016 National Dog Show, Sandra Nordstrom of Ocean City, New Jersey, joined the team as co-owner to help support the campaign.

“Ty’s solid form and gentle nature are a testament to Maryann’s passion for the breed,” Katie says. “Every win was an emotional, tear-filled one because Ty was from the last litter she bred.”

Recalling the whirlwind year of 2017, Katie says, “We never expected Ty to be the No. 1 dog in the country. Our goal was to hit 20 Bests in Show and be No. 1 in the Working Group. He was the No. 1 Working dog by the end of March and became No. 1 all-breed in August. I jumped on the bed I was so excited.”

The Giant Schnauzer Club of America National Specialty in August in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, was a dream weekend, Katie says. Ty took Best of Breed for the second consecutive year, winning under an expert, schnauzer breeder Dr. Carmen Battaglia, plus three Bests in Show at supported specialties.

The 2017 tally for Ty was 69 Bests in Show out of a career 87 wins and 130 Working Group Firsts out of more than 200 wins. He was in top form going into the 2018 Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show at the Garden, where he won Reserve Best in Show from the Working Group.

The prognosis after Ty’s injury was grave, with specialists predicting a 50-percent chance that regenerative medicine using his own platelet rich plasma would repair the damaged tissues. The alternative procedure, carpal arthrodesis, would have been career-ending. After months of wearing a custom orthotic cast and rehabilitation with water and laser therapy, his veterinary team agreed that the tissues had fused. In September 2019, the long ordeal was over; Ty was free to run and be a dog.

“We had kept him in bubble wrap for so long,” Katie says. “It was important to show him again and let everyone see him healthy and strong — that’s why we showed at the AKC National last December. He is officially retired now.”

She adds, “Ty is my best friend. He loved to show because of our relationship.”

For Russell and Tubb, they kept on, going to more than 100 field trials. In 2015, he won the Purina Outstanding Amateur Retriever Award, amassing the most points of any retriever in the country in the yearlong competition.

About three years ago, Martha developed a condition that causes weakness in her legs. “I am pretty whipped just walking from the truck to the line where we send dogs,” she says. “I have found Tubb has an idea of what I can and can’t do. It’s so gratifying. He has taught me that if I walk up carefully and don’t rush, we can do it. It’s like he’s saying, ‘OK, we got this.’” ■

HOW DOGS COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR BODY LANGUAGE

The ability to read dog behavior and pick up on dogs' body language can be life-saving for people and for dogs. Recognizing signs of fear in a dog, expressed in a myriad of behaviors including red-flag signs like a tense, rigid body, deep growling and bared teeth, could precipitate swift action to avoid a problem.

"Accurately predicting a dog's behavior can help circumvent a dog aggression incident," says Purdue University animal behaviorist Candace C. Croney, PhD. "Whether you run a dog kennel or work as a handler or trainer, being responsive when you see warning signs and acting quickly promotes human safety, canine welfare and also protects the human-animal bond."

Dr. Croney, professor of animal behavior and well-being and director of the Purdue University Center for Animal Welfare Science, and her research team developed the Field Instantaneous Dog Observation (FIDO) tool¹ to help kennel owners, inspectors and laypeople recognize signs of stress in dogs and evaluate their state of physical health and well-being.

"Accurate assessments of dogs' behavior and welfare are especially important in kennels where dogs are housed for extended periods of time," she says. "Not only is this important for an individual dog's well-being, it has been shown that stress can affect the physical, behavioral and emotional health of breeding dogs and their puppies."

READING CANINE BODY LANGUAGE

GREEN BEHAVIORS (NON-FEARFUL DOGS)



Dog is friendly, social, relaxed, or neutral/undisturbed. When approached, a green dog may continue resting, eating or playing with a toy. A dog that is friendly and comfortable may excitedly wag its tail, look at you, and position its ears forward, its head up, and its mouth slightly open as though smiling. The dog may approach you to solicit interaction by jumping up while its body language remains soft and

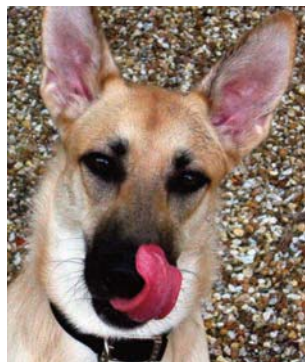


loose, or performs a play bow, lowering its front end and sticking its bottom in the air, encouraging a chasing game. Some dogs may sleep lying on their backs with their feet in the air, indicating they feel safe. Dogs showing green behaviors are more likely to be biddable and amenable to training than those showing red or yellow behaviors, as fear and stress often impede many types of learning.



YELLOW BEHAVIORS (AMBIVALENT DOGS)

Dog is shy, wary or unsure. When approached, a yellow dog may show enough green and red behaviors to make it impossible to accurately place them in either of those categories, as a



dog may both approach and retreat or approach but maintain enough distance to avoid contact with a person. A cautious dog also may show mixed signals via a low-wagging tail and attempt to approach with lowered body positioning, or the dog may temporarily tolerate being approached while also showing



signs of fear or stress by retreating or hiding behind other dogs to block contact with people. The tail may be tucked behind the hind legs, head down, eyes diverted, and ears lowered and back. Stress signals, often referred to as calming signals, include yawning, lip and nose licking, and head and eye aversion — behaviors that make a dog seem disinterested. They may shed and pant excessively when

it is not hot and food is not present. A dog showing yellow behaviors is conflicted about the interaction and should be allowed to initiate approach and interact at its own pace rather than be forced to tolerate approach and handling. Because fear is present, the dog showing yellow behaviors should always be interacted with cautiously.



RED BEHAVIORS (FEARFUL DOGS)

Dog is fearful of people, other dogs, odors, noises, items in the environment, or the situation. When approached, a red



dog may flee, freeze in place, exhibit behaviors such as wall bouncing or circling, or indicate fear through aggressive behavior. Aggressive behaviors include growling, barking, snapping, or lunging forward at a person. A dog's eyes may protrude or bulge with fear, ears may be alert or perked, tail up and stiff or wagging, nose wrinkled, lips pursed,



teeth showing, and hackles raised on the shoulders and spine. Offensively aggressive dogs often show forward body positioning and hard, rigid body language, including intent staring. If two dogs stare intently at each other in this manner, it rarely ends well. Defensively aggressive dogs may exhibit some of the same signals but often show calming or stress

signals as well, and their body position is typically lowered and their weight shifted backward. A dog showing red behaviors is not coping well with the current situation and could bite a person or another dog.

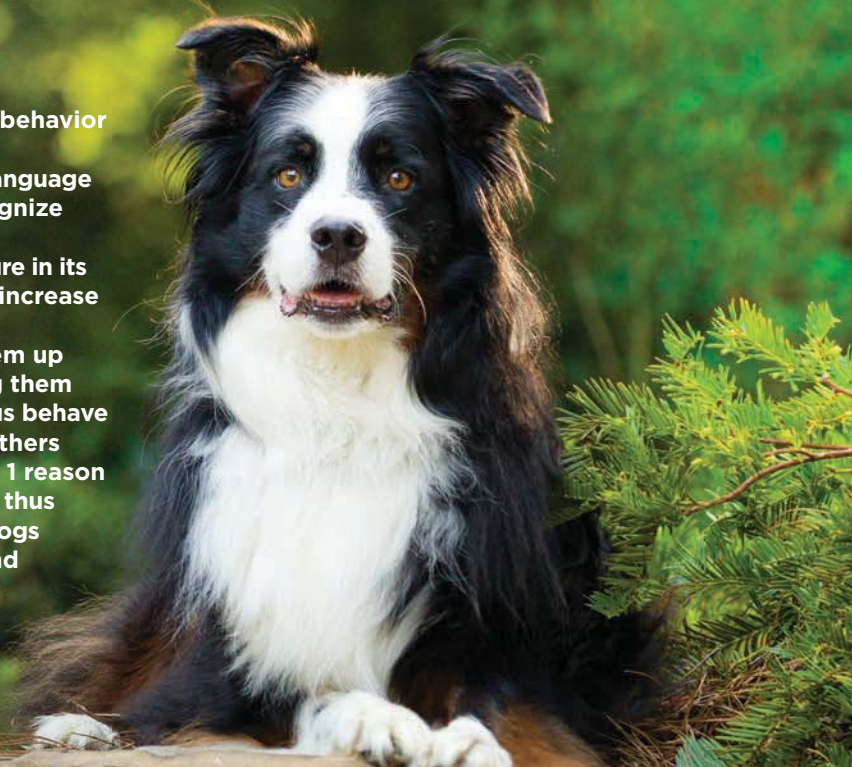


Source: Candace C. Croney, PhD, professor of animal behavior and well-being and director of the Purdue University Center for Animal Welfare Science, and Traci Shreyer, MA, animal behaviorist and research and education coordinator for the Croney lab at Purdue University

TIPS OF THE TRADE

It's critically important to recognize signs of a dog's behavior and understand dog language. Here's why:

- 1 Accurately interpreting a dog's posture and body language can help you interact safely with the dog and recognize when it is safe to approach and handle a dog
- 2 Recognizing when a dog does not feel safe and secure in its environment allows you to make adjustments that increase human and dog safety and well-being
- 3 Knowing dog body language allows you to set them up for success in social interactions and avoid placing them in situations where they may not cope well and thus behave in undesirable or injurious ways to themselves or others
- 4 Behavior problems such as aggression are the No. 1 reason dogs are surrendered, abandoned and euthanized, thus understanding dog body language can help keep dogs and people safe, protect the human-animal bond and promote canine welfare



The FIDO scoring system, which is based on research sponsored by the World Pet Association and the Pet Food Institute, categorizes dog behavior much like the color coding of traffic signs:

- Red behaviors indicate fear and distress that can be problematic for a dog's welfare and for human safety, and some red behaviors signify a potentially reactive dog that may be a danger to human handlers and kennel workers. All red behaviors indicate a dog is uncomfortable with the interaction.
- Yellow behaviors reflect ambivalence, or a dog having mixed reactions to a situation, meaning humans should slow down and be cautious.
- Green behaviors describe a dog that is undisturbed from its current activities, or a dog that is friendly or wanting attention in the moment, putting interactions with humans at that point in go mode.

"Regardless whether a dog's initial response is red, yellow or green, handlers should check the dog's posture and signals throughout their interactions to ensure safety and well-being of both the dog and the handler," Dr. Croney says. "Some of the biggest concerns with dog safety relate to fearfulness dogs may experience when confronted by strangers or novelty."

In kennels, this can happen when new people come to breed dogs, drop off unfamiliar dogs, and assist with kennel chores that include handling dogs, especially in ways in which they are uncomfortable or unaccustomed. Dogs also meet unfamiliar people at field trials, dog shows, obedience, and agility events, virtually any dog sport. Dogs can pose risks to veterinarians, groomers and others whom their caretakers may be familiar

with if dogs are fearful, in pain or distressed about being handled and restrained for procedures viewed as routine by humans, but not by the dog.

"FIDO evaluates a dog's physical health and his behavioral response to being approached," explains Dr. Croney. "Body postures are used to categorize the dog's response as fearful, not fearful or ambivalent. This provides a guide for monitoring dogs at all stages when people are interacting with them, which is useful as dog behaviors can vary throughout such interactions. For example, a dog's initial perception of an interaction as positive can change, resulting in a behavioral situation that requires the person to adapt quickly and appropriately."

The research team conducted a pilot test to see if FIDO was an objective tool that enabled consistent ratings of dog behavior among novice observers and expert behaviorists. The inter-rater reliability of the FIDO tool showed that with proper training, novices could score dog behavior consistently with experts. The study also showed the tool's potential usefulness in assessing individual dogs and identifying those having difficulty coping with their kennel environments.

"It is so important to pick up on what dogs communicate through their body language," Dr. Croney says. "Identifying dogs in need of intervention is critical from a safety standpoint and also from an animal welfare viewpoint. All dogs deserve physical, emotional and behavioral well-being."

¹Bauer AE, Jordan M, Colon M, Shreyer T, Croney CC. Evaluating FIDO: Developing and Pilot Testing the Field Instantaneous Dog Observation Tool. *Pet Behaviour Science*. 2017;4:1-15.



THE VIZSLAS OF RED MESA KENNEL

Bird dog winter camp in the Wild West of Prewitt, New Mexico, is a spiritual coming together, where a string of red dogs, known as Hungarian Vizslas, and their pro trainer and handler escape to decompress, recharge and fine-tune their pointing and retrieving skills. Taking a break in this rustic paradise brings clarity and purpose to the mission of raising the bar for Vizslas on the highly competitive bird dog circuit.

Riding up on a stylish pair of his starter team dogs staunchly pointing game, Brian Gingrich sits tall in the saddle atop Tennessee Walker "Chaco." Donning a cowboy hat, the 6-foot-4-inch solidly built bird dog trainer looks like he could reach up and touch the open blue sky. His ruddy cheeks and suntanned face attest to his outdoor lifestyle. His sparkling blue eyes and easygoing smile speak to his love of the versatile hunting breed and the field trial sport.

Locked in on the find, "Red" (NCH NFC DC Bangert's Red Baron), a conditioned, muscular 7-year-old male, is pointing the bird, and "Scout" (NCH 2XCH 3XRUCH FC CK Post Route Scout), an athletic, far-ranging 5-year-old male, honors the find with calm resolution. Arguably the top-performing Vizslas on the circuit, they have come by their talents humbly, hand-developed and trained by Brian since puppyhood. "I worked with a lot of dogs to get these exceptional dogs," Brian says.

Bringing out the power-driven bird-finding ability of the red dogs to run competitively with Pointers and English Setters in shooting dog and all-age horseback stakes takes grit. "This is what excites me," Brian says. "I am looking to put together an all-star team of big-running dogs that I can take to new places and raise people's expectations of Vizslas."

At left: "Red" (NCH NFC DC Bangert's Red Baron), 7 years old, and "Scout" (NCH 2XCH 3XRUCH FC CK Post Route Scout), 5 years old, proudly point quail in Prewitt, New Mexico.



Professional trainer and handler Brian Gingrich has developed Scout, left, and Red, into powerful, bird-finding dogs who are highly competitive Vizslas.

He knows there are naysayers, those who don't believe Vizslas have the engines to run a fast-forward one-hour endurance trial, the bird-finding finesse to trump a brace mate or the focus to stay the course. Brian aims to prove them wrong. So far, he's won 10 National Championships with six different Vizslas, an impressive claim for 10 years on the circuit. He's also won eight all-breed open championships.

Rolling into Circle, Montana, in May 2019, Brian faced the doubters. He was hauling a 50-foot trailer

An athletic, forward-running male, Scout is exciting with his intensity and focus. A National Champion, Scout takes the game to a whole different level, Brian says.

with three horses, a dozen Vizslas, and “Roux Roux,” a yellow Labrador Retriever mix he found tied to a chain by his rig five years ago, now a loyal family member. As he staked out his dogs, he noticed curious onlookers.

One of his best, an 8 ½-year-old named “Guy,” would be running the open shooting dog stake. Having trained Guy for owners Ron and Denise Chenoweth of Paducah, Kentucky, since the dog’s derby year of competition at 18 months of age,

Brian knew the big-hearted, talented dog had the potential to win. Brian’s father, James L. Gingrich is a co-owner of Guy.

With four finds on sharp-tailed grouse and pheasant, 2XNCH 2XNFC NAFC 10XCH 3XRUCH DC AFC CK Touchdown Guy set the bar high and won the 2019 Big Sky Open Shooting Dog Championship. The powerful, huge-running male stood out among a field of Pointers, English Setters, a German Shorthaired Pointer, and Vizslas.

“Everything goes back to Guy,” Brian says. “He’s the foundation behind all these dogs like Red and Scout. We’re breeding better dogs and achieving things with Vizslas that have never been done before.”

Back at winter camp, Brian dismounts Chaco to release Red, pausing to admire the stately male standing proudly on the find. “I could watch this dog all day,” he says. “When you ride up and find him, there he is 50 solid pounds, his tail straight up. He’s intent, watchful and focused. Red is the whole package. I do love this dog.”

Something Red and Scout have in common with Guy is winning National Championships. Guy gifted Brian with four of his 10 National Championships. Guy is a two-time winner of the Vizsla Club of America (VCA) National Field Championship, having won in 2013 and 2017, and a two-time winner of the National Vizsla Association (NVA) Open National Championship, taking top honors in 2014 and 2019.

Guy’s sons, now in their prime, are going after the record of their recently retired sire. Red, a Dual Champion holding American Kennel Club (AKC) Field Champion and Conformation Champion titles, won the 2018 NVA Open National Championship and the 2019 VCA National Field Championship, counting for two National Championships of Brian’s 10. Owned by the late Richard Bangert and his wife, Patricia, of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and bred by Greg Jones, Red came to Brian when he turned out to be a big-running dog with a lot of talent.

Meanwhile, Scout, owned by his father and bred by Mark Sullivan, holds his own as a fine bird dog. The winner of the 2017 NVA Open National Championship, Scout gave Brian one of his 10 National Championships. Noted for his forward race, Scout impresses with his style, handling and manners on birds. Importantly,





Brian prepares to release Red to find birds. "I do love this dog," he says, of the Dual Champion and two-time National Championship winner.

as Brian says, "Scout is so athletic, he takes the game to a whole different level."

Combining the genetics that Guy passes on to his offspring with Brian's foundation training is a catalyst for turning dogs into champions. "I am so much more patient now than when I started," says Brian. "You can't rush things. Dogs develop at their own pace."

A bonus of Brian's program is his understanding of the breed's affectionate ways. "Vizslas just want to be with you and please you," he says.

"I rotate the dogs in the house with two or three taking turns each night. The dogs are friendly, and this helps them. If they are running 600 to 800 yards out there ahead of me and I tell them to turn, I want them to listen because they like me. Vizslas love their people."

Brian's fondness for Vizslas might never have happened had James Gingrich, an avid bird hunter buying his first dog, followed through with his intent of getting a different versatile breed, the German Shorthaired Pointer. "A co-worker suggested to him, 'You don't want a Shorthair. I know a guy who has Vizslas,'" Brian recalls.

The puppy Vizsla bred by Jim Busch was named Princess Molly by 12-year-old Brian. The litter was nominated for the Midwest Vizsla Futurity, making Princess Molly eligible to compete in 1985. When she won the Futurity, held at Red Rock State Park in Iowa, father and son were hooked on bird dog field trials.

Although Brian enjoyed Vizslas and going to field trials, frequently scouting for his father,

Energy and drive are virtues of "Toby" (Burr Oak's Born Again), a 3-year-old male sired by Red. Showing promise early, Toby won the 2019 Midwest Vizsla Futurity.



he did not plan to be a professional bird dog trainer. “It started real innocent,” he says, grinning.

After years attending a handful of colleges, majoring in business and then considering anthropology, possibly education, Brian wasn’t sure what he wanted to do. “I had become a professional student,” he concedes.

With time on his hands in 2009, Brian started yardwork training his father’s Vizsla puppies. A neighbor and fellow Vizsla enthusiast, Mark Johnson, frequently drove by and saw Brian working the pups. “One day, he pulled over and asked me, ‘Can you train my pup ‘Tex’?” Brian says. “That’s how it all began.”

Illinois, Brian started shaping dogs to win by making training fun and giving lots of praise. He and his father bought Tennessee Walking horses and a trailer, transitioning to handling on horseback from walking.

“Rex” (NFC FC AFC Burr Oak’s Quarterback), a male owned by his father, became Brian’s first finished AKC Field Champion and at 6 years of age won the 2012 NVA National Championship, the first of Brian’s 10 National Championships. “Rex was a good dog with nice style and high prey drive,” says Brian.

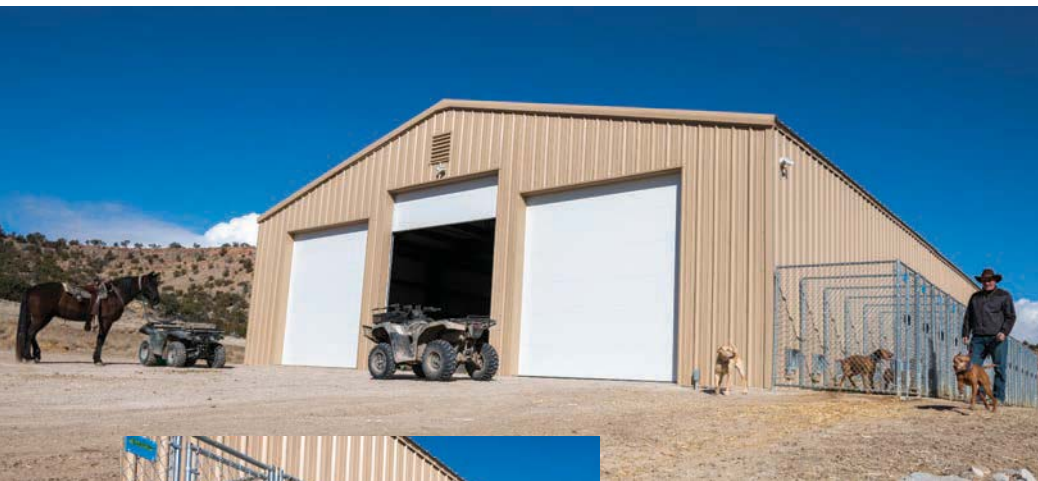
A female Vizsla, “Gabi” (NFC Midnight Run’s Gabi), owned by Joe Cronin, won the 2013 NVA National, giving Brian his second of 10 wins. The 5-year-old trained alongside Guy, the winner of the VCA National in 2013 and the NVA National in 2014, two of the Vizsla male’s career four National Championship wins. In 2015, “Driver” (NFC FC Mira’s Mr. Playmaker), a 3-year-old male owned by Michel Berner, won the VCA National Field Championship, adding to Brian’s tally of 10 National wins.

More and more field trialers had begun seeking Brian to train their dogs in 2014 when James Gingrich bought a property in Prewitt, New Mexico, which he named Mt. Taylor Vista Ranch. The rugged Southwest scenery with gorgeous red mesas, windblown blue grama grass, and scattered pinyon pines and cedar trees offers nearly a dozen areas to run bird dogs. Once home to Anasazi Indians, reminders such as sacred burial grounds, pottery chards and dugout fire pits on top of mesas abound.

“We were chasing warm weather to train in winter when we found this place,” Brian says. “I love the contour and flow of the land. The mountainous altitude is a perk. It helps to increase the dogs’ speed, strength, endurance, and recovery. This ranch is our little playground.”

Improvements have come gradually. The well was dug in 2015; a modern rustic cabin came in 2016; a 65-foot-by-50-foot metal building was built in 2018; and kennels and electricity were added to the metal building in 2019. Projects like building fences, a horse paddock and Johnny houses for the quail and pigeons used to train are part of daily life on the ranch.

Working hard physically blended with time spent training and building relationships with the dogs have been life-changing for Brian. “This is my heaven,” he says. Befittingly, he recently renamed his BG Gundogs to Red Mesa Kennel.



Clockwise from top: The Red Mesa Kennel features 30 indoor-outdoor kennels having 6-foot-by-4-foot outdoor concrete runs. Vizsla “BamBam” peeks out from her inside kennel, an insulated barrel with comfortable, warm bedding. Brian feeds his high-powered Vizslas Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula because the dogs love the food and have ample energy and healthy stool.

Brian started out training dogs for Vizsla Club of America weekend trials sanctioned by the AKC. In 2010, he entered the National Vizsla Association’s National Open Championship in Grovespring, Missouri. The one-hour format of the American Field event was “eye-opening,” he says. “Going from 30-minute weekend trials to a one-hour championship was a whole different level.”

His competitive nature kicked in. Working Vizslas at his parents’ farm in Winnebago,



As winter camp comes to a close, Brian is satisfied with the dogs' progress. "The 2-year-olds have continued to get dialed in on their bird work on their path to becoming solid broke dogs," he says. "The juveniles, the 14-month to 2-year-olds, are beginning to learn to honor another pointing dog. It is fun to watch their competitiveness build. The solid broke dogs have continued to polish their style."

At trials, Brian may run dogs in open stakes, while the owners handle them in amateur events. Take, for example, in 2017 when Guy won the VCA National Field Championship with Brian, and then owner Ron Chenoweth handled Guy to win the VCA National Amateur, something that only has been done three times in VCA history.



A young Pointer, "Earl" (Ramblin River's Natural), came from Wisconsin to take part in winter camp.

James Gingrich, who now sometimes scouts for Brian, proudly tells people, "I have a pro in the house to train my dogs." In 2019, he won the NVA National Amateur Quail Championship with "BamBam" (2XCH 4XRUCH FC Burr Oak's BamBam), a 6-year-old female sired by Guy. In 2018, he won the NVA National Amateur Championship with "Reve" (NAFC RUNCH 2XRUCH FC Burr Oak's Reve), an 8-year-old female. His wins in amateur stakes have been many.

An up-and-coming Vizsla male is "Toby" (Burr Oak's Born Again), winner of the 2018 NVA National Quail Championship Derby Classic and the 2019 Midwest Vizsla Futurity. Representing three generations of powerful bird dogs, Toby was sired by Red, the 2019 VCA National Open Champion, and his grandsire is Guy. "Toby is slowly coming into his own," Brian says. "Red took some time, too. Toby is steady on point and thinks like Red. With him, patience is a virtue."

With a goal of picking up more field trials and competing at the highest level, Brian is traveling to more all-breed American Field stakes. He also is slowly expanding into other bird dog breeds. "Earl" (Ramblin River's Natural), a 1-year-old Pointer owned by Bill Stapleton, attended winter camp.

His love for the red dogs, these Hungarian Vizsla hunting dogs, is mutual. The spiritual coming together that took place at winter camp at Red Mesa Kennel will soon be seen at bird dog stakes across the country, where Vizslas will be taking the game to a whole new level. ■

Riding down Long Valley Road on "Chaco," a Tennessee Walking horse, Brian is headed out to work "BamBam" (2XCH 4XRUCH FC Burr Oak's BamBam), a 6-year-old female who has earned some impressive wins.

ONE HEALTH RESEARCH IS ADVANCING CANINE BRAIN TUMOR KNOWLEDGE

Dogs and people are susceptible to many of the same or very similar diseases. A type of brain tumor, meningioma, is an example. Both species are at risk for succumbing to the cancer's debilitating, life-changing effects.

One Health research funded by the AKC Canine Health Foundation is supporting collaborative studies by investigators into human and canine diseases, who are searching for similarities in biological behavior and underlying mechanisms of this and other kindred diseases. Their synergistic insights and expertise are fast-forwarding progress in the therapeutic discovery pipeline.

"Across the portfolio of research funded by the AKC Canine Health Foundation are studies cited as having a One Health approach," says Mary Smith, BVM&S, PhD, DACVIM (Neurology),

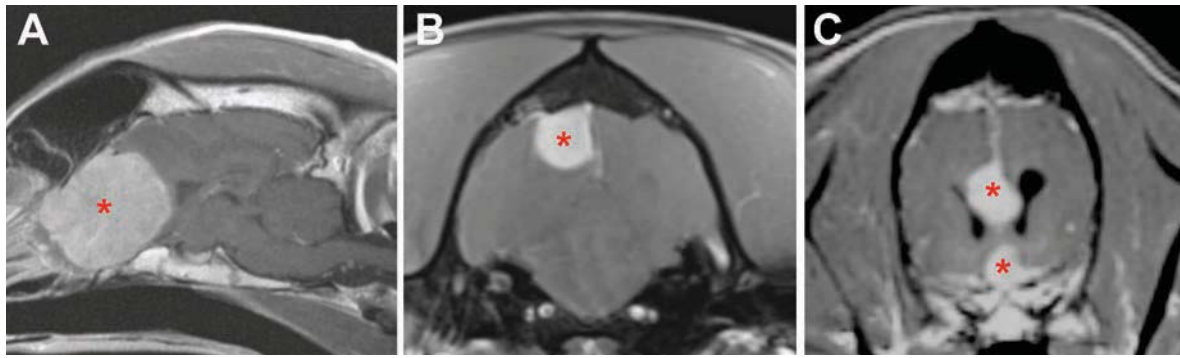
chair of the Foundation's Scientific Review Committee and vice chair of the Board of Directors. "It is exciting when our canine companions can help us better understand diseases in people and vice versa."

Meningioma is the most common primary brain tumor in dogs, representing 50 percent of cases.¹ Typically affecting senior dogs 10 years of age and older, meningioma develops in the meninges, the membranes that surround the brain, gradually compressing or squeezing brain tissue, nerves and vessels. Confusion, behavioral changes, seizures, and loss of balance are signs.

As owners grapple with these unsettling changes in their older, beloved dogs, they may get lucky and learn that the tumor has not invaded areas preventing surgery, chemotherapy

A lifetime Boxer owner, Joyce Baker Brown is shown with "Lindi," left, and "Palmer." A member of the American Boxer Club Charitable Foundation and sponsor of research to establish the CBTC Meningioma Pathology Board, Baker Brown has lost nearly all her Boxers to cancer, including brain cancer.





Magnetic resonance images show meningiomas in dogs. Brain tumors located in different areas of the brain are represented by white masses with asterisks. Some dogs have multiple tumors when diagnosed, as shown in image C.

SOURCE: VETERINARY AND COMPARATIVE NEURO-ONCOLOGY LABORATORY, VIRGINIA TECH, BLACKSBURG, VA

and/or radiation treatment. For others, the size of the tumor and its location may eliminate the possibility of surgery, or their dog may have surgery only to have the tumor regrow.

A four-year clinical trial is investigating a novel therapy for these challenging canine cases. Led by Timothy Fan, DVM, PhD, professor of veterinary clinical medicine and principal investigator of the Comparative Oncology Research Laboratory at the University of Illinois, the study is treating meningioma cases with a chemotherapy combination of procaspase-3 activator (PAC-1) and hydroxyurea.

PAC-1 and hydroxyurea are drugs that stimulate apoptosis, or natural cell death, within meningioma cells. While hydroxyurea alone has a modest effect on these tumors, the combination of the two drugs is thought to synergistically promote death of the cancer cells. Studies on cultured meningioma cells and tissues obtained from tumors from humans and dogs have supported the belief that the PAC-1 combination may be a useful chemotherapy drug for meningiomas in both species.

“Management of nonresectable or recurrent brain tumors requires the discovery of novel therapies that can be accelerated for a comparative approach,” Dr. Fan says. “This is the first study to validate a new therapy directly applicable to dogs with possible benefit to humans. The hope is that the therapy, if effective, may potentially help humans with the most aggressive forms of malignant meningioma.”

Dogs eligible to participate in the study have been diagnosed with meningioma based on magnetic resonance imaging though not treated with radiation or chemotherapy. The three steps of the study are:

- treatment with the investigational chemotherapy combination

- monitoring with magnetic resonance and noninvasive molecular imaging for shrinkage of tumor masses
- surgery for tumor removal along with tissue analysis to better understand how the drugs work within the tumor

“The current clinical trial will serve as an important pilot trial, informing us whether a larger prospective clinical trial should be pursued to further evaluate the combination of PAC-1 and hydroxyurea for management of meningioma,” says Dr. Fan.

The study is the inaugural clinical trial of the Comparative Brain Tumor Consortium (CBTC), a group founded in 2015 at a meeting at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) attended by veterinary and human neuro-oncologists, neuropathologists, clinical trial experts, and drug development specialists. CBTC members are experts at veterinary school comparative oncology centers who participate in clinical trials designed by investigators at the National Cancer Institute’s Center for Cancer Research Comparative Oncology Program. The goal is to better understand naturally occurring canine brain tumors to advance outcomes for canine and human patients with brain cancer.

A collaborator from the beginning of the Consortium, the AKC Canine Health Foundation provided funding of \$51,191 in 2017 for Dr. Fan’s study, which will be completed in January 2021. The Foundation also provided funding of \$79,600 in 2019 to establish the CBTC Meningioma Pathology Board to study the pathology of canine meningioma, to standardize pathology criteria and to identify biomarkers to aid diagnosis and treatment.

In 2019, 27 percent of the grants awarded by the AKC Canine Health Foundation had a One Health approach.

CANINE MENINGIOMA		HUMAN MENINGIOMA	
Breeds Affected	Clinical Signs	Affected Individuals*	Symptoms*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boxer • German Shepherd Dog • Golden Retriever • Labrador Retriever • Miniature Schnauzer • Prevalence observed in some large-breed dogs and also occurs in mixed breeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusion • Behavioral changes • Loss of balance • Seizures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 371 people diagnosed per year in the U.S., with 2,692 living with the tumor at any time • Tends to occur in people around 60 years of age and older • Five-year survival rate of 63.8 percent • Exposure to radiation in childhood is the only known environmental risk • People with a genetic condition, fibromatosis type 2 (<i>NF2</i> gene), are at increased risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision changes, including blurry and double vision • Loss of hearing or smell • Headaches • Confusion • Seizures

* Source: National Cancer Institute

Purina and the AKC Canine Health Foundation have worked together since 1997 to support canine health research to benefit all dogs.



A Boxer lover, Joyce Baker Brown of Mount Dora, Florida, is sponsoring the establishment of the CBTC Meningioma Pathology Board. “I personally have lost dogs to brain cancer and realize the importance of doing this research,” she says. “Cancer has killed almost all my Boxers.”

“Many dogs with meningioma are probably not diagnosed,” says Amy LeBlanc, DVM, DACVIM, senior scientist and director of the Comparative Oncology Program at the National Cancer Institute. “Tumors that affect a small part of the brain may not be recognized because the signs are mild. Usually tumors are large when they are diagnosed and subsequently difficult to treat.”

“We do not know if meningioma is inherited in dogs, but since it is common in some large breeds and mixed breeds, we suspect there are shared molecular pathways that contribute to the development of these tumors,” says Andrew Miller, DVM, DACVP, assistant professor in anatomic pathology at Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine.

Dr. LeBlanc along with Dr. Miller and Molly Church, VMD, PhD, assistant professor of pathology at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, are leading the investigation of the pathological process of canine meningioma. The work involves development of a grading and classification scheme for meningioma in dogs that will aid comparisons between human and canine tumor subtypes and comparative studies.

“This study includes cases from many different dog breeds from around the country and will incorporate detailed clinical history, postsurgical

outcome, histology, and immunochemistry of canine meningioma to hopefully provide more clarity regarding clinical outcome in affected dogs,” Dr. Miller says.

“From this study, we aim to create a sound molecular classification for canine meningioma,” Dr. LeBlanc says. “Molecular changes that occur with this brain tumor are very important, as they can be used to identify novel biomarkers and predict prognosis.”

Dr. Miller agrees. “Better understanding of canine meningioma may reveal insights into affected pathways that have not been studied in human meningioma and vice versa. The better we understand the molecular underpinnings of meningioma, the more data we will have to develop targeted therapeutic interventions. The growth pattern, molecular alterations, treatment, and prognosis of some canine meningiomas are similar to what is seen in humans.”

The Consortium has provided a means whereby veterinary and human neuropathologists and neuro-oncologists can work together to tackle this slow-growing, potentially treatable tumor that morphs into one that can cause significant illness and usually death. “The ability to advance ideas and knowledge is a catalytic force,” Dr. LeBlanc says.

“We’ve started with the basic building blocks of understanding the wide array of histologic patterns in meningioma and are progressing from there,” Dr. Miller says.

“I am inspired by this research,” Baker Brown says. “I definitely feel there is hope coming for dog lovers like me whose dogs develop potentially fatal brain cancer.” ■

¹LeBlanc AK, Mazcko C, Brown DE, et al. Creation of an NCI Comparative Brain Tumor Consortium: Informing the Translation of New Knowledge from Canine to Human Brain Tumor Patients. *Neuro-Oncology*. 2016;18(9):1209-1218.

FAVORITE COVER

IS AMERICAN WATER SPANIEL 'NAMY'

Today's Breeder readers eagerly emailed and called in to choose their favorite cover in our special 100th issue coverage. Receiving the most tallies was Issue 65 featuring an American Water Spaniel named "Namy" on the cover. Bred and co-owned by Paul and Lynn Morrison of Howell, Michigan, Little Brownies Namaste CDX was 3 ½ months old in 2008 when she appeared on the cover. In May, she will turn 12 years old.

Kenneth and Marilyn Bridges of Commerce, Georgia, called to check whether they could choose individually. "I like Issue 66 of the English Setter (MBIS/BISS CH Chebaco Blame It On Trabeiz) because my uncle hunted with bird dogs. I always remember the setters," Kenneth Bridges said.

"I think the spaniel on Issue 65 is so beautiful, so picturesque," Marilyn Bridges said. "The color of the dog and its natural look are striking."

Today's Breeder wrote the names of those who participated on slips of paper and put them in a box. Sherry Bresnahan, Purina Breeder-Enthusiast Senior Marketing Manager, drew the name

of Sylvester Karasinski of Swanzey, New Hampshire, whom we surprised with a year's supply of *Purina Pro Plan* dog food.

Excited to have won the dog food, Karasinski also was pleased that his favorite cover was selected. "I have an American Water Spaniel named 'Ziva.' I take her hunting. It's a great breed," he said.

A call to Little Brownies Kennel found the Morrisons busy caring for two litters of puppies — altogether eight males and nine females — born March 7 and March 15. Cover girl Namy is a great-great aunt on both sides of the pedigree of the dam of the first litter, and she is a great aunt on the sire's side and a great-great-great aunt on the dam's side of the second litter. Besides breeding, the Morrisons train their dogs for American Kennel Club conformation shows and spaniel hunting tests, which Paul Morrison also judges.

The couple fell in love with the versatile breed known for hunting upland game and retrieving waterfowl in 1988 and bred their first litter in 1992. Today, they average about three litters a year. They are committed to producing high-quality American Water Spaniels, a rare breed with fewer than 200 dogs a year registered, and focus on hunting ability, health, trainability, proper structure, and temperament.

"To us, breeding is an enjoyable experience, though it has its challenges and disappointments," said Paul Morrison, author of "American Water Spaniel," a limited-edition comprehensive owner's guide published in 2007. "We've always felt fulfilled with the ability to give people a proper hunting dog and wonderful companion."

Congratulations Paul and Lynn Morrison on the success of your breeding program. Your loyalty to the sweet little brown dogs embodies the true spirit of dog breeding. ■



Paul and Lynn Morrison hold American Water Spaniel puppies born in March 2020. The puppies are related to "Namy," the dog pictured on the cover of Issue 65, which was chosen as the favorite cover by readers of *Today's Breeder* in our special 100th issue coverage.

SMART BREEDING

STARTS WITH HEALTHY NUTRITION

Preparing a bitch nutritionally to whelp a litter of puppies begins even before she is bred. Veterinary nutritionists and reproduction specialists agree that body condition — a body fitness report card — has an impact on reproductive success.

“Belle” (CH Spotlight Adora Belle) cares for her 2-week-old puppies. The sire is GCH Spotlight’s Storm Chaser ROMX. Connie Wagner of Spotlight Dalmatians in Ocala, Florida, is the breeder.



NUTRITION FOR PREGNANCY & LACTATION

- Bitches should be fed a caloric-dense dog food during pregnancy and lactation. Veterinary nutritionists recommend feeding an all life stages dog food or a puppy food providing 400 to 500 kilocalories. It is ideal to feed a highly palatable, complete and balanced food that includes a proper balance of carbohydrates, which are so important for a healthy pregnancy.
- A high protein-to-fat ratio around 30 percent protein and 20 percent fat is recommended. A protein deficiency during pregnancy can reduce the birth weight of puppies and increase neonatal mortality. Protein requirements are even higher during lactation, especially in large litters. Fat contains twice as much energy, or kilocalories, per unit of food than carbohydrates or protein, making it an essential part of nutrition for gestation and lactation.
- The quantity of food fed should not be increased during the first trimester, or three weeks, of pregnancy. During the second trimester, the amount of food fed should be gradually increased. A pregnant bitch's intake requirements generally increase one and a half times more than maintenance during the last

- trimester, though this varies based on the nutritional needs of an individual bitch. Several small meals a day are recommended due to less abdominal space related to pregnancy.
- Bitches with average size litters should gain no more than 15 to 25 percent of their prepregnancy body weight and weigh 5 to 10 percent more than their prepregnancy weight immediately after whelping.
- Energy requirements may increase by double to triple during lactation, particularly with large litters. Bitches carrying singleton or small litters may not need an increase in calories despite increased appetite.



Feeding a balanced commercial all life stages or puppy food, such as one of these Purina Pro Plan dog foods, is ideal for optimal reproduction in bitches and optimal growth in puppies.

Andrea Hesser, DVM, DACT, a board-certified theriogenologist who practices at Josey Ranch Pet Hospital in Carrollton, Texas, says, “An ideal body condition of 5 or 6 out of 9 is optimal for conception, healthy pregnancy, delivery, and lactation.”

Alternatively, a bitch having thin body condition may not cycle normally, and one in an overly thin state may have limited ability to conceive. “Reproduction is a ‘low-priority’ body function in thin animals,” Dr. Hesser explains. “If a dog’s nutritional needs are not met, the uterus and ovaries are less active. When a thin bitch cycles, the nutrients such as fat that are required to form healthy eggs and later embryos may be of low quality and less likely to result in puppies.”

Obesity presents other complications related to conceiving and carrying a pregnancy to term. “Bitches in obese body condition have more pelvic fat, which prevents puppies from easily passing out of the pelvis during delivery,” says Dr. Hesser. “Adipose tissue, or fat, is a source of inflammation for the body, and this inflammatory state is not optimal for a bitch and likely

is part of the reason we see decreased conception rates in overweight bitches.”

Maintenance of ideal body condition is important throughout the nine weeks of pregnancy. “Regardless of the phase of pregnancy, diets should be adjusted based on maintaining ideal body condition for the pregnant dam,” says Purina Senior Research Nutritionist Deborah Greco, DVM, PhD, DACVIM. “Ideal body condition during pregnancy is defined as having an appropriate muscle and fat balance. You should be able to easily feel the bitch’s ribs, shoulder blades and hips; however, her growing abdomen means that you cannot see a waist behind the ribs when viewing from the top or an abdominal tuck from the side as when she is not pregnant.”

During the first trimester, from 0 to 21 days, a dam should be fed a normal amount of her

“Regardless of the phase of pregnancy, diets should be adjusted based on maintaining ideal body condition for the pregnant dam.”

Deborah Greco, DVM, PhD, DACVIM, Purina Senior Research Nutritionist



regular complete and balanced adult or all life stages dog food. During the second trimester, from 22 to 42 days, the amount of food fed, preferably of an all life stages or puppy food, should gradually increase based on the nutritional needs of an individual bitch. During the third trimester, from 43 to 64 days, a bitch should be fed to meet her nutritional needs;



bitches carrying average litter sizes generally are fed one and half times more food than before pregnancy in small feedings throughout the day.

As fetal development continues, the dam has progressively less abdominal space for comfortable digestive tract expansion and function. Frequent feedings of smaller meals may be helpful. Growing fetuses, fluid and developing placental tissues, and mammary glands all contribute to a dam's increasing body weight. During the final two weeks of gestation, food consumption may increase.

"The importance of feeding a balanced commercial all life stages dog food or puppy food as the mainstay for optimal reproductive capacity in bitches and optimal growth in puppies is key," Dr. Greco says. "Certain micronutrients and macronutrients when balanced with other nutrients in the formulation can affect the long-term health and well-being of puppies. Optimal nutrition is so important during pregnancy and lactation for the dam and her puppies." ■



FC-AFC Hockley Creek's Switch Hitter scores a double as the Purina Outstanding Open and Amateur Retriever.



November Morning Rain eases to the top to be named the Purina Outstanding Derby Retriever.

PURINA RETRIEVER AWARD WINNERS ARE 'MICKEY' AND 'RAIN'

Extraordinary Labrador Retrievers, standouts with keen marking and retrieving talents, are the winners of the 2019 Purina Outstanding Retriever Awards. A 6 ½-year-old male named "Mickey" hit a grand slam in the yearlong competition to win both the Purina Outstanding Open and Amateur Retriever Awards, and a 2-year-old female named "Rain" outshined the competition to win the Purina Outstanding Derby Retriever Award.

The uncommon feat of winning two Purina Awards in the same year solidified the powerhouse abilities of FC-AFC Hockley Creek's Switch Hitter handled by owner Robby Bickley of Gainesville, Texas. "Mickey has the focus, drive and intelligence to win, and importantly, we have a huge bond contributing to how well he works with me," Bickley says. "Mickey is my third competition dog, and he has accomplished the most in the least amount of time." Bred by Joe O'Brien and James Roberts, both of Tulsa, Oklahoma, Mickey was sired by NAFC-FC-AFC Texas Troubadour out of FC-AFC Dance Hall Gal.

The superstar male earned 35.5 points from three wins and 12 placements in Open stakes, outperforming 1,353 retrievers, and 42.5 points from five wins and 12 placements in Amateur stakes, topping 1,517 retrievers. During the year, Mickey won a double-header at the Brazosport Retriever Club in Walden, Colorado, and was a Finalist at the 2019 National Amateur Retriever Championship. Mickey is a two-time winner of the Purina Amateur Award, having also won in 2017.

A rock-steady, consistent performance powered November Morning Rain to the front of the game to win the Purina Outstanding Derby Retriever Award. "Rain is so easygoing, you don't realize her potential until she retrieves. Rain's consistency under three handlers wowed us," says owner-handler Karen Nelkenbrecher of Maple Ridge, British Columbia, Canada, who shared handling duties with her husband, Nolan, and pro trainer Dan DeVos of Baypoint Kennels in Port Rowan, Ontario, Canada. Bred by Tim and Julie Higgins of Longview, Washington, Rain was sired by FC-AFC Waluke Stryder out of Skookum Creek's Another Chapter MH. The sire is the nephew of Nelkenbrecher's first Labrador Retriever, a special dog who got her into the game.

The bird-focused female proved her natural ability by earning 88 points from 13 wins and 21 placements out of 28 Derby stakes besting 831 retrievers vying for the award. Among her Derby career highlights, Rain was a Finalist at the 2019 National Derby Retriever Championship and achieved a record 125 combined points in the U.S. and Canadian Derby circuits. She also was the Canadian High Point Derby Dog in 2019, earning the title Top Canadian Junior Dog with 37 points tallied from six wins out of 10 starts.

Mickey and Rain and their owners and handlers were honored in March at a celebratory dinner in Thomasville, Georgia. Both Purina Award winners are fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula. ■

Circle of Champions

TOP-WINNING FEMALE MINIATURE SCHNAUZER IN BREED HISTORY IS 'TWINK'

Twinkling her way to fame by lighting up the ring with charisma and spirited joviality, a 3-year-old salt-and-pepper Miniature Schnauzer named "Twink" is the all-time winningest female in breed history. Handled by Jorge Olivera of San Marcos, California, MBIS/MBISS GCHP Carmel Sky High Wish Upon A Star has earned eight Bests in Show, making her the third all-time winningest Miniature Schnauzer behind her uncle, GCHP Allaruth Just Kidding V Sole Baye, who had 35 wins, and her great-grandsire, CH Regency's Twist of Fate, with 13 wins. "Twink is a dream dog with a lot of personality," says Carma Ewer of Salt Lake City, who owner-handled the dog to her championship title at 8 months of age. Ewer co-bred the litter with Susan Coulter of Central Square, New York. The No. 1 Miniature Schnauzer in all systems in 2019 and 2020, Twink has won 15 Bests in Specialty Show. Her sire, GCHG Allaruth Carmel Still Kidding V Sole Baye, was the No. 1 Miniature Schnauzer in 2015 and 2016. Owned by Marilyn Jacobs of San Francisco, Marilyn Lande of Phoenix, Silvia G. Soos-Kazel of Syracuse, New York, Ewer, and Yvonne Phelps of Del Monte, California, Twink is fed *Purina Pro Plan FOCUS Sensitive Skin & Stomach Salmon & Rice Formula*.



PHOTO BY TYLER CRADY

Miniature Schnauzer "Twink" took Best of Breed at the 2019 and 2020 Westminster Kennel Club Dog Shows and placed third in the Terrier Group at the 2019 AKC National Championship.

ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIEL NAMED 'ZACHARY' IS THE 2019 HIGH POINT OPEN WINNER



A serious-minded bird dog named "Zachary" showed consistency, intelligence and authority to become the 2019 High Point Open English Springer Spaniel. Handled by Mike Wallace of Cross Junction, Virginia, FC Salmý's Zachary From Windy Ridge stood out with his outstanding bird-finding ability, control around game, driving flushes, and precision retrieves. The 6-year-old liver-and-white male won three trials in the spring season at North Texas, Central Virginia and Central New England, and then went on to run 13 trials in the fall season, placing in 10 of them with two wins and finishing the year with 45 points. "Zachary is a powerful dog who works aggressively and knows he has a job to do when running birds," says Wallace, who became a full-time pro handler in 2007 after growing up in the sport. Zachary is the stud puppy from a male whom Wallace trained and handled, NAFC-FC-CFC-CAFC Salmý's Master Piece, the 2012 English Springer Spaniel National Champion. Owned by Jack Waggoner of Decatur, Texas, Zachary is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula*.

Proving his consistent ability, "Zachary" took top honors as the 2019 High Point Open English Springer Spaniel.

WINNER OF THE 2019 QUAIL CHAMPIONSHIP INVITATIONAL IS POINTER NAMED 'MACK'

The winner of one of the most challenging all-age horseback stakes in the country, the Quail Championship Invitational held December 2019 in Paducah, Kentucky, is a 7-year-old white-and-liver male Pointer called "Mack." Handled by Randy Anderson of Cross Country Kennels in Vinita, Oklahoma, and owned by Jay McKenzie of Eureka, Kansas, Valiant, as Mack formally is known, delivered a powerful performance with stamina, style and speed producing multiple covey finds. The top 12 all-age dogs in the country took part in the highly competitive Quail Invitational, running in one-hour braces for two days and two-hour callbacks the third day. "A dog has to be prepared to win the Quail Invitational," says Anderson, who won his third with Mack, having previously won in 2002 and 2013. "Mack always had bird-finding ability and composure on game but was slow maturing in his ground range. He has come into his own in the past year, a true Cinderella story." Mack was sired by Miller's Happy Jack, the winner of 42 field trials, including seven championships and seven runner-up championships, who also sired National Champion Miller's Dialing In and is the grandsire of National Champions Dunn's Tried N True and Miller's Speed Dial. Mack is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula.

An outstanding year came together for "Mack," a Pointer, as the winner of five championships, two of which were endurance stakes, plus two first places and three placements in field trials.



CHINESE SHAR-PEI NAMED 'JOAN' IS NO. 1 NON-SPORTING DOG



Named for Joan Rivers, this showy Chinese Shar-Pei is a fast achiever who became a show champion at 10 months of age.

A 5 ½-year-old red fawn female lovingly called "Shar-Perfect" by her handlers Tiffany and Shea Skinner, "Joan" is the No. 1 Non-Sporting dog and No. 1 in the breed. Bred by Russell and Lori Crowe of Weston, Ohio, and owner Mara Snyder-Davis of Valley Center, California, MBIS/MBISS GCHG Broken Rd's Can We Talk At Prunehill CGC started the year at a face pace winning Bests in Show in January at the Sand to Sea Non-Sporting Association of Southern California, Puyallup Valley Dog Fanciers and Tualatin Kennel Club shows. The winner of 21 Bests in Show, Joan took her first back-to-back Group Firsts at 11 months old at the Kennel Club of Pasadena shows in 2015. "Joan is a once-in-a-lifetime dog, the best I've owned in over 35 years," says Snyder-Davis, who asked Shea Skinner to special her dog three years ago. Six months into the campaign, Tiffany Skinner stepped in as handler when her husband was delayed in a breed ring and she proceeded to win the Group "Joan looked perfect for her," says Shea Skinner, who became the top Non-Sporting junior handler in the country in 1994 with CH Prunehills Encore. "Joan gives it her all every time in the ring," says Tiffany Skinner, who has become smitten with the dog who will retire to live with the Skinners. The standout Chinese Shar-Pei is fed *Purina Pro Plan FOCUS* Sensitive Skin & Stomach Salmon & Rice Formula.

TOP WINNER IN GUNDOG BRACE, SPO & LARGE PACK TRIALS IS BEAGLE NAMED 'ROMO'

A consistent, rabbit-tracking hound named "Romo" has proved his versatility, focus and endurance as a top winner in gundog brace trials, small pack option (SPO) and large pack. IFC FCLP Maravic's Romo is a 5-year-old open-marked bluetick 15-inch male Beagle bred, owned and handled by Vic Costanza and his son, James Costanza, both of Frankfort, New York. "Romo wins by staying with the rabbit, and he is very smart and knows when to gear up and when to gear down," Costanza says. The winner of the New York Consistency Award in 2018 for his yearlong performance in the 10-club large pack hare association, Romo also won the Iroquois Beagle Gundog Association Consistency Award in 2016-2017 for standing out in the 23 clubs' SPO trials. A beagler since 1971, Costanza, who was inducted into the Better Beagling Hall of Fame in 2013, started in traditional brace beagling and then got involved in gundog brace, SPO and large pack trials, finishing field champions in all formats. He attributes Romo's keen abilities to six crosses in his pedigree of a top-producing male, IFC Maravic's Blue Ninja, a Hall of Fame inductee in 2012. This high-performance hound is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula dog food.

Noted for his versatility, Romo in April 2017 won a large pack trial at Claremont Beagle Club in New Hampshire, besting 40 hounds trailing hare over five hours, and the next day was high in a class of 22 hounds tracking cottontail rabbits in a gundog brace trial at Berkshire Beagle Club in New Hampshire, ultimately placing third.



'JOANAH' IS NO. 1 ENGLISH SETTER FOR TWO STRAIGHT YEARS



A showy, spotlight-stealing 4-year-old orange belton female named "Joannah" is the No. 1 English Setter for two straight years. MBIS/MBISS GCHG Wingfield 'N Chebaco Here And Now grabbed attention when she won the Michigamme English Setter Club Specialty at 2 years old, besting her sire. Pro Eileen Hackett of Pendleton, Indiana, handled the sire, while junior handler Abigail van Meter, who works for Hackett, handled Joannah to the win. "Joannah thrives on being spoiled and has a great sense of humor," Hackett says. The fun-loving setter captured Best of Winners from the 6- to 9-Month class at the English Setter Association of American (ESAA) National Specialty in 2016 and then won Best of Breed in 2018 and 2019. Bred and owned by Don and Pat Collier of Madison, Georgia, and Hackett, the handler, Joannah was sired by MBIS/MBISS GCHG Wingfield 'N Chebaco Just So You Know, the No. 1 English Setter in 2018, out of CH Wingfield 'N Chebaco Keeping Up Appearances. Her great-grand sire on both sides of the pedigree is MBIS/MBISS CH Chebaco Blames It On Trabeiz, one of Wingfield 'N Chebaco's top-winning males, and her maternal grand sire, GCHP Stargaz'R 'N Wingfield Time Will Tell, is a four-time winner of the ESAA National. Joannah is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula.

English Setter "Joannah" excels with her attitude and love of attention.

'HUGO' IS NO. 1 BOUVIER DES FLANDRES FOR TWO STRAIGHT YEARS

A playful, confident Bouvier des Flandres named "Hugo" drives attention at dog shows with his sweet-spirited, joyful temperament. The No. 1 Bouvier in all systems in 2019 and 2020 and currently the No. 8 Herding dog, MBIS/MBISS GCHS G & W Avalon Ace's Guardian Of Hugo CGC is handled by Larry Fenner of Elk Grove, California. The 4 ½-year-old male took back-to-back Bests in Show at the Greater Sierra Vista Kennel Club shows in November 2019 in Tucson, Arizona. Bred by June Guido and Sherrod McDaniel, both of Lewisville, North Carolina, and Jill Reifschneider of Patterson, California, Hugo is owned by Guido, McDaniel, Shelley Bowman of Lakewood, California, and Steve Wieczor of Lewisville, North Carolina. A breeder of Bouviers under the G & W prefix for 22 years, Guido says, "Hugo represents everything I love about this breed. He is friendly, has an easygoing attitude and loves all people." The maternal side of Hugo's pedigree out of McDaniel's Avalon line has produced three previous No. 1 Bouviers: Hugo's great-grandparents, CH Avalons Aurora and CH Ace's Indelible Mark, and his uncle, MBIS/MBISS GCH Avalon Frontier Sleepinglady Webber. Hugo is fed *Purina Pro Plan FOCUS Sensitive Skin & Stomach Salmon & Rice Formula* and *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula*.



An easygoing Bouvier des Flandres named "Hugo" exudes friendliness and a love of showing while in the ring.

TREEING WALKER COONHOUND NAMED 'BANK' IS THE 2019 PKC WORLD CHAMPION



A 3-year-old male Treeing Walker Coonhound named "Bank" has been rolling in the winnings with co-owner-handler Kevin Cable Jr. of Connersville, Indiana. WCH PCH GR NITE CH CH 'PR' Money In The Bank won the Professional Kennel Club (PKC) World Championship October 2019 in Salem, Illinois, by besting nearly 800 coonhounds in the elimination-style competition and earning \$30,000 in winnings. Prior to the World Championship, Bank won at the Earl Floyd Ford Pro Classic in Carrollton, Kentucky, capturing \$10,000 in winnings. A few weeks after the World Championship, Bank won all three nights at the Pro Classic in Liberty, Indiana, again earning \$30,000 in winnings. Cable bought Bank, who is co-owned by Larry Danner of Sycamore, Ohio, as a started 2-year-old in March 2019. "Not many dogs have done what Bank has done at his age, and being consistent is what he does best," Cable says. The handsome male is handled in bench shows by Cable's wife, Angie. Bank was sired by PCH GR NITE CH GR CH 'PR' Big Money, a 9-year-old who won \$61,000 during his career and is a top producer who gives his progeny independence and accuracy on trailing. Bank is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula*.

A handsome Treeing Walker Coonhound named "Bank" stands out in Professional Kennel Club nite hunt competitions.

Please visit the Circle of Champions on the *Purina Pro Club* website at purinaproclub.com to read about top-performing show and sporting dogs powered by *Purina Pro Plan*.



PPCP PROGRAM BENEFITS UKC COONHOUND PARENT CLUBS

The hardworking nature of coonhounds can be seen as they move through the woods trailing the scent of raccoon. Hounds maneuver across creeks and swamps, prairies and fields, eventually their fast-paced race turns to tall trees as they track the nocturnal creature to the safety of its den.

The widespread prevalence of ticks across America, particularly in wooded and grassy areas, and the dangers of tick-borne diseases to dogs have put coonhound enthusiasts on high alert for ways to safely enjoy their sport. As coonhound parent clubs seek knowledge about ticks, many are earmarking funding to support the AKC Canine Health Foundation's (CHF) Tick-Borne Disease Research Initiative.

"Since ticks are becoming more common, our members want to learn how to prevent infections and contribute to research aimed at helping diagnose and treat tick-borne diseases," says Chad Smith, president of the American Black & Tan Coonhound Association.

This United Kennel Club (UKC) parent club and others are working to identify research to support using monies from their participation in the Purina Parent Club Partnership (PPCP) Program. On the American Black & Tan Coonhound Association website is information about how members can help fundraise for research. For every \$100 in Purina Points a member earns, Purina donates \$10 to the parent club.

Since it began in 2002, the PPCP Program has raised over \$8.2 million; in 2019, the 195 clubs participating in PPCP earned \$249,907. The program provides funding directly to participating parent clubs and to their Donor Advised Fund at CHF. Funding is based on the annual submission of proofs of purchase of qualifying Purina pet products from parent club members who are members of Purina Pro Club and who designate their participating parent club to receive credit for their submissions. Pro Club members

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also earn credit for their qualifying proofs of purchase in their individual Pro Club accounts. The Tick-Borne Disease Research Initiative, introduced by CHF in 2016, has provided funding for 10 research grants so far, and more are slated to be funded in 2020. Studies focus on how to diagnose, treat and reduce the spread of ticks and their pathogens. Lyme disease, or borreliosis, the most common tick-transmitted disease in the U.S., is being studied, as well as bartonellosis, ehrlichiosis and American canine hepatozoonosis.

The Treeing Walker Breeders and Fanciers Association also plans to fund research of tick diseases. "Lyme disease and other tick-borne diseases are among our top concerns. We lean on supporting research that ultimately will help our hounds be healthier," says treasurer and longtime president Alan Kalal.

Two other UKC coonhound parent clubs, the Bluetick Breeders of America and the National Redbone Coonhound Association, share concerns about tick-borne diseases. When multiple clubs unite to support research, it increases funding overall and adds resources such as samples from participating affected and normal dogs to study.

Other health areas of interest cited collectively by the coonhound clubs are:

- Heartworm preventive resistance
- Thyroid disease and whether it may relate to missed heat cycles in bitches
- Hip dysplasia
- Blastomycosis
- Eye disease such as cataracts

"The PPCP Program means a lot to our club because it gives us the ability to work with the CHF and try to get some of these diseases figured out," says Kalal with the Treeing Walker Breeders and Fanciers Association. ■

Note: If your club is seeking information about your Donor Advised Fund at the AKC Canine Health Foundation or research grants to support, please contact Andrea R. Fiumefreddo, Director of Programs & Operations, at 919-334-4022 or andrea.fiumefreddo@akcCHF.org.

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Breed Snapshot

BARBET: A FLUSHING & RETRIEVING WATER DOG

A French water dog, dating to the 16th century, the Barbet (pronounced Bar-bay) was particularly adept at flushing and retrieving game in freshwater marshes and wetlands, yet also was a devoted farm dog and companion. The French term “muddy as a Barbet” described the work ethic of this sociable, well-loved breed.

An ancestor of the Briard, Bichon Frisé and Newfoundland, the Barbet takes his name from the French word “barbé,” meaning beard. This rustic, medium-sized breed has balanced proportions with a substantial head and long, sweeping tail. His thick, wooly coat protects from cold temperatures but also requires considerable grooming. Nearly extinct after World War II, the Barbet thrives today due to the efforts of a few loyal enthusiasts who adored the breed’s joyful, intelligent nature.

A newly recognized breed by the American Kennel Club, the Barbet became eligible to compete in the Sporting Group on Jan. 1, 2020. The eager, agile Barbet excels in activities such as lure coursing, agility and dock diving and benefits from a consistent training regime. Males are 21 to 24 ½ inches tall and weigh from 45 to 60 pounds, and females are 19 to 22 ½ inches tall and weigh from 30 to 45 pounds. The versatility of the Barbet as a sporting dog and beloved family member endears the breed to all.

Sources: *The Complete Dog Book*, Official Publication of the American Kennel Club, and website of the Barbet Club of America (barbetclubofamerica.com)



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