



PURINA

Today's Breeder

A Nestlé Purina Publication Dedicated to the Needs of Canine Enthusiasts

Issue 75



BREEDER PROFILES

Long Gone Kennels
Belle Creek Bichons

Feeding for Performance
Conditioning the Complete Dog
Herding Trials at Purina Farms

The READERS' PAGE



ShaMira Shiloh Shepherd breeder Jan Forman, right, and Leslee Slater are shown with, from left, "Sasha," "Nuella," "Surge," "Shadow" and "Shanna."

I would like to share this photo of my ShaMira Shiloh Shepherds taken last fall at the IABCA (International All Breed Canine Association) Dog Show at the Purina Event Center in Gray Summit, Mo. I have been breeding Shiloh Shepherds for four years. Over the weekend at the IABCA show, we won four Bests of Breed, Best of Opposite Sex, Best Bred by Puppy and Reserve Best in Show Family Group. I feed all my ShaMira Shiloh Shep-

herds *Pro Plan Selects* dog food because it contains natural ingredients. Since I have been feeding *Selects*, I have noticed my dogs' coats are shinier, and the dogs seem to have more energy and are more alert. Even my picky eater likes *Selects*. Thanks, Purina, for making such a wonderful dog food!

Jan Forman
ShaMira Shilohs
Kalamazoo, MI

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2012 National Specialties at the Purina Event Center

Event	Date
Leonberger Club of America	Mar. 30 - Apr. 1
*American Belgian Malinois Club	Apr. 9 - 15
United States Australian Shepherd Association	Apr. 21 - 27
**Alapaha Blue-Blood Bulldog Association	Apr. 28
Japanese Chin Club of America	Apr. 28 - May 1
**Irish Wolfhound Club of America	Apr. 30 - May 3
Kuvasz Club of America	May 3
Miniature Australian Shepherd Club of America	May 7 - 13
*Irish Water Spaniel Club of America	May 8 - 11
American Rottweiler Club	May 19 - 27
Australian Terrier Club of America	May 30 - June 3
*Saluki Club of America	June 5 - 9
Norwich Terrier Club of America	June 15
The American Water Spaniel Club	July 17 - 21
Golden Retriever Club of America	Sept. 2 - 8
Ibizan Hound Club of the United States	Sept. 20
Finnish Spitz Club of America	Sept. 20
English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association	Sept. 24 - 29
Labrador Retriever Club	Oct. 8 - 12
*Australian Cattle Dog Club of America	Oct. 13 - 19

*Portion of event will be held outdoors.

**Event will be held outdoors.

The Purina Event Center is a \$15 million, state-of-the-art facility custom-made for all-breed and specialty dog shows. It is located at Purina Farms in Gray Summit, Mo., about one hour from St. Louis. For information about scheduling an event, contact Kaite Flamm, Purina Event Center Manager, at 888-688-PETS (888-688-7387) or by e-mail at kaite.flamm@purina.nestle.com.

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Keith Schopp, Vice President, Public Relations

Barbara Fawver, Manager, Pet Influential Communications, Editor, *Today's Breeder* magazine, and Breeder, Brace Beagles

Adam Williams, Senior Communications Specialist, Pet Influential Communications

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The success of Long Gone Kennels in Stark, N.H., is rooted in Lloyd Murray's endless passion for English Setters and hunting wild birds. A third-generation bird dog enthusiast, Murray focuses on producing some of the finest cover dogs in the sport.

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Physical conditioning helps make the difference in the conformation ring for dogs and handlers. Regimens that include exercise, casual play and rest are necessary to prepare show dogs for the rigors of weekend dog shows, where sometimes only the fittest prevails.

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Top sporting dog trainers and handlers ensure excellent nutrition is part of their program. Feeding a performance dog food with a proper balance of protein and fat and allowing enough hours before competition for complete digestion are part of the equation honed by experts.

24 BELLE CREEK'S TIES THAT BIND

Bichon Frise breeders Lorrie Carlton and her veterinarian husband, Larry Letsche, of Plymouth, Mich., have bred and finished 146 show champions. While their love of the breed enriches their partnership, it is her grooming and handling expertise and his veterinary knowledge that has helped make them successful.



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On Our Cover

7XCH Long Gone Madison is a 7-year-old English Setter bitch owned by Lloyd Murray of Long Gone Kennels in Stark, N.H. "Maddy" is one of the top-heralded English Setters ever to compete in field trials. Cover photo by Adam Williams. See story on page 4.

The Obsession of Long Gone



STORY AND PHOTOS BY ADAM WILLIAMS

As the sun dips behind the White Mountains in northern New Hampshire, 7XCH Long Gone Madison slips through the gate of the backyard at Lloyd Murray's farmhouse. Without seeing which way she ran, Lloyd knows where "Maddy" has gone. He knows his dogs well, and his dogs know two things: grouse and woodcock.

Long Gone Farm is on 15 acres outside Stark, a former paper mill town. This thinly populated country is shaped by wooded, undulating terrain that buffers residents from the bustle of cities, major highways and consistent cell phone signals. The area is heavy with birds that find cover amid sprawling state and national forests and surrounding properties, all open land for hunting. Within this bird dog's paradise, Maddy has raced off, a streak of white with black ticking. She didn't need, however, to go far.

As expected, Lloyd spots the 7-year-old bitch a couple of hundred yards away in a field of green and yellow grasses surrounded by pine trees. She is pointing a chukar that had been released in a demonstration for a visitor an hour before. Though alone in the field, Maddy shows the discipline that has made her a seven-time champion, one of the top-heralded English Setters ever to compete in field trials. She stands rigid, her feathered tail erect in the golden light, coolly eyeing the bird that dawdles under a bush merely feet away.

This is why Lloyd moved north from his roots in southern New Hampshire 25 years ago. The land and wild bird habitat afford boundless opportunities for him and his setters to fulfill their passions.

Lloyd maximizes his availability for leisure with the Long Gone setters. A chef who trained at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, R.I., Lloyd

has owned White Mountain Chalet, a catering company and event hall in nearby Berlin, N.H., for 24 years. He works long hours on weekends, especially during the spring and summer wedding season, but reserves time to walk miles through the woods with his dogs on weekdays and during fall and winter. As he walks, he listens for the faint sound of the brass bells they wear around their necks to signal their locations in the woods. Lloyd



Lloyd Murray trains his English Setters, from left, Long Gone Conway, CH Long Gone Boston, CH Long Gone Buckwheat and 7XCH Long Gone Madison, on his 15-acre farm in Stark, N.H.



"Maddy," a 7-year-old bitch, shows the focus and discipline that has made her one of the top English Setters ever to compete in field trials.



Backed by "Boston," Maddy points a chukar. She wears a brass bell on a collar in the field, as do all Long Gone setters. Known as "cover dogs" because they hunt in thick, woodland ground cover, the bell signals the dog's location.

hunts on seemingly endless acres of unposted land where the beauty of mountain lakes and rivers, moose and wild birds, such as grouse and woodcock, abound.

"The alders, conifers and young aspens make for great cover for wild birds," Lloyd says. "You've got to know cover to be successful when hunting. The thousands of paper mill-owned acres that have been cut around us are growing back and have created an ideal situation.

"We live in a bird dog mecca," he adds. "It's why I moved Long Gone Kennels here. To do this right — breeding, hunting and winning field trials with great dogs — you have to be committed to it."

The Best Bloodlines

Commitment to Long Gone Kennels has been a three-generation endeavor that began with Lloyd's grandfather, R.B. "Bernie" Murray. "Bernie was obsessive about bird dogs, like I am," says Lloyd. "My dad, Lloyd Sr., had English Setters and Pointers.

"One of my earliest memories of hunting with them was when I was young enough I only carried a BB gun. When I'd shoot it, my grandfather would call me by my nickname and say, 'You got it, Sam. You got it.' When I was a little older, my mother would let me skip school every

year on opening day of grouse season. Bird dogging has always been a great passion in my life."

Lloyd's wife, Tammy, has supported that passion since they went to a field trial on their first date. In the years since, their daughters, Ruth Anne and Colleen, have come to know fall as the season not only when leaves change colors, but also when bird dog enthusiasts and their strings of dogs gather at Long Gone Farm.



Lloyd gives attention to Maddy and "Connie" in the enclosed one-acre backyard at Long Gone Farm.

Professional trainer and handler Dave Hughes of Grampian, Pa., and his training partner Ryan Frame of Clearfield, Pa., where Hughesview Kennels is located, are regular guests. They stay at Lloyd's farm for 10 days each July and August. In September and October, they use the farm as a home base as they travel to walking field trials and go hunting in Vermont and New Hampshire.

Lloyd credits Hughes as the trainer and handler who has propelled Long Gone to the pinnacle in the sporting setters' world, but that success has come in no small part due to the foundation laid by Bernie.

A Hall of Fame trainer and handler of English Setters, Bernie died in 1992. He got his first setter as a teenager, then built his knowledge and honed his skills during 76 years of hunting and competing with the breed. He also mentored many in the sport.

“Bernie imparted his breeding philosophy to me,” Lloyd says. “He was particular about the dogs. He wanted solid dogs with good structure. They needed to have a friendly disposition and be fancy. He taught me that success begins with breeding, that if you don’t have a good bitch, then you won’t get good dogs. We have no brood bitches. We want an accomplished bitch for breeding.”

Long Gone males have made their mark on the breed, too. CH Long Gone Stokely, winner of the 1979 North American Open Woodcock Championship and Runner-Up Champion in the 1980 International Amateur Woodcock Championship, produced one of Bernie’s favorites. Stokely’s Diablo Ace was the top-producing sire of champion cover dogs, a term describing dogs that hunt in thick ground cover. Offspring of “Ace” won or were runner-up champions in as many as eight major grouse or woodcock championships a year from 1991 to 2001.

“You can’t micromanage the process for success,” says Lloyd. “Talent evaluation and development only comes after breeding good sires and dams. We don’t leave the gene pool, so we’re not going to get aggressive dogs or dogs that don’t want to handle because that’s not in the pool. A lot of it is common sense. I don’t like to gamble, so we take the guesswork out of it.”

That gene pool includes more than 50 years of breeding with the well-known Commander bloodline. One of Bernie’s early field trial winners was Flight Doctor, whelped in 1949 out of Flight Commander Sue. In the 1970s, 2XRUCH Long Gone Sam (“Sam”), whose double great-grandsire was CH Commander’s Hightone Beau, would become a cornerstone in Long Gone’s breeding program.

“Our breeding with the famed Commander bloodline from time to time is like making a French puff pastry,” Lloyd says. “You do it with many, many layers. We have kept mixing the Commander blood into our breeding program. The Commander setters have always been known for being intelligent, good at finding birds and tolerating the high heat that exists where the bloodline comes from in Texas.”

Long Gone’s breeding program respects the past but expects new generations to lead the way for the future. Not a strong believer in frozen semen breeding, Lloyd looked to CH Long Gone George to carry the mantle of his sire, Ace, when the time came. A strapping male with an ornery, independent streak, “George,” whose great-grandsire was Sam, had potential Lloyd and Hughes knew was worth developing. George not only is one of the few dogs to place in championship grouse events in all three grouse regions — Lake States, Northeast and Mid-Atlantic — in the same year, he also became a great producer.

George sired CH Magic’s Rocky Belleboa, the 2007 winner of the Michael A. Seminatore Cover Dog Award, which is given to the top English

Setter Cover Dog in the U.S. and Canada. George also produced Long Gone Murphy (“Murph”), who sired CH Long Gone Buckwheat (“Buck”), an up-and-coming dog at Long Gone Farm.

“Field trials are about perpetuating the best bloodlines,” he says. “If we’re not producing better dogs each generation, we’re doing something wrong.”

Building a Dynasty

Lloyd watches as Maddy points a bird in the field that he maintains for training near the farmhouse. CH Long Gone Boston, a muscular, tricolor 5-year-old, backs the point, head high, nose tilted to the cloudless sky.

“Boston’ holds his head high like his mother, 8XCH Long Gone Agnes,” says Lloyd, “and she did it just like her father, 5XCH First Rate.”



Having taken the bell collar off Maddy, Lloyd lifts her into the kennel in the back of his truck for the short drive back to the Long Gone farmhouse.

Almost two years apart, Maddy and Boston were whelped by “Aggie,” who has produced seven champions. 6XCH Cracklin’ Tail Speed sired Boston, and 5XCH Grouse Ridge Reroy sired Maddy. Among Aggie’s many field trial highlights was her 2001 win at the inaugural Bernie Murray Open Shooting Dog Stake. Aggie won the Northeast Open Grouse Championship twice and the New England Open Grouse Championship three times. In 1999, she won the Seminatore Award and the William Harden Foster Top Cover Dog Award, which Purina has sponsored since 2006 to honor the top grouse and woodcock dog in the country.

Aggie cemented the working relationship between Lloyd and Hughes. What started in the mid-1990s with Hughes handling CH Long Gone Pumpkin led to competing with George. The success that followed with Aggie confirmed it was a good owner-handler match, each with strengths he brought to the team.

“Lloyd has a very good eye for talent,” says Hughes. “He already had won three championships with Aggie as an amateur, and then I put another five on her. Lloyd has always had a great breeding program. His dogs are the ones to beat. They hunt all year long in a great area for wild birds. Lloyd has built a dynasty.”

Long Gone Kennels consist of four indoor-outdoor runs, which accommodate Maddy, males Boston and Buck, and a female puppy Buck sired named Long Gone Conway (“Connie”). Lloyd happily keeps his string small, focusing on breeding, selecting, training and winning with what he views as the best dogs the highly regarded Long Gone bloodline can produce.

Lloyd breeds a litter each year or two, setting up a whelping box in a back door entry area off the living room and kitchen in the farmhouse. His stud dogs, however, breed several bitches a year. CH Long Gone Nixon (“Nick”), the first male English Setter to place in the North American Woodcock Futurity and the Grand National Grouse Futurity, and Murph are kept for stud services by Kelly Shepherd of Rainbow Kennels in Waverly, Ohio.

Lloyd keeps only one or two puppies from those breedings each year. He raises the puppies and hunts with them in the North from spring to fall. In the winter, the dogs can run on plowed roads for 45-minute exercise sessions. Lloyd usually goes for 10 days to Cape Cod, Mass., or to Hoffman, N.C., where he joins Hughes, who spends a month there training dogs. Another winter option for Lloyd is hunting with friend Todd Kalter of Rutland, Vt., at Kalter’s farm in South Carolina. Kalter co-owns the 14-month-old Connie and 3-year-old Buck.

“It’s good to have a team effort like that,” Lloyd says. “It upgrades the quality of Todd’s hunting dogs and gives my dogs training on wild birds year-round.”

When the puppies have matured, Lloyd passes them to Hughes, who takes over their training for field trials. While Lloyd’s ambition always has been to produce great dogs, he says his partnership with Hughes gives Long Gone the one thing other competitors don’t have: “the best trainer and handler in the country.”

Hughes has been a professional for more than 40 years. In that time, he has handled 11 Grand National Championship winners, but that is the only number he divulges about his tremendous success. “I’m superstitious,” he says. “Tooting your own horn is the kiss of death.”

Cover Dogs

Trained as bird dogs in England more than 400 years ago, the English Setter is well-suited for hunting birds, such as grouse and woodcock, in woods and thick cover ground. The term “cover dog” describes these dogs that hunt in heavy cover.



CH Long Gone Boston

Lloyd, however, heaps praise on Hughes.

“Dave is the Michael Jordan of our cover dog sport,” Lloyd says. “Long Gone’s success wouldn’t be half what it is without him. The man was born to be a dog trainer. I’d done OK before we started working together, but this has been a match made in heaven. We’ve produced winners together for six or seven generations of dogs.

“The key is to use your trainer as a resource like you would a stock broker or a doctor. Don’t go to your trainer and tell him what the dog needs. Ask him what the dog needs then be willing to follow that plan.”

As a result of Lloyd hunting year-round and reinforcing Hughes’ training methods, all the dogs at Long Gone contribute winners’ hardware early and often to the kennel’s walls, which are thick with plaques.

Maddy became the only dog to win the William Harden Foster award more than once, taking the honor for her third time this past spring. Boston is a two-time champion, having won the New York State Open Grouse Championship in 2009 out of 66 entries with three grouse finds and the Empire Open Walking Shooting Dog Championship this year. Buck won the North American Woodcock Futurity in 2009, becoming the fourth generation to do so, following his dam, CH Long Gone Daisy, his granddam, CH Long Gone Mittens, and

his great-granddam, Long Gone Giggles. Buck also won the 2009 New England Open Grouse Championship. Connie won the New Hampshire Amateur Puppy Classic in April, like her sire, Buck, did two years ago. She also won the Grand National Puppy Classic this past spring.

“English Setters are the best grouse and woodcock dogs of any breed,” Lloyd says. “They run with their heads high and have great coats that protect them in thick cover and the colder climates in the North. They win most wild bird championships. Setters also have lovable personalities. My dogs are sweet family dogs that get along well together. If they weren’t good hunting dogs, they wouldn’t be such good field trial dogs.”

Instinct & Drive

A sports fan, Lloyd likens his string of Long Gone Setters to a baseball team. Success and failure rest on his shoulders as the team’s manager. “I draft the dogs, and I evaluate them,” he says. “If I don’t evaluate them right, then we won’t do well. That makes it my fault if we don’t win, not the judges’ fault.”

The Long Gone team is focused on winning championships and futurities



Lloyd and Maddy pose in front of Long Gone Kennels. Lloyd converted part of the building, formerly a garage, into a heated kennel with indoor-outdoor runs. Inset photo: Lloyd cleans the four-run kennel each morning.

these days. Hughes handles Lloyd's dogs in about eight championships a year. "We used to compete in field trials every weekend," Lloyd says. "We don't do that anymore. We only go for the big ones now, the ones where people will remember who won."

At each trial Lloyd goes to, he watches every hourlong brace, regardless whether his dogs are running. Six braces a day add up to around 15 miles of back-and-forth walking along a trial's wooded course. "Sometimes I am reporting the trial, marshalling or judging it," he says, "but even when I'm not, I'm always interested in seeing what other dogs can do."

Serious about field trials since he started going to them with his grandfather, Bernie, as a young boy, Lloyd views the progression of competition as similar to that in human sports. Puppies start in puppy classics and then progress until they compete to win all-age championships. "It's like someone who goes

from high school to college to the pros," says Lloyd. "Not all dogs do well as puppies, but they may get better with time and experience. Aggie was horrible as a puppy. She went on to become the winningest grouse dog ever."

Puppy trial rules don't require the dogs to point. Rather, they are judged on running style. Long Gone puppies often, but not always, have accomplished both by the time they are entered in trials. "Aggie pointed as a puppy but didn't like to run," Lloyd says. "That's OK. I'd rather see a puppy be short, or not run enough, and point birds than run big and win all the puppy stakes without pointing. I can teach a dog to run. I want dogs that have natural instinct and drive for birds."

He wants a dog with singular, innate focus on wild birds, like when Maddy slipped past him through the gate of the farmhouse's backyard and ran out to the field, simply to point, rock steady with discipline. That moment of intense obsession is all Maddy wants.

Like Ace, George, Murph, Buck and Connie.

Like Bernie, his son, Lloyd Sr., and grandson, Lloyd.

Obsession courses through generations of Long Gone blood. ■



Lloyd feeds Boston and the other Long Gone setters Purina Pro Plan Performance.



Getting a Lift on Herding

BY KAITE FLAMM

HC Double V C-Threepio, a 4-year-old blue merle Australian Shepherd called “Trio,” sits quietly on the side of the field staring at a livestock pen at the end. A flock of Katahdin-Barbados sheep wait to be let out of the pen for the first run of a two-day herding trial.

“In herding, it’s not just about you and your dog working toward a common goal,” says owner-handler Wendy Pinckney of Versailles, Ky. “The equation factors in the handler, the dog and the stock. It can be challenging. The stock moves at free will, yet you and your dog are being judged on how well you control their movement and placement.”

Bettie Kinsley, a herding enthusiast and Manager of Visitor’s Programs at Purina Farms, opens the gate, expertly setting the sheep for the start of the Course A Advanced Run, while her dog, “Joyce,” a Border Collie, holds them steady.

Pinckney nods at Trio to start the outrun. He stealthily casts a pear-shaped formation as he moves toward the sheep, getting wider the closer

he gets so as not to alarm the stock. Trio moves behind the sheep, leaving room to not disturb them.

Already a herding champion, Trio begins the lift — the point when the sheep begin to move under the dog’s influence — from his position behind the sheep. As the sheep start out, Trio herds them along in an orderly, controlled fashion. The run transitions into the fetch, the term used to describe moving stock down the course toward the handler and through the fetch gates. As Trio works the stock, Pinckney gives commands.

“Come bye,” she directs. Trio begins circling in a clockwise direction.

“Way to me,” she calls, as Trio falls into a counterclockwise motion.

Trio is one of 20 dogs competing in the herding trial that is part of the United States Australian Shepherd Association (USASA) National Specialty in May at Purina Farms

in Gray Summit, Mo. Beginning to advanced classes are held for Aussies and all-breed dogs to test their skills herding sheep and ducks.

“Over the years, we have held our Nationals in many states around the country, but we have held six of the past eight Nationals at Purina Farms because of the excellent facilities and amenities,” says Stevens Parr, USASA vice president and this year’s show chairman. “Since our breed is a herding breed, our herding trial is the cornerstone of our Nationals.”

The USASA Nationals herding trial is run on Purina Farms’ lighted A course and 10-acre B course, using the resident herd of 150 sheep. Ducks are provided by a local herding competitor. Purina Farms has supported herding enthusiasts since open-



Tracy Parciak handles “Skye” (MACH Skye’s My Little Blue Heaven, UDX, RAE, HXAs, HSAd, MXP, MJP, NF), a Border Collie, during the United States Australian Shepherd Association (USASA) herding trial held in May at Purina Farms.

ing the herding trial field and buying the sheep about 15 years ago. Local clubs regularly train at the herding course and hold trials using the sheep at no cost.

More than 75 herding events are held each year at Purina Farms. Some events are sanctioned by herding organizations and others by parent clubs. Parent clubs planning upcoming National Specialties at Purina Farms are the Border Collie Society of America, Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America and the American Bouvier des Flandres Club.

Herding trials test the natural instincts and trainability of breeds developed for herding. Dogs are judged on how well they work stock quietly and efficiently, while following commands from handlers. Ten minutes are allowed to complete a run. Handlers start with 100 points. Deductions are taken



Owner-handler Wendy Pinckney poses with her Australian Shepherd, HC Double V C-Threepio ("Trio").

for faults such as stock missing an obstacle or a dog looking away from the stock. Handlers must have 60 points by the end of the trial to qualify.

"Aussies are considered a 'loose-eye breed,' meaning they move stock with their body versus the steely stare the Border Collie uses to work stock," Pinckney explains. "No matter the breed, it comes down to trust. The handler must trust the dog to control the stock, and the dog must trust the handler to direct him where he needs to go."

Among the breeds competing in the USASA Nationals all-breed herding trial are German



CH Carwin's Alex V Rochill ("Alex"), a German Shepherd Dog, moves sheep during the herding competition.

Shepherd Dogs and Border Collies. Tracy Parciak of Wright City, Mo., is competing with her German Shepherd Dog, CH Carwin's Alex V Rochill, HIBds, HXAds, HTAD-IIIlds, HTD-IIIld ("Alex"), who is just three points shy of his AKC (American Kennel Club) herding champion (HC) title.

"My nervous energy affected Alex's performance today," Parciak says. "He ignored a command and herded the sheep to the opposite corner from where they should have moved. I had those three points in mind and used a more stern voice with him than I normally would have. He is sensitive to my tone. It affected his performance."

Meanwhile, the Course A Advanced sheep competition that Trio is competing in proves to be the tightest field with less than eight points separating first and fifth places. In this competition, the dog and handler must move the stock through eight obstacles before reaching an exhaust gate at the end.

The advanced test determines a dog's ability to drive the stock. "Driving goes against a dog's natural default," Pinckney says. "The dog must move the stock away from the handler when it's more innate for the dog to either hold the stock against the fence or bring them back to the handler."

An experienced handler, Pinckney is reserved with her commands and allows Trio to work without constantly directing him. Keeping an eye on the stock, Trio glances toward Pinckney for directions and reassurance that he is moving correctly. Steadily, Trio moves the stock through a drive gate and into a holding pen. He must hold the sheep for a specified time determined by the judge. From the holding pen, Trio begins the cross drive, herding the sheep across the course to the second drive gate. The cross drive must be strategic and orderly.

As he nears the end of the course, Trio successfully moves the sheep along the fence in front of the exhaust gate. Then, he waits on Pinckney to open the gate so the sheep may pass through safely.

"That'll do," she says, letting Trio know he is released from the work.

When the advanced run trial is over, Trio takes Top Five placements in sheep and duck herding. "Trio has great instincts, but he also is a very biddable dog who wants to please me so much that sometimes he forgets to maintain a constant relationship with the stock," Pinckney says. "Every trial I see him rely a bit more on internal validation rather than assurance from me on a job well done. That says progress to me."

Though Alex didn't complete his HC title at the USASA Nationals, he finished the following weekend by going Reserve High in Trial at a St. Louis Herding Club trial. He is the second German Shepherd Dog in the country to become a Dual Champion in conformation and herding.

"The exciting part about herding is that every sheep, every flock and every trial is different," Pinckney says. "I go into each trial hoping that we can still have a good outcome despite the unknowns. Today was a good day, but there's always tomorrow to have a better day." ■

For more information about herding trials at Purina Farms or to schedule an all-breed or National Specialty dog show at the Purina Event Center, please contact Kaite Flamm, Purina Event Center Manager, at 888-688-PETS (888-688-7387) or by e-mail at kaite.flamm@purina.nestle.com. Please visit www.purinaproclub.com/eventcenter to learn more about the Purina Event Center.

Professional handlers Michael and Michelle Scott exercise GCH Spotlight's Ruffian ("Ian"), left, and GCH Northwoods Send Money Honey ("Schatze").



Conditioning

the Complete Dog

Regular bicycle rides along the Chesapeake & Delaware Canal with a couple of finely chiseled show dogs running alongside makes conditioning dogs fun for professional handlers Michael and Michelle Scott of Chesapeake City, Md.

Fresh air and beautiful scenery turn the public access portion of the 14-mile canal connecting the Delaware River and the Chesapeake Bay into a nature outing. Its habitat teems with great blue herons, gulls and sandpipers. One is likely to spot wildlife such as marsh rabbits, muskrats, groundhogs and white-tailed deer.

The Scotts' early-morning treks are two miles down and two miles back at a moderate pace on a hard-packed dirt trail. Holding loosely to leads and watching keenly the dogs' every move, they ride along ready to pick up or cut back their speed according to their exercise companions' body changes.

"The pleasure our dogs feel when they go for conditioning is due to the environment we bike in," says Michelle Scott, the handler of the 2004 and 2005 Westminster Kennel Club Best in Show winners. "Wildlife all around combined with the fresh air truly is uplifting. It is a feeling of euphoria to put on a pair of sneakers, grab the bike and just go for a ride.

"The benefits of such conditioning are important for us for the same reasons as the dogs," she continues. "When we are in the ring running and presenting our dogs, we must be able to move at the same speed as they do. If we cannot, we are inhibiting their performance."

Dog shows are similar to many canine sports, such as agility, field trials and rally obedience, in which handlers also must be fit for competition.

"It makes no sense to have a dog in perfect condition and then a handler who is not," says Michael Scott, who handled the top-winning sporting dog of all time, a Pointer, CH Cookieland Seasyde Hollyberry, and has handled the No. 1 Hound, Non-Sporting and Sporting dogs over 27 years as a professional. "It is a complete picture, dog and handler."

Professional handler Scott Yergin of Woodstock, Ga., whose parents bred and showed German Shepherd Dogs, became fond of the breed as a junior handler. In the 1970s, when he began handling shepherds, it was common for handlers to walk the dogs around the ring. Today, handlers may sprint four miles around a specialty show ring, which can be up to four times larger than an all-breed ring, he says.

"Now, there is more running," says Yergin, who campaigned the No. 1 German Shepherd Dog and No. 2 Herding dog in 2009, Select GCH Shoal Creek's Sangria v Barick ("Ria"). "Judges are testing whether dogs are in condition and whether they are able to go for miles as they would if they were herding or working. The breed must be athletic and functional."

A trotting gait is essential for German Shepherd Dogs. Judges look for dogs that cover a great deal of ground with long strides of the hind legs and forelegs. The outreach should be smooth and effortless.

Since dogs weigh around 90 pounds and bitches around 72 pounds, the

demands of showing German Shepherd Dogs cause some owners to seek handlers to exhibit their dogs. “It is difficult for some people to show their dogs,” Yergin says. “You’ve got to be able to run and make it look easy.”

Handlers who make it look easy know that toned muscles are just part of the formula for getting dogs in prime condition. A dog’s mental acuity factors in as well.

“Exercise is needed for physical and mental well-being,” Yergin says. “Conditioning means not only exercising but also bathing and working the skin and coat, keeping up to date on vaccinations, staying clean from parasites, and practicing good nutrition. A healthy dog in the ring has that extra spark, and that extra spark wins dog shows.”

“The benefits of exercise include increased endurance, and it also makes dogs happy,” says Michelle Scott. “Sometimes in the ring the competition gets stiff, and the judges spend a lot of time ‘working’ a few dogs to make their final decision on how to place a class. This means they move the dogs a lot to look at movement and spend a lot of time watching them stand and be attentive. We find that physically fit dogs with more endurance from their workouts can withstand this type of scrutiny more readily than a dog that doesn’t have the same conditioning.”

A dog with a high endurance level, earned from hard work and exercise, is “Lucky” (AM GCH/CAN CH D’Oro Solido’s Feliciano Uno, CGC), the No. 1 Rottweiler in the country who is handled by Michelle Scott. Debbie Cabe of Annapolis, Md., the breeder and owner with her husband, Harry, lives one hour from the Scotts, so Lucky lives with them except when going to dog shows with the Scotts. Cabe realizes the importance of Lucky being in condition, so she takes the 130-pound, 4 ½-year-old male Rottie to the Canine Fitness Center in Crownsville, Md., where he eagerly swims with a private instructor 30 minutes three times a week.

“Last summer, it got too hot to run Lucky while I rode the ATV (all-terrain vehicle),” Cabe explains. “We started going to the pool to swim. It’s so good for him, and he can swim through the winter. He’s solid as a rock. It has really built his endurance.”

This past spring at the Jersey Shore Cluster, a five-day outdoor dog show in Freehold, N.J., temperatures reached a stifling 90 degrees with high humidity. While other dogs faded in the heat, Lucky had stamina that carried him to winning Best in Show one day and then taking Best in Show in the All Bests in Show competition.

Getting Set to Work Out

Prior to beginning an exercise and conditioning program, it is important to establish a dog’s physical condition. Owners preparing to send dogs with professional handlers are advised to have a veterinary checkup to assess physical condition, test for parasites and make sure vaccinations are current.



“Lucky,” the No. 1 Rottweiler in the country, swims at the Canine Fitness Center in Crownsville, Md. Though Lucky is handled by Michelle Scott, he lives with his owners, Debbie and Harry Cabe, who realize the importance of keeping him in top condition through regular exercise.

“It is a stressful situation for a dog to be sent to a new environment, and stress can bring on problems that may have been sitting dormant,” Yergin says. “Many times dogs can have parasites not detected by the owner, or the owner thinks because he gives heartworm preventive the dog is free of parasites. Before putting dogs into a conditioning program, they must be healthy on the inside.”

Trainers should start exercise programs slowly and build up gradually based on an individual dog’s age, breed and physical condition. Beginning too aggressively with a full workout can do more harm than good.

While the Scotts bicycle many of their sporting, working and hound breeds, toy and small-breed dogs get paired with other dogs in 50-by-

50-foot paddocks for exercise at their home kennel. The breeds that are biked romp and play in the paddocks before and after exercise runs, which occur three times a week with a day between workouts.

As for their method of conditioning, “we bike our dogs at a slow pace for a certain distance,” Michael Scott says. “It is not about sprinting or any type of speed. We believe that there is a certain distance for each dog that is correct, and doing more does not equal better conditioning. The workouts get their heart rates up, but the idea is that this conditioning is fun for them as well. It is a special time we share with the dogs, and they enjoy it immensely.”

Starting slowly with new dogs helps Yergin create a special bond. “When dogs arrive here, it is all about survival for them,” he says. “They are not sure where they are or what the routine is. We let them settle in. It may take days, but soon they ‘make the turn’ and want to be part of the activities. Then, my wife, Loren, starts playing with them, throwing balls and toys, giving them attention.”

Gradually introducing dogs to exercise gives their musculoskeletal systems time to adapt properly. To improve muscle fitness, muscles must

have a reason to adapt, and the clearest reason is fatigue. The biochemical process of fatigue activates the processes that remodel muscles and make them better at an activity. As exercise helps muscles adapt, it also lubricates joints, improves heart health and strengthens the immune system.

The German Shepherd Dogs in Yergin’s program have ample opportunity to self-exercise in spacious pastures that connect to the kennel, a converted barn on the six-acre former horse farm. “New dogs may get a little stiff from running in the pasture if they are not used to exercise,” he says.

Once the dogs are accustomed to their surroundings, Yergin begins road working them to condition their muscles and build endurance. “Shepherds should look as strong at the end of the day as they do at the beginning,” he says. “Road work helps work different muscles and leads to better conditioning. I mix it up with sprinting and then slowing the gait, but I let the dog set the pace. The idea is to improve the gait and train the dog to trot.”

Atop an ATV, Yergin exercises dogs one by one about a mile around an outdoor show ring used for training. Before starting out, dogs are allowed to run freely, which helps warm up muscles. “I always start out slowly with a new dog similar to how a human slowly gets in condition,”



Scott Yergin, a professional handler, conditions CH Tsali Jubilate Raisen Kane at Falkrigia (“Kane”), a German Shepherd Dog, at a trotting pace.

he says. “I watch their pace and whether their tongue is hanging out, looking for signs of soreness. If their pace is slower than normal or they show signs of fatigue, I stop, run cool water on their gut and rest them in a cool place. We pick it up on another day.”

When the ATV workout is completed, Yergin settles into serious conformation training, jogging while he gaits dogs around the grassy show ring. “When Ria came here, her gait was adequate but not floating,” Yergin says. “One year later, she made the Top Ten at the National and could win the breed in specialty and all-breed shows. She had more of a floating gait, and it was easier for her. She won Best of Breed at the Manatee Kennel Club show in January 2009 out of 1,700 dogs and then went Select at the National.”

During exercise, muscle activity is the main internal heat producer. Twenty to 30 percent of the energy expended by the muscles is used for work, and 70 to 80 percent is released as heat. The heat increases body temperature. Conditioned dogs handle heat better than dogs not in shape.

While dogs can tolerate a few degrees of increased body heat for a short period, prolonged heat stress can be dangerous. Since dogs do not have sweat glands, panting and evaporation through the mouth are their primary mechanisms for eliminating body heat.

Careful observation is required during workouts, and scheduling workouts in the coolest part of the day is best during warm weather.

“We never bike our dogs in extreme heat or direct sun,” Michael Scott says. “We choose early morning over evening because the temperature is cooler that time of day.”

Warming up and stretching muscles is a requisite before vigorous exercise. As the muscles warm up, blood flow increases to muscles, joints, tendons and ligaments, helping to reduce muscle or ligament tearing.

Throughout exercise, trainers should monitor dogs for signs of injuries. Even the choice of where dogs work is important. “We do not bike dogs on pavement as that leaves chances for their pads to get scraped, and the pavement is as stressful on the dogs’ joints as it can be on humans,” says Michelle Scott.

Hard surfaces, such as concrete and pavement, can be harmful to handlers as well. Michael Scott suffered a meniscus tear to his left knee last fall when on a five-mile pleasure run by himself. Subsequently, he had surgery to repair the meniscus. More recently, Yergin suffered a meniscus tear to his



Yergin and his wife, Loren, pose with GCH No Kidding of Edan (“Noah”) in front of the horse barn they converted into a kennel. Left: Loren Yergin, shown with Kane, regularly gives playful attention to the dogs her husband handles.

right knee. He initially fell at a specialty show on wet grass, which caused his knee to be sore, and then the following weekend he tore the meniscus while running on concrete.

Proper hydration also is important. “Our dogs have access to water prior to our working them,” Yergin says. “During hot seasons, we cool dogs down with water after working them, but we monitor their water intake.”

“Our dogs are warmed up and cooled down in the paddocks before and after workouts,” says Michelle Scott. “They trot around freely, playing, walking and lounging, whatever they like.”

Down time is essential for the dogs and their handlers to help maintain a healthy state of mind. “Our dogs are at home and in the paddocks every week for at least a few days,” Michelle Scott says. “That time to play and relax is key to a happy dog.

“We follow the same regimen for ourselves. We exercise, plan play time, eat well and get proper sleep. We go out for lunch, wander through our local town window-shopping and plan things that make us well-rounded people. We try not to make our lives revolve entirely around work. Luckily for us, exercise comes naturally, and we enjoy that time to unwind and relax.”

“Exercise impacts many facets of dogs’ overall health, physically and mentally,” Yergin says. “Nothing is better.” ■

Time to Smile & Dream Big

BY SUSAN VROOM

It's 6 a.m. on a Saturday. A slight breeze carries the hum of generators, while the aroma of bacon frying in a motor home rises into the air. Your sensible crepe-soled loafers are damp from grass covered in dew, and across the large field a mist covers the ground. Your stomach has small butterflies winging their way around your insides, and you can't wait for the day to begin. Undoubtedly, you're at a dog show. It's 8 a.m. and anything is possible. The day has yet to unfold and the sense of anticipation is intoxicating.

The dog world is comprised of a vast diversity of people, having a wide range of educational levels, occupational skills and social backgrounds. There are few places where paths cross in such a variety of purpose and direction. Some people are seeking a social outlet apart from family and the workplace. Others, such as vendors and professional handlers, are in their workplace, and yet another group is driven by a competitive spirit that has attracted them for two reasons — their love of competition and love of dogs. The serious breeder is motivated by his expression of art in dog form and comparing his or her dogs with other breeders. Casual participants are likely drawn by the pride of seeing a beloved family pet in the show ring or perhaps the satisfaction of handling their dog in the ring. Nonetheless, we are all joined in a shared space.

A number of books have been written about the psychology of competition, the winning mindset and how best to avoid the losing syndrome.



Susan Vroom handles CH Rufkins Bonnie Reight, the No. 1 Lhasa Apso in 2004.

The content is targeted to aid one in areas of occupational success, athletic goals and single-minded purpose. True enough, in life, there are winners and losers. At times, we have experienced both sides. Technically, dogs and dog shows don't really fit any of these categories, except that somebody takes home the big prize. The unique element is that we are competing with an object of our passion and, for some, of our making from the whelping box through puppyhood and into the show ring. Given the fact that we possess a wide range of motivations for entering into the world of dogs and competition, the potential for things to go awry does exist.

The following suggestions may help you achieve the ultimate enjoyment from your hobby:

- Set Realistic Goals — Establish and define

your ideal goals, bearing in mind that one's goals should be commensurate with affordable time, resources, desire and motivation. Setting a goal that is completely out of line with what is realistically attainable will only lead to discouragement and disillusionment. Be honest with yourself and allow others whom you trust also to be honest with you. Positive attitude is the key to attaining what one sets out to achieve and then learning and refining the skills necessary to be successful in whatever the chosen path. Hoping to succeed and expecting to succeed is a complex concoction that can only be blended by the participant after careful consideration of the visualized goals. Develop a competitive mindset by applying positive principles.

• Understand What Judges Are Looking For —

According to the American Kennel Club rules, a judge is required to judge 25 dogs an hour at an all-breed show. This leaves little room for time-wasting on the part of the exhibitor or the judge. In the course of breed class judging, the judge is looking for the “whole package.” This is: style, breed-specific quality and merit, correct muscle and coat conditioning, grooming, and presentation. One cannot expect to be competitive for a ribbon placement by making a hundred mistakes and causing the judge to take extra time and effort in order to properly and adequately evaluate the merits of your dog. Learn the skills required to present your dog like a professional: enroll in a handling class and practice with your dog so you limit mistakes in your ring presentation. The old adage of getting out what you are willing to put in is good advice.

• Assess Your Own Dog With An Objective Eye — How

does he stack up next to the competition? Is his weight right for his breed, is he groomed and clean? Be prepared, follow directions and allow time to study your judge’s ring procedure before the scheduled time of judging so when your class is called you are mentally and physically ready.

• Think Through Co-Ownerships — One of the most common issues in

our dog community are co-ownerships that, for multiple reasons, do not seem to work out. Before entering into an agreement with another person, make absolutely certain of the terms and conditions. A contract is written to protect each owner. Few people remember the same conversation and what was actually agreed upon several years later. Also, be aware of possible ownership conflicts. Sometimes club affiliations prevent owners from exhibiting at their shows. If you co-own a dog with a member of a club that has such a clause in their show policy, this pertains to you as well. The dog you co-own with the club member may not be entered and exhibited. Better to know in advance whether your co-owner has any restrictions. If you co-own a dog with one who also is a dog show judge, be aware of the rules pertaining to conflicts. You will not be permitted to show any dog to your judge/co-owner for the length of time of your co-ownership. Even if the dog is older, spayed and long past a show career or breeding age, the conflict still exists. Co-ownerships can and do work out successfully as long as the involved parties enter into the agreement thoughtfully put on paper.



Above, from top: Vroom hugs CH Gailbraith's Iron Eyes, a Bouvier des Flandres who was the No. 1 all-breed dog in the country in 1991. Vroom poses with Best in Show winner CH Larimar's Talk Of The Town.

• Read Show Premium Lists — Be sure to take time to read the premium list for the show you have entered. This document is the show manual and information guide that has everything you need to know about the event that weekend: overnight and day of show parking, venue hours for exhibitors on setup day, specific restrictions and conditions of the venue and club giving the show, entry fees, events or services being offered in conjunction with the show, etc. Most, if not all, questions can be answered by reading the show premi-

um list. Show superintendents’ websites have these online if no hard copy is available. Knowing what to expect before you arrive at the show grounds can make life much simpler and certainly less stressful.

• Surround Yourself With Positive People — I don’t have to remind you that there are glass half-full and glass half-empty people. The latter bunch seems to carry around a bucket of ice water to douse everyone else’s good time. Distance yourself from the guy who has only negative vibes to throw your way.

When you are genuinely happy for a friend’s success, you can expect the reciprocal treatment when you win.

There are few, if any, short cuts in achieving a worthy goal. Stay focused on what matters and don’t give insignificant nonsense a home in your head. Smile, dream big, load the van, and go to the dog show. ■

A professional all-breed handler for 32 years, Susan Vroom of Denton, Texas, and her late husband, Corky Vroom, won hundreds of Bests in Show during their career. Vroom considers among her personal highlights her success as a breeder and winning the 1988 Tibetan Terrier Club of America National Specialty with her homebred AM/MEX/INT CH Ashante's Too Hip Gotta Go the same year she won Best in Sweepstakes with his son, CH LanLin's California Cooler. Vroom currently works as an Executive Field Representative for the American Kennel Club. For information, contact Vroom at 940-497-4500 or by e-mail at suevroom@centurytel.net.



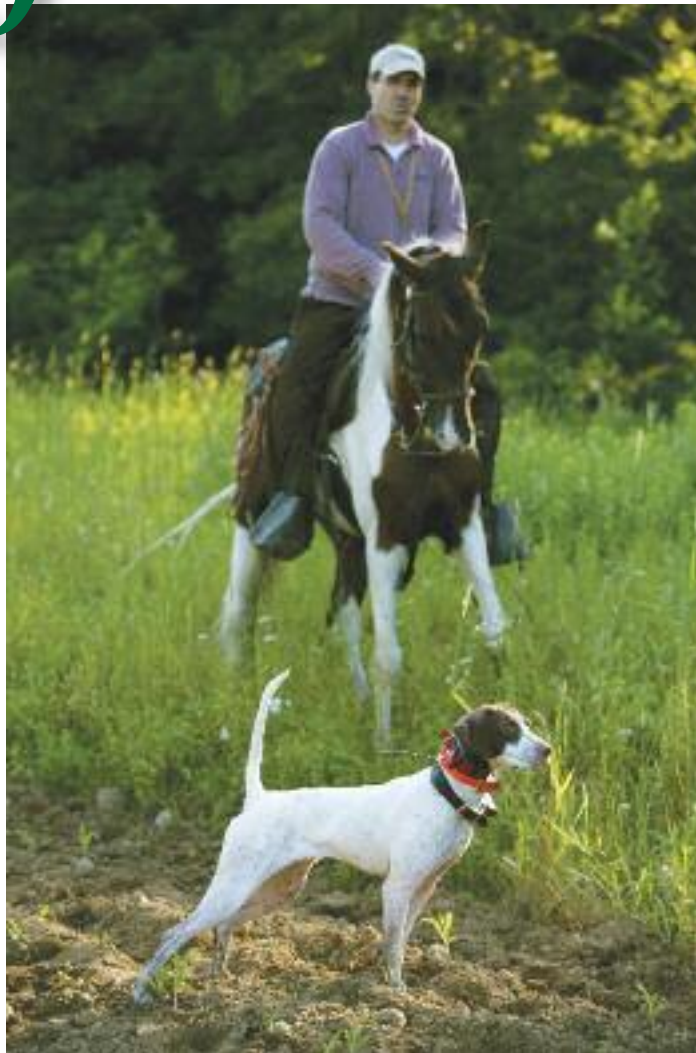
Professional retriever trainer Karl Gunzer sends "Aragon," a yellow Labrador Retriever, on a mark during a training session.

Feeding for *Performance*

The early summer morning glistens from sunlight peeking through hickory and oak trees, dancing on fresh dew. Professional trainer John Stolgitis takes advantage of the coolness of the Rhode Island morning to condition and train his string of Pointers and English Setters. Though it is early, undoubtedly the coolest time of the day, the dogs' body heat rises as they sweep the countryside in search of quail.

Stolgitis, a staunch competitor in walking and horseback quail field trials since 1998, honed CH Beaver Meadow Benjamin, the sire of 50-plus champion progeny, and 13XCH/9XRUCH Chasehill Little Bud, whose wins included three National titles. This year, Stolgitis owned and handled Chasehill Molly, the Grand National Grouse Champion. In trials, his upland bird dogs may range for one hour, sometimes longer, in some of the toughest bird cover in the U.S.

More than halfway across the country in Ronan, Mont., professional retriever trainer Karl Gunzer and his wife, Cyndi, are working Labrador Retrievers, casting them on water and land retrieves. The 600-acre prairie, dotted with lakes and wetlands, is a natural waterfowl habitat, making it the ideal summer training location for Gunzer and his truck of 20 Labradors. A professional trainer since 1994, Gunzer has titled multiple field champions, competing in the last six National Championships with 12 different dogs.



Professional trainer John Stolgitis watches as Richfield Almond Joy, a Pointer owned by Rich Guliano and Erin Stolgitis, points a quail.

“Retriever field trials consist of land and water tests,” Gunzer explains. “In the land tests, dogs exude relatively short bursts of energy, usually in 10 minutes or less. The water series can be 20 minutes or more. Retrievers generally perform at full speed and make no effort to conserve energy or pace themselves. Dogs in better condition have a greater ability to run straight to their birds and

fight environmental factors, such as wind, water and hillsides.”

Though their sports are different, the Labrador Retrievers in Gunzer’s camp and the Pointers and English Setters training with Stolgitis are all hardworking athletes that require optimal nutrition to perform at their best. Both trainers feed *Purina Pro Plan Performance Formula*, a performance dog food containing 30 percent protein and 20 percent fat.

Whereas maintenance dog foods may have from 24 to 26 percent protein and 12 to 16 percent fat, *Pro Plan Performance* has high levels of fat and protein nutrients that help to increase dogs’ capacity to metabolize fat and give them a higher oxygen capacity. Increased fat metabolism and higher oxygen capacity help to increase metabolic capacity and generate energy.

“Dogs need a nutrient-dense food so you don’t have to feed an excessive amount to keep weight on them,” Gunzer says. “Dogs need to be in good physical condition and have a good coat to keep them warm in cold weather and water. I prefer to feed *Pro Plan Performance* because the dogs eat less. With less volume in the stomach, I feel they are more comfortable in the kennel and on the truck.”

“The ultimate goal is to optimize performance,” says Purina Research Scientist Brian Zanghi, Ph.D. “This means feeding a food containing key nutrients in an optimal balance to provide optimal benefits.

This enables dogs to hunt longer and find more game. Food can metabolically prime our dogs to promote optimal endurance.”

Canine athletes have increased metabolism due to their physical activity, which, in turn, increases their need for energy. Based on environmental conditions plus exercise intensity and duration, these dogs’ energy requirements are best fulfilled by a high-energy nutrient-dense food. Fat, the most dense energy nutrient, has 2 ¼ times more energy per gram than either protein or carbohydrate. Luckily, dogs are more efficient at fat metabolism than most species.

“Exercise metabolism for a hardworking dog is best when fat is used for producing energy for muscles,” Zanghi says. “Fat promotes and supports endurance exercise, which is what most hardworking dogs require for optimal performance.”

Nutrition studies have shown that feeding dogs a food with higher levels of fat will result in more fatty acids in the blood before exercise. These fatty acids, important for hardworking dogs that perform endurance-based exercise, can contribute 60 percent or more energy during the first



Proper conditioning and nutrition provide Aragon the energy he needs for the short sprints common in retriever land tests. Gunzer trains Aragon for owner Sherwin Scott.

two hours of exercise. The increased fatty acids continue even after exercise compared to foods with lower fat and high carbohydrates. More fatty acids in the blood mean more nutrients to promote endurance metabolism.

“Fatty acids are used by the muscles to make energy for movement,” explains Zanghi. “Dogs fed a high-fat food have more capacity to use or

burn fatty acids and have a greater capacity to metabolize oxygen. Elevated dietary protein complements the benefits of fat metabolism in the sense that amino acids, the building blocks of protein, promote muscle growth.”

Exercise Nutrition Do’s & Don’ts

Helping dogs achieve an optimal performance involves more than feeding a quality performance dog food. Nutritional do’s and don’ts come from experience and learning from experts. Here are some considerations when feeding a hardworking dog.

- Do not feed a hardworking dog before exercise. Complete digestion takes from 20 to 24 hours. Dogs fed less than 23 hours before exercise could have fecal matter in the colon that could compromise their performance by adding extra weight. Additionally, exercise alters the gastrointestinal transit time and can change nutrient digestion and absorption, resulting in a decrease of oxygen in the gut.

“Generally, performance dogs should be fed a minimum of 10 to 12 hours before exercise,” Zanghi says. “It is best to feed the night before a trial that is scheduled the next morning. When dogs are fed six hours or sooner before exercise, the body’s fat burning enzymes are not optimized, which contributes to reduced endurance and energy generation. Studies have



Early morning sunshine and dew highlight Stoney, as the Pointer locks in on a bird find. Stoney is owned by Elias Richardson.

shown that endurance performance can be as much as doubled when dogs run on an empty stomach compared to having eaten four or less hours before exercise.”

“I never feed dogs the morning of a field trial,” says Stolgitis. “I try to feed 24 hours before they are scheduled to compete. This allows time for them to digest the food and for the nutrients to be available to their bodies for work.”

If a trial is a multiple-day event, dogs should be fed as soon as possible after exercise, allowing adequate time for cooling down, so they have the maximum time to digest the meal before the next competition.

“At a trial I try to keep the same feeding schedule, but it is often not possible during summer trials that run until 7 or 8 at night,” Gunzer says. “On those occasions, I try and feed at least half an hour after the last dog has run unless it is unusually hot.”

- Generally, it is best to feed performance dogs one time a day. As with not feeding dogs before exercise, it is optimal to feed hardworking dogs one time a day so they can completely digest the food.

“I feed once a day unless I have a young dog or an unusually high-maintenance dog that requires a larger portion of food, in which case I feed twice a day with a slightly smaller portion in the morning,” Gunzer says.

“I always try to feed once a day around 4 p.m.,” says Stolgitis.

- Dogs should be fed for ideal body condition. The best way to determine how well a dog’s diet meets his activity level is to examine his physique by putting your hands on the dog and feeling his ribs. Place both thumbs on the dog’s backbone and spread your hands across the rib cage. You should be able to easily feel the ribs. You also should be able to view the dog’s waist behind the ribs, and an abdominal tuck should be apparent from the side.

The amount of food fed should be adjusted to maintain ideal body condition. During the first four to six weeks of conditioning, food quantity should increase but then level off and decline slightly.

Gunzer feeds most retrievers from 4 to 5 cups

of food a day. The adult females weigh around 55 pounds, and the males could weigh up to 90 pounds. “I always measure each dog’s food,” he says. “The proportion fed is changed in half-cup increments to keep an ideal weight. Every dog is an individual. Larger males and young males may require twice as much food as a smaller female. Usually more energetic, highly active dogs require



CH Beaver Meadow Benjamin, a Pointer owned by Stolgitis, is fueled by Purina Pro Plan Performance Formula, a performance dog food with 30 percent protein and 20 percent fat.

substantially more food than a calm, quiet dog.”

- Working dogs should be well-hydrated with plenty of water. Maintaining hydration in working dogs is critical to prolonged endurance and thermoregulation.

“Hydration is important for two reasons,” Zanghi explains. “Exercise is a heat-producing activity, and water is required to help dissipate heat. About 60 percent of heat dissipated by dogs during exercise is through water evaporation in the respiratory tract.

“Water also is needed to remove the byproducts of energy metabolism. This may be the most important determinant of endurance and performance. Though dogs may be distracted by the environment or their work, they should be encouraged

to drink water during extended periods of exercise.”

“Trial dogs need to drink lots of water to replace water lost during exercise,” says Gunzer. “Though retrievers do not have the opportunity to drink while they are working, they are given access to water immediately after they run. Dogs also have free access to fresh water in their kennel at all times.”

“Hydration is very important,” agrees Stolgitis. “First, it helps keep dogs cool so they can continue to perform, and it helps keep them from breathing so hard so they can work effectively. I hydrate my dogs during workouts. I give them cool water to drink before the 10-minute mark, and then I try again usually 10 minutes later. I give them water at 30 minutes, and then they can usually go an hour if not in extreme conditions.”

- It is best to feed hardworking dogs a performance food year-round. A performance food — such as *Pro Plan Performance* — fed throughout the year helps to maximize training and conditioning.

“In order to keep weight on dogs and get a strong performance, you need to feed a quality product,” says Stolgitis. “Whether you are a serious field trial competitor or a hunter, nutrition is a key part. *Pro Plan Performance* is good because it is a high-quality food that allows dogs to perform at the highest levels.”

“I feed *Pro Plan Performance* year-round,” Gunzer says. “Any time I have a dog in training, they are working and need the nutrition provided in *Performance*. Besides the high-quality nutrition and digestibility, nothing compares with *Pro Plan’s* palatability. It is a great food for my dogs to compete at the highest levels.”

Only weeks remain before the start of the fall field trial season. Gunzer and his retrievers and Stolgitis and his upland bird dogs will soon be traveling across the country to competitions. Though there are many uncertainties — factors like weather conditions and injuries — one thing is certain: Their hardworking athletes will benefit from being fed a high-quality performance food that offers optimal nutrition to support an optimal performance. ■

A Y R W E N ' S DREAM COME TRUE

A spunky, fawn-and-white Smooth Coat Chihuahua named "DeeDee" personifies a big dog in a small package in a big way. In her third year on the campaign trail with breeder-owner-handler Gloria Johnson, the 4-pound 4 ½-year-old has become a pro.



Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Ayrwen Starkissed Delight ("DeeDee") has been the No. 1 Chihuahua in the country since 2009.

Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Ayrwen Starkissed Delight is a typey Chihuahua with typey temperament. In other words, she depicts the breed standard to a tee, and she acts like a terrier. The winner of 15 Bests in Show, DeeDee doesn't mind standing alongside Great Danes, Golden Retrievers or any other breed bigger than she.

Ready with DeeDee's favorite toy — a yellow toy duck — tucked in her armband, Johnson brings out the best in her dream dog. "DeeDee has given me the opportunity to show at a level I only dreamed of attaining," Johnson says. "I realize how fortunate we are to have her."

The No. 1 Chihuahua in the country since 2009, DeeDee is a two-time winner of the Chihuahua Club of America (CCA) National Specialty and two-time Best of Variety winner at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. She has won 21 Bests in Specialty Show and one Toy Best in Show. Her show wins have accumulated, making her the top-winning Chihuahua bitch in history.

Only eight years ago, Johnson and her husband, Art, bought their first show Chihuahuas from breeder Pat Regnier in Rochester, Minn. "We went

to buy one, a little girl, but when Art saw the little male, he said, 'We've got to have him,'" recalls Johnson. "They were Smooth Coats from different litters."

The little male, "Ricky," snuggled his way into Art Johnson's heart. Though professional Jim Lehman handled Ricky to his majors, Art John-

son went in the ring with the dog at most shows. AM/CAN CH Regnier's Lake Michigan Wave quickly finished in the U.S. and Canada.

Meanwhile, Johnson started her dog show career handling "Tricksy," who earned 7 points before retiring to the whelping box. "She just didn't care for shows," Johnson says. In her first litter, an out-cross breeding sired by CH Dartan Grand Slam, Tricksy produced the Johnsons' first homebred champion, AM/CAN CH Ayrwen Way To Go Joe.

Married 38 years, Gloria and Art Johnson met in junior high school in Bovey, Minn. In their early married life, they dabbled in showing Golden

Retrievers and Toy and Miniature Poodles, pets they owned at various times. Since they frequently moved — 11 times over 13 years — the Johnsons never had a chance to get grounded in the sport. That changed when Art Johnson, an executive with Sherwin-Williams, was transferred to Holland,



Art and Gloria Johnson pose with, from left: Ayrwen Desert Storm, WD ("Tank"), CH Ayrwen Star Queen of Ayrwen ("Paddy") and DeeDee.



Six-week-old Ayrwen Chihuahua puppies play in the Johnsons' yard.



Highlights of DeeDee's career, handled by breeder-owner-handler Gloria Johnson, include winning, clockwise from top left: Best of Breed at the Evergreen Chihuahua Club Specialty; Best in Show at the Minneapolis Kennel Club Dog Show, her first back-to-back Best in Show weekend; Best of Breed at the Atlanta Chihuahua Club Specialty; and Best in Show at the Saginaw Kennel Club Dog Show, her 13th Best in Show.

Mich., in 1999. The Johnsons finally could get serious about dogs.

They began asking questions about breeding and whelping, taking advice from Regnier and Darwin Delaney, who bred "Grand Slam." They started attending dog shows, watching and learning from professional handlers. They practiced at home and enrolled in conformation classes.

"We've been very fortunate that so many people along the way have helped us," Johnson says.

Art Johnson agrees. "Going to a show is like going to school," he says. "There is always something to learn and a better way to do things. It helps when you love your breed, the competition and showing as we do."

Art Johnson created Ayrwen to be their kennel name. "Ayrwen sounded like a fairy-tale word," he says. "It has been such a fit for us. We have been fortunate to have had success since our first homebred champion, but when DeeDee was born, we began to realize a fairy-tale story."

In 2005, the same year Tricksy's litter was born, the Johnsons bought two puppy bitches from Delaney. "Paddy," a Long Coat, and "Sammy," a Smooth Coat, did well with Johnson as their handler. CH Dartan Star Queen

of Ayrwen took Best of Winners in the Long Coat variety at the 2005 CCA National Specialty after winning Winners Bitch from the 9-to-12 Month Puppy Class. CH Dartan Samantha of Ayrwen took Best of Opposite Sex at the 2006 CCA National Spring Specialty and was ranked among the Top Ten Smooth Coats in 2007.

DeeDee was one of two pups from Paddy's first litter. It was a line-breeding back to Paddy's grandsire, Grand Slam. "When DeeDee was a puppy, nothing bothered her, except she didn't care for the leash," Johnson says. "She would scream and have nothing to do with it. At one point, I thought maybe she wouldn't make it as a show dog.

"When she was 6 months old, we took her to her first show (Saginaw Valley Kennel Club) at Birch Run, Mich., and she won the BBE (Bred By Exhibitor) Class, Winners Bitch and Best of Winners for a 5-point Major. I knew she was nice and would probably finish, but I had no idea how special she is."

Since 2005, the Johnsons have bred or shown 20 champions. Johnson considers among her top honors being one of five people nominated for the 2010 Best Owner-Handler Award presented by *Dogs in Review*.



Art Johnson handles Ayrwen Desert Storm, a Long Coat male Chihuahua, to Best of Winners and Best Bred By Exhibitor at the 2010 Chihuahua Club of America National Specialty under judge Sandra Goose Allen.

The Johnsons breed one to three litters a year with a focus on quality. "The breed standard is our goal, but we strive to produce more than just pretty heads, the defining characteristic of the breed," Johnson says. "We also want dogs with outgoing, solid temperaments, following the standard's call for terrier-like temperament."

All their Ayrwen Chihuahuas are fed *Purina Pro Plan* Chicken & Rice Puppy Formula mixed with *Purina Pro Plan Selects* Natural Salmon & Brown Rice Formula and a tablespoon of *Pro Plan* Canned Entrée. The toy dogs are fed

one-quarter cup of food two times a day. "Chihuahuas like variety," Johnson says.

Though DeeDee will retire in 2012, other Ayrwen Chihuahuas are waiting their turns in the ring. Undoubtedly, DeeDee has left a mark not only on her breeders' hearts but also in the breed with her significant contributions.

"All my life I have wanted to do this," Johnson says. "It is a dream come true." ■



Lorrie is shown with her current
Specials, clockwise from top:
"Roxy," "Turbo" and "Governor."

Belle Creek's TIES THAT Bind

BY BARBARA FAWVER



Larry Letsche snuggles with a Bichon puppy after giving him a bath.

Cradling 7-week-old Bichon Frise puppies in his arms, veterinarian Larry Letsche smiles proudly. Six fluffy white powder puffs, the latest litter of Belle Creek Bichons, are being carried to the minivan for a quick ride to the Remrock Farms Veterinary Services clinic for a day of puppy play while their owners work.

Twenty-five years ago, another litter of Belle Creek Bichons took credit for the accidental meeting of Larry and his wife, Lorrie Carlton. “Lorrie had brought the puppies in to be cared for by the boss of the clinic,” Larry says. “He was not in, so she got me.”

A fancier of Bernese Mountain Dogs, Larry had pined for a show-quality Berner. Lorrie, a second-generation professional handler, found Larry his first show dog from a breeder in New York. Three years later, in 1989, the couple were married.

“She needed a vet, and I needed a handler,” laughs Larry.

All jokes aside, their mutual respect for each other has shaped the success of their 22-year marriage and working relationship. His veterinary knowledge and her dog show experience are the ties that bind.

“Lorrie was my first mentor in both Bichons and the world of purebred dogs,” Larry says. “Her best advice was to become an all-around dog person by watching other people and other breeds at dog shows. I think this advice has made me a better dog person.”

Having bred and finished 146 champion Bichons over the past 32 years, Lorrie will tell you that she is a perfectionist born under the astrological sign of Virgo. Her fastidious nature contributes to her workaholic 60- to 80-hours-per-week schedule.

Bustling around Remrock, where three days a week she grooms clients’ dogs and her own for dog shows, Lorrie is grooming Belle Creek’s current Specials, “Governor,” “Roxy” and “Turbo,” who are going different directions this weekend in late May. Professional handler Amy Booth is taking Roxy (CH Belle Creek’s Razzle Dazzle), the No. 1 Bichon bitch in the country, to the Cincinnati shows. Lorrie is showing Turbo (CH Belle Creek’s Flight to Deja Vu), ranked No. 8 in the breed, at the Kalamazoo, Mich., cluster, and Governor (CH Glenliegh Gangs N’ Roses), who took a 5-Point Major in May at the



Lorrie Carlton cuddles the only female in a recent litter of six puppies.

Bichon Frise Club of America (BFCA) National capturing Winners Dog and Best of Winners, is headed to Tennessee to be handled by professional Ellen Perry.

Remrock Farms Veterinary Services is a converted ranch-style house that was Lorrie and Larry’s first home. Its purpose changed when Larry quit the clinic he worked at when they met to go solo. Situated on 12 acres in rural Plymouth, Mich., the clinic shares its name with the prefix Larry uses for his Bernese Mountain Dogs, a combination of the names of his first two show dogs, “Remmie” and “Rocky.”

As she clips Turbo’s coarse, dense coat, expertly scissoring the rounded



Larry carries 7-week-old Bichon puppies to the minivan for a ride to his Remrock Farms Veterinary Services clinic for a day of play while he and Lorrie work.

look of the Bichon head, Lorrie explains that the Bichon is the only breed that is 100 percent sculpted. The intense grooming has taken a toll, causing her to have two carpal tunnel surgeries, the first in 1986, followed by a second in 1996. These days, dogs are prepped for her by an assistant, who bathes and blow dries the coats.

A friendly family atmosphere pervades at Remrock, partly because more than half the staff is related. Lorrie and Larry's niece, Saundra Luttermoser, is the veterinary technician. The receptionist is Becky Vagt, and her sister, Kim Rehberg, assists with grooming. Karen Weaver prepares dogs for grooming. All are passionate purebred dog owners with seven breeds among them.

The clinic's clients include dog show judges, handlers and breeders. Plaques, rosettes and bronze figurines won at dog shows decorate the clinic and speak to Lorrie and Larry's accomplishments as professionals. Photographs of memorable dogs, some winning National Specialties and all-breed shows, symbolize special moments.

Animal lovers at heart, Lorrie and Larry's two Arabian horses and a small herd of pygmy and alpine goats graze leisurely on the clinic's pastures. Thirteen cats — four rescue cats Lorrie took in to help a local cat rescue — complete the menagerie.

"I've been fortunate to have a gift with animals," Lorrie says. "I either learned it or was born with it. My parents were breeders and owned a kennel,



A self-described perfectionist, Lorrie meticulously scissors the coat of "Fred," a 4 1/2-month-old Bichon puppy, at home in her kitchen.

so I started walking by holding onto a longhaired Weimaraner named 'Heidi.'"

George Carlton was a pharmacist who raised Weimaraners for dog shows and field trials, winning the National Amateur Championship in 1957. People who bought his puppies would ask him to kennel their dogs when they went on vacation. This led to Carlton opening a boarding kennel, which he named Belle Creek after a creek that ran through the two-acre property in Livonia, Mich. Lorrie's mother, Roberta (Carlton) McDonnell, managed the kennel. In 1967, Carlton retired from his pharmacy job and began handling clients' dogs professionally. Grooming services were added at Belle Creek.

Sharing her father's love of animals, Lorrie spent time helping in the kennel. She handled an

Old English Sheepdog for a client of her father's when she was 11 years old and groomed her first client's dog, a Cocker Spaniel, in a pet trim when she was 14 years old. "When I was about 16, our groomer left us, and my mom asked me if I would like to groom," she says. "Mom is an artist. She said, 'I will be your eyes.'"

When Lorrie was in high school, her mother arranged for her to be released early from classes to groom dogs at the kennel. Self-taught on grooming Irish Setters and Old English Sheepdogs, Lorrie groomed her first Bichon when she was 19, the same year she bred her first litter out of her father's Weimaraners.

Lorrie's father introduced her to professional handlers Dick Cooper, Jack Funk and Clint Harris, from whom she learned tricks of the trade. "Jack, a non-Bichon person, gave me some of the best advice about grooming," she says. "He told me to get a picture in mind of the dog I liked the most and then trim to that picture."

By the age of 21, Lorrie had become an AKC (American Kennel Club) licensed handler. She handled a Bichon, CH Jadeles The Kid HH Pride ("Sam"), for Naomi Makowiec and won her first Best in Show at the Marion (Ohio) Kennel Club show. That Best in Show was the first recorded for a Bichon from Michigan.

"Naomi was my earliest mentor," Lorrie says. "She showed me many ways to dry a Bichon coat."

In 1979, Lorrie's parents sold the boarding kennel to her. Since her first litter was Weimaraners, it was "only natural for me to keep their kennel name," she says. The Belle Creek name also was stamped on her professional handler services.



Larry, a veterinarian, examines a Wirehaired Dachshund patient at his veterinary clinic. Inset photo: Plaques, rosettes and bronze figurines won at dog shows decorate the clinic's reception area.

Ten years later, when Lorrie married Larry, she sold the kennel but continued to work as a professional handler. She handled a Borzoi named "Rose" (Multi-BISS CH Fox Run's Ivy Rose), for owners Ron Mater and Joanne Hack, to Hound Group Firsts at the Westminster and Detroit kennel club shows in 1993. The No. 1 Borzoi in the country that year, Rose holds the record for the most Specialties won by a bitch, which includes winning the 2002 Borzoi Club of America National. "Rose did things most Borzois don't do," Lorrie says. "She baited in the ring and came when she was called. She was such a pleasure to be around."



Photos of Lorrie with early dogs are, from top: "Freckles," an English Springer Spaniel at her father's kennel; "Rose," the No. 1 Borzoi in 1993; and "Trader," a Bouvier des Flandres, a Best in Show winner who won the BMDCA National Specialty in 2000. Lorrie, who began breeding and showing Bouviers in 1981, was fond of Trader as a puppy, so Larry traded his ear cropping service for the litter to surprise her with him.



After Rose's campaign, Lorrie continued to work as a professional handler, but she scaled back to focus on showing her own dogs and working at the veterinary clinic. "I was so worn out from the constant travel," she says.

Bichons from the Beginning

A variety of breeds, mostly hounds, non-sporting and herding dogs, consumed Lorrie's time and attention as a handler, but it was the Bichon that stole her heart. "They are the most charming, appealing little white dogs," she says. "The Bichon is an independent, intelligent dog with a happy temperament. They love human company."

Makowiec, her early mentor, bred under the Dedebe prefix. Lorrie helped breed several Dedebe litters for Makowiec, even raising the puppies. Another early influence was Clover Allen of Diandee Bichons. "She helped me with the vision of the face and what to think of when I was trimming it," Lorrie says.

Recognized by the AKC in 1973, the Bichon was a fairly new breed when Lorrie won Best in Show in 1976 with Makowiec's dog Sam. A hypoallergenic breed that sheds little, the Bichon is long-lived, with an average life span of 15 years.

Photographs of Lorrie and her first Bichons show a longer coated dog with longer hair on the ears, a grooming style that began to transition in the mid-1990s to the familiar rounded, sculpted look. The art of grooming a Bichon, Lorrie learned, is "a matter of accentuating the good and decreasing the bad. Coats are different, and there is no perfect dog."

Breeding proved challenging. "Bichons do not breed true," Lorrie says. "They tend to be long and low or tall and square. The breed standard states they should be

one-quarter longer than they are tall. They should have a rounded top skull and round eyes. Their eyes and nose form an equilateral triangle."

In 1978, Lorrie bought a male Bichon, the pick puppy of the litter, from breeder Jean Rank, who gave her permission to use her kennel name. CH Rank's Raggedy Andy, the first dog Lorrie bought, became her foundation sire. The winner of the 1981 BFCA National, Andy held a Top Five ranking for five years.

"Andy" was a great show dog, house pet and foundation stud," Lorrie says. "He also was a good watchdog who saved me from a fire that a friend accidentally started while I was sleeping. Andy woke me up



Among Lorrie's winning Bichons are, from left: "Sam," her first Best in Show winner in 1976; "Andy," the first Bichon Lorrie bought and the winner of the 1981 BFCA National Specialty; and "Shelby," the first Belle Creek Bichon Best in Show winner.



A family portrait taken in Lorrie and Larry's living room includes, from left, "Torino," a Bernese Mountain Dog, Roxy, "Lucy," Turbo, and "Donald," a Whippet.

about 1 a.m. when the house was filling with smoke. I was able to get all the dogs and myself out safely."

"Andy was an outstanding Bichon," Larry agrees. "Lorrie had him before my time. I only knew him in his later years, and he lived to be over 18 years old. He is one of the oldest, coolest, sweetest Bichons I have ever known."

A devoted Bernese Mountain Dog lover, Larry was becoming fond of Bichons. "I call Bichons 'weasel dogs' because they weasel their way into your heart," he says.

He and Lorrie began traveling to weekend dog shows, finishing their own class dogs and sending Specials out with professionals. Winning from the Bred-By-Exhibitor class was, and continues to be, their goal. "This class says it all more than any other class," Lorrie says. "If we don't have consistently good breeders, we don't have good dogs to show in any class."

Andy was bred to a bitch Lorrie bought from Evelyn Koziel, CH Raelyn's Deliah, producing two outstanding bitches in one litter — CH Belle Creek's Prima Donna and CH Belle Creek's Pride 'N Joy. They were the first homebred Bichon bitches to exemplify the qualities that Lorrie and Larry wanted for Belle Creek.

An outcross breeding in 1993, sired by CH Dove-Cote's Mr. Magoo, ROMX, out of CH Ceejay Mid Nite Surprise, produced a bitch that became their first Best in Show winner. CH Belle Creek's Beyond Compare

("Shelby") also was the first Bichon Larry handled at a BFCA National Specialty, winning the Open Class in 1995.

Another bitch, CH Belle Creek's Aggravation, ROMX ("Hilde"), was bred to Multi-BIS/AM/CAN CH Sterling Rumor Has It, a top-producing sire, giving Belle Creek the first three of 12 champions she would produce in four litters. Those three pups were: "Ripley" (CH Belle Creek's Seeking Gold), a male Larry finished; "Smiley" (CH Belle Creek's Winning Colors), a Top Ten Bichon from 1999 to 2001; and "Darcy" (CH Belle Creek's Ounces A. Bounces), a bitch who became a top producer.

Stud dogs that have contributed to the Belle Creek bloodline include CH Beau Monde Drewlaine Deluxe ("Parker"), the sire of 18 champions. Parker was bought from Richard "Rick" Beauchamp, who bred the top-producing sire in history. CH Belle Creek's Latest News, a male sired by the 2001 Westminster Best in Show winner, CH Special Times Just Right, produced seven champions.

On the bitch side, CH Belle Creek's Risgae Glory Be was named Dam of the Year in 2008 by the Bichon Frise Club of America. That year, five of her progeny finished, putting her in a three-way tie with a Bulldog and Standard Poodle for the Non-Sporting Dam of the Year.

"An old rule of thumb is that a great bitch rarely reproduces herself," Lorrie says.

"A nice bitch, but not an outstanding bitch, ends up the best bitch in this breed," Larry adds.

Structure, health and temperament are the key attributes that Lorrie and Larry aim to produce. "You cannot separate the importance of type, temperament and soundness, and breeding healthy Bichons is imperative," Lorrie says.

Lorrie passes on to judges what makes a proper Bichon as chairwoman of the judge's education committee for the Bichon Frise Club of America. The 35th most popular AKC breed, based on registrations, the

The Merry Little Circus Dog

Known for his merry temperament, the Bichon Frise carries his plumed tail jauntily over his back. The breed originated in the Mediterranean, descending from the Barbet or Water Spaniel, from which came the name Barbichon that later was shortened to Bichon. In the late 1800s, the Bichon had become a "common dog" that ran in the streets, accompanying organ grinders and performing tricks at circuses.

Belle Creek Bichon breeder Lorrie Carlton adores the breed's charming, affectionate temperament. "Bichons are happiest when they are part of a family," she says. "They have an independent spirit, yet are intelligent, bold and lively."



CH Glenliegh Gangs N' Roses

Bichon was overbred in the 1980s due to a fad. “As a result, some Bichon lines are not as social or easily trained,” Lorrie says.

A Well-Rounded Life

After a busy day at Remrock, Larry and Lorrie load the minivan with 12 Bichons, ranging in age from 7 weeks to 9 years old, for the ride to their home only a few miles away. As they open the door of their timber-frame style house, a 5-year-old Bernese Mountain Dog named “Torino” (CH Odessa’s Let the Games Begin) welcomes them. A 1 ½-year-old Whippet named “Donald” is the other non-Bichon breed who lives with them.



Lorrie and Larry pose with “Stella,” a 9-year-old Bichon and beloved house pet.

Perennial gardens with bird houses and baths provide a relaxing setting. Both outdoor lovers, Larry frequently slings a Nikon D5000 digital camera around his neck for photographing wildlife, and Lorrie takes in bird watching. Other favorite pastimes they share are attending the theater and traveling. They have visited all 50 states and taken trips to Kenya and the Nile River in Egypt. Lorrie works jigsaw puzzles, and Larry follows his favorite sports teams, which include the Michigan State Spartans.

Their well-rounded interests are rooted in their love of Bichons, a passion that leads them to finishing about 10 champions a year. Individual responsibilities make their partnership strong. Larry oversees breeding, whelping of litters — always in their home — and health testing for hip dysplasia, patellar luxation and eye examinations for Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) certification. Lorrie trains puppies and grooms the Bichons for shows. They both handle dogs in the ring.

They rely on *Purina Pro Plan Sensitive Skin & Stomach Formula*, mixed with *Pro Plan Sensitive Skin & Stomach Salmon & Rice Entrée*, to provide optimal nutrition for their adult dogs. Puppies are fed *Pro Plan Chicken & Rice Puppy Formula*. “We’ve fed *Pro Plan* for the last 15 years,” Larry says.

“It has been a great success for our breeding program.”

Lorrie agrees. “*Pro Plan* provides the omega fatty acids that are important for healthy coats. It is a complete diet.”

Plopping a 4 ½-month-old Bichon puppy named “Fred” on a towel placed on the kitchen island, Lorrie proceeds to stack the puppy. “He is just learning to take food from my hand,” she says. “He’s not comfortable yet, but it takes time. Fred is very food motivated.”

Puppy training never starts too early, although “it is something that can be overdone,” Lorrie says. “I like to separate my puppies from their dam between 4 and 5 weeks of age and then from each other around 7 weeks. This gives them independence and makes them respond to me much earlier. At that point, they get structured lessons and lots of play time with us.”

Fred’s dam is “Lucy,” one of the 12 house dogs. Campaigned by professional handler Lisa Bettis, Multi-BIS CH Belle Creek’s I Love Lucy, now 5 years old, retired from dog shows in 2009, but not before taking Best of Opposite Sex at the Garden two times. She also won two Bests in Show, the first at the Grand Traverse (Mich.) Kennel Club Dog Show handled by Lorrie after Bettis won three Groups.

“Lucy is a character in every sense of the word,” Lorrie says. “She keeps everyone smiling.”

Another house dog is “Stella” (CH Belle Creek’s X-Tra Special). A 9-year-old beloved pet, Stella takes a matronly role with the puppies. She was diagnosed with lymphoma last January, but after undergoing chemotherapy, the cancer is in remission. “Stella travels everywhere with us,” says Lorrie. “She is our everything — our house dog, herding dog, retired show dog, obedient dog. She greets everyone at our clinic and is great therapy for those who have lost their own pets.”

Shifting her focus back to Fred, Lorrie moves him into a steady, standing position and then begins clipping his coat. Over and over, she makes short clips, sculpting the textured outer coat into the beautiful rounded shape that defines the Bichon. “I am a perfectionist,” she concedes for the second time, “and my own worst critic.”

That perfectionism along with Larry’s knowledge and expertise has made all the difference. ■



Governor watches as Lorrie mixes *Purina Pro Plan Sensitive Skin & Stomach Formula* and *Pro Plan Sensitive Skin & Stomach Salmon & Rice Entrée*. She feeds adult Bichons, which weigh about 10 pounds half-cup of food a day.



The Path to Nite Hunt Success

BY RON TAYLOR

Achieving success as a top coonhound breeder, owner, trainer and handler is a years-long process. It requires patience and dedication to incremental improvements in the hounds and yourself. Though a top dog can be bought and placed with a top handler to compete in nite hunts, breeders who build upon many years of experience enjoy the personal satisfaction that comes from developing homebred winners.

Ron Taylor heads into the woods with Texas Ridge Lucky, left, and Son's Northern Blue Bingo.

Almost 40 years ago, I set a goal of competing in nite hunts at the national level. Then, I aimed to win those championships. When I began, there were few registered hounds in competition. In the early 1970s, I started breeding for dogs with qualities that improved my chances in competitions and did so with registered ones. Quality hounds, ones that are independent, intelligent and driven, make it easier to succeed.

Besides breeding dogs that are better-suited for nite hunts, I dedicated myself to training and conditioning the hounds and to building my knowledge and skills as a breeder and handler.

Over the years, the sport has evolved. As a breeder and handler, I've necessarily changed with it. For example, dogs and handlers used to walk together through the woods. Now, the hounds range farther much faster, and a handler must assess the dog's performance by hearing rather than sight. Also, every couple of years the rules of nite hunts are reviewed by a committee and modified. Flexibility to respond to such changes through breeding and training is crucial for continued success.

By their nature, hounds are pack hunters. When I began in the sport, pleasure hunting meant taking as many as six hounds into the woods. By the late 1970s and early 1980s, when nite hunts gained popularity, dogs were being rewarded more points for independence. Goals of breeding have shifted because of such changes in nite hunts. I now pleasure hunt and train with one or two hounds at a time. When competing, I want my dogs to think for themselves and tree coons first.

It took me around a decade of trials and errors, learning from others and my dogs, to reach the level I wanted. After each nite hunt I'd ask myself: "What did I do tonight that caused me not to win?" I call those "\$30 lessons," having paid the entry fee to learn from mistakes in competition. It took that time and experience for me to thoroughly understand the rules of nite hunts and how to create the best opportunities to succeed within those rules. After that, the wins started coming.

After years of breeding and learning how to

consistently win nite hunts, you reach a plateau where improvement of the dogs becomes tough to do. You've achieved a great bloodline of dogs, and the goal becomes to maintain it.

A few weeks ago, a bitch of mine whelped the 10th generation of Texas Ridge Blueticks. It was around the time of my fifth generation of Bluetick Coonhounds that I started to feel like they were as



"Lucky" and "Bingo" bay up a tree during a training session.

good as the dogs anybody had produced. I shifted my focus to sustain that bloodline.

Though I'd done well with the first couple of generations, producing one or two good dogs out of each litter, the breeding became consistent around the fourth or fifth generation. That's when whole litters resulted in top-caliber puppies.

Because independence makes the difference in competition, I breed for dogs that perform consistently every time I turn them loose in the woods, no matter what other dogs in the cast do. I don't care if the other dogs tag along behind mine, but I want my dog hunting independently.

Just as I established my foundation stock using others' quality hounds, others now enhance their bloodlines using my dogs. That's another sign of accomplishment as a breeder, and achieving that

comes from proving the hounds' abilities in the field. I take pride that dogs influenced by my Texas Ridge bloodline are doing well at nite hunts around the country.

Another way to achieve goals and make a lasting impression on the breed and sport is to mentor younger breeders and handlers. Most of the time, young competitors who are serious about the sport gravitate to the experienced nite hunters they admire. That's part of how I learned. When you're new to the sport, you want to learn from those who have set the benchmarks for success. You see what they are achieving and decide that is where you want to be. Eventually, I put my own twist on what I learned, as do those who learn from me. I pass to them what has helped me — knowing the value of a good bloodline and recognizing talent.

I've breeder-owner-handled the World Championship Bluetick at the World Hunt, and I'm still aiming for the overall win. If I never win the World Hunt as a handler, I will be proud to see a dog out of my Texas Ridge bloodline reach that pinnacle or to see someone I've mentored do it. Those are added ways for me to achieve the goals I've worked so long and hard to accomplish.

For me, as for each breeder and nite hunt competitor, the path to success depends foremost on the honest answers to these two questions: Do I have the ability to win, and am I willing to do what it takes?

When the answer is "Yes" to both questions, it's time to set goals and start the challenging process to achieve them. ■

Ron Taylor of Texas Ridge Bluetick Kennel in Gosport, Ind., is a breeder-owner-handler who has finished more than 50 Nite Champions and Grand Nite Champions, including the 1993 and 2010 Purina Outstanding Bluetick Coonhound. Over the past 49 years, Taylor has won all major UKC coonhound competitions, except for twice placing second at the World Championship. He is past president of Bluetick Breeders of America. For information, please contact him at texasridgebl@bluemarble.net.

On Behalf of Upland Conservation

Recently named the national dog food sponsor of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever, Purina and Purina Pro Plan brand dog food is partnering with the largest nonprofit organization in the country dedicated to upland habitat conservation and one in which seven of 10 members own dogs.

“Pet nutrition and care is very important to our members,” says Howard Vincent, president and CEO of Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever. “Even more important, our members support our conservation efforts with their pocketbooks and their volunteer time. It’s important to them that companies do the same, and Purina is one of those outstanding examples.”

Purina will support Pheasants Forever, and its quail conservation division, Quail Forever, at the corporate level and its 700 local chapters across the U.S. and Canada. The organization is dedicated to the conservation of pheasants, quail and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public awareness, education and land management policies and programs. With more than 130,000 members, Pheasants Forever promotes a grass-roots effort in which local chapters determine the use of locally raised conservation funds.

As part of the sponsorship, Purina will be a featured exhibitor at the annual National Pheasant Fest & Quail Classic, scheduled for February 2012 at the Kansas City (Mo.) Convention Center. Purina experts will provide seminars on bird dog training and nutrition for hardworking dogs. The trade show, the largest in the country for pheasant and quail hunters and bird dog enthusiasts, features wildlife conservation, upland game bird hunting, and wildlife habitat management and restoration. Purina also will provide nutrition and dog training information in the organization’s monthly electronic newsletter,



On the Wing, and in the *Journal of Upland Conservation*, published by Pheasants Forever, and the *Journal of Quail Conservation*, published by Quail Forever.

“Purina is pleased to once again sponsor Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever,” says Bob West, Director of Purina’s Sporting Dog Group. “This is a great fit because Purina and *Pro Plan* provide top-notch nutrition for

hardworking dogs. We’re excited about the opportunity to share the latest information about canine nutrition, conditioning and training.”

The agreement renews Purina’s longtime — more than two decades — support of Pheasants Forever, which was founded in 1982 by avid pheasant hunters and conservations. Quail Forever was launched in 2005.

AKC Launches iPhone App

Imagine judging or watching a dog show and wanting to know the proper gait or conformation for a particular breed of dog. With a new iPhone application, called “AKC Dogs,” it is now possible to easily access the information.

Downloadable through iTunes for \$2.99, the AKC Dogs app is a portable encyclopedia loaded with information about breeds recognized by the American Kennel Club (AKC). Users may view photos and illustrations plus learn profile and breed standard data. Fun facts and breed histories are included. The app allows users to search for breeds by Group, add favorite breeds and share information with friends via e-mail or Facebook.

“The AKC Dogs app is for anyone who loves purebred dogs and wants to learn about them,” says Lisa Peterson, AKC director of communications. “While watching a Dachshund being judged at Westminster this year, a woman sitting next to me asked about the breed standard for the head. I

pulled out my phone and used the new application. We were able to review the standard and apply it to a dog while the show was going on.

“Judges are allowed to consult the breed standard while in the ring,” she continues. “Being able to use the iPhone app to look up information is more convenient than thumbing through pages in binders. The app also is useful for puppy buyers wanting to learn about breeds that fit well with their family and lifestyle. Owners can look up information about their breed, particularly their grooming and exercise needs.”

Behind Shar-Pei Fever

The thick, wrinkled skin that distinguishes the Chinese Shar-Pei also is the cause of familial Shar-Pei fever (FSF), a periodic fever disorder that affects about 23 percent of Shar-Pei in this country. Research linking the breed’s skin phenotype to the condition was reported in the March 17 issue of *PLoS Genetics*, an online research journal.

Importantly, the finding may benefit humans suffering from hereditary periodic fever syndromes, such as familial Mediterranean fever (FMF). Shar-Pei with FSF and people with FMF experience recurrent episodes, from 12 to 48 hours, of fever and inflammation of major joints, with no signs of illness in the interim. The chronic conditions can lead to liver or kidney failure.

Researchers at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard and Uppsala University in Sweden conducted a genomewide SNP analysis of Shar-Pei and other breeds, and also of healthy and affected Shar-Pei, pinpointing chromosome 13 as the location of the genetic mutation. The wrinkled skin of Shar-Pei is due to an overproduction of hyaluronan or hyaluronic acid (HA), which is synthesized at the plasma membrane by three HA synthases. One of these synthases, HAS2, is overexpressed. A segment of DNA that regulates this gene is duplicated erroneously, often multiple times, resulting in the disorder.

The discovery linking HAS2 with autoinflammatory disease is particularly helpful to researchers studying FMF in humans since 60 percent of human patients with periodic fever syndrome remain genetically unexplained. “The finding that hyaluronan is a major trigger of fever opens a new research field in canine and human inflammatory disease,” says Kerstin Lindblad-Toh, Ph.D., director

of Vertebrate Genome Biology at the Broad Institute and professor at Uppsala University.

Shar-Pei fever has ranked among the top five breed health concerns for the past 10 to 12 years. Its origin partly is due to the selection for the wrinkled skin phenotype and heavily padded muzzle — known as the “meatmouth” type — by breeders in the U.S. Chinese Shar-Pei descendants from dogs exported to this country in the early 1970s underwent strong selection for the meatmouth type that has become popular worldwide. The traditional Shar-Pei has less accentuated wrinkled skin phenotype.

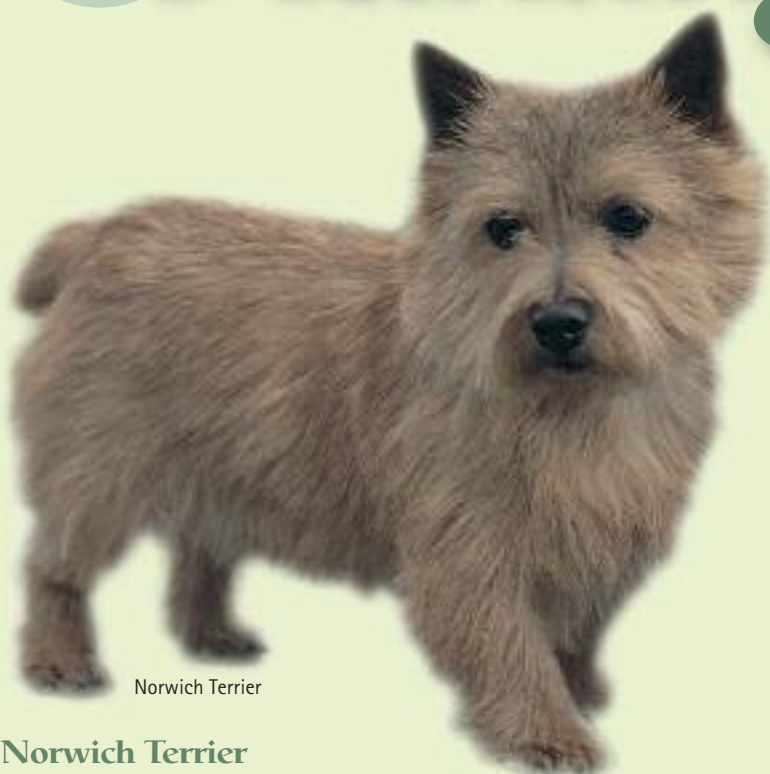
The researchers are working to develop a genetic test to help breeders reduce the risk of FSF. “Our hope is that we will be able to determine if a dog is at high or low risk based on the copy number for the mutation,” Lindblad-Toh says.

Funding for the research was supported by the Swedish Research Council, FORMAS, the European Science Foundation, the Swedish Foundation for Strategic Research, the Intramural Research Program of the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases, the National Human Genome Research Institute of the National Institutes of Health, and the Chinese Shar-Pei Charitable Trust. ■



Chinese Shar-Pei

Spirited Terriers & Hunting Spaniels



Norwich Terrier

Norwich Terrier

One of the smallest working terriers, the Norwich Terrier originated in England in the late 1880s from small red and black-and-tan crossbreds from native Yorkshire and Irish stock. Sporting undergraduates at Cambridge University made it a fad to own one of the small rattling terriers. Known as Trumpington Terriers at the turn of the 20th century, the breed is named for “Rags,” one who lived near the city of Norwich.

A Norwich Terrier named “Willum,” bred by Frank “Roughrider” Jones, was introduced in America in 1914. This stocky, short-legged terrier with cropped ears and docked tail became a charming, muscular breed ambassador and prolific sire. Some people in the U.S. still refer to Norwich Terriers as Jones Terriers.

Not until January 1979 did the American Kennel Club (AKC) recognize the prick ear and drop ear terriers as two varieties. The prick-eared Norwich Terrier, with his spirited, gay and fearless temperament, makes an affectionate companion. Norwich Terriers may be any shade from wheaten to

dark red, black and tan, or grizzle. Height should not exceed 10 inches at the withers, and weight should be about 12 pounds.

Norfolk Terrier

A small, sturdy sporting terrier whose chief attributes are his gameness, hardiness, loyalty and charm, the Norfolk Terrier is the drop-ear variety. He has a natural, weather-resistant coat and short legs that make him well-suited for going to ground or tackling vermin alone or with a pack. Affectionate and reasonably obedient, the Norfolk Terrier should have outstanding personality over conformation. The Norfolk Terrier is 9 to 10 inches tall at the withers and weighs from 11 to 12 pounds.



Norfolk Terrier

Clumber Spaniel

The Clumber Spaniel takes his name from the Duke of Newcastle's estate at Clumber Park in Nottinghamshire, England, where titled families and landed gentry used the Clumber for hunting. The duke's gamekeeper is credited with developing the breed. Vintage paintings feature hunting Clumbers that closely resemble those of today, with orange and white coat patterns but less bone and smaller heads.

A long, low substantial dog, the Clumber Spaniel has powerful hindquarters and massive bone that give him the power and endurance to move through dense underbrush in pursuit of game. An intelligent, independent thinker, the Clumber is a determined worker with a strong sense of purpose that thrives on positive reinforcement and praise. When trained, he is a sure finder and splendid retriever.

The hallmark of the Clumber Spaniel is his sweet, gentle temperament. He is charming, loving and affectionate, and considered good with children and other animals. The ideal height is 18 to 20 inches at the withers for dogs and 17 to 19 inches for bitches.

Dogs weigh between 70 and 85 pounds, and bitches are from 55 to 70 pounds.



Clumber Spaniel




American Water Spaniel

American Water Spaniel

An all-around shooting dog with an excellent nose, the American Water Spaniel, as his name suggests, was developed in the U.S. This active, muscular breed works thicket, rough ground or cover depending on scent to locate game. He swims like a seal and leaves little to be desired as a retriever. The breed is believed to have originated from the Irish Water Spaniel, Curly Coated Retriever and old English Water Spaniel. American Water Spaniels are friendly and eager to please. Both sexes are from 15 to 18 inches tall. Males weigh from 30 to 45 pounds and females from 25 to 40 pounds.

Source: *The Complete Dog Book*, Official Publication of the American Kennel Club (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006).



CIRCLE OF CHAMPIONS

'LILLY,' 'THIEF' AND 'BIG BOY' HONORED AS PURINA AWARD WINNERS

A record number of retriever enthusiasts attended the Purina Award banquet at Pebble Hill Plantation in Thomasville, Ga., in March, when FC Adams Acres Water Lilly, a 7-year-old Labrador Retriever owned by Marion Stroud-Swingle, of Elverston, Pa., and handled by Bill Sargenti, of Escalon, Calif., was honored as the 2010 Purina Open All-Age Retriever.



Professional handler Bill Sargenti and owner Marion Stroud-Swingle are shown with the banner and oil painting won by FC Adams Acres Water Lilly, the Purina Open All-Age Retriever.

"Lilly," a 49-pound female, had four firsts and seven total placements in 23 starts to earn 25 points and capture the prestigious Open All-Age Award. She also qualified for her third consecutive National. Lilly is among an elite group of retrievers owned by Stroud-Swingle, which included the 2009 Purina Outstanding Open winner, the late FC Hawkeye's Red, White & Blue.

"Lilly is a special, intense competitor," Stroud-Swingle says. "I've never seen such intense desire in a female dog. Billy did a wonderful job with her. He's a fantastic trainer and handler."

"Great dogs make great trainers," Sargenti says. "When Lilly came to me at 3 years old, I asked, 'Does she have any holes?' The answer was, 'No, no holes.' They were right about that."

The Purina Outstanding Amateur Retriever was FC-AFC Castlebay's Night Robber ("Thief"), a 7-year-old male owned by David and Glenda Seivert of Everly, Iowa. Handled by David Seivert, Thief earned 27 points with four wins in only 11 starts.

"Thief is a very tractable, willing dog who tries to do what is right in almost every situation," says David Seivert, who bought his first Labrador 39 years ago. "Thief is willing to do whatever you ask of him."

Thief qualified for his first National at age 3. David Seivert credits Scott Dewey and Issac Langerud for helping to train him.

The Purina Outstanding Derby Award went to Carolina's Half Moon ("Big Boy"), a Labrador male owned by Clint and Kay Joyner of Smithfield, N.C. Big Boy, who had 12 wins and finished with 70 points, was handled by Clint Joyner, an accomplished amateur competitor for 35 years.

"Big Boy is a quick learner, and if you show him something, he comprehends and remembers it," Joyner says. "When he's on his game, he's a dandy marker."

The winners were honored at the 27th Annual Purina Outstanding Retriever Award banquet held in conjunction with the spring field trials of the North Florida Amateur Retriever Club and Tallokas Retriever Club. The winners received engraved Purina Award plaques, oil paintings of their dogs by artist Ross Young of Springfield, Mo., satin award



Owner-handler David Seivert and his wife, Glenda, pose with FC-AFC Castlebay's Night Robber, the Purina Outstanding Amateur Retriever.

banners, and a year's supply of *Pro Plan* Performance Formula for one dog. Stroud-Swingle received a pendant, and Sargenti received a ring and \$5,000 as Lilly's handler. The Amateur winners received a diamond ring.

Purina Area Manager Dean Reinke, who served as master of ceremonies, commended the winners for their

achievements. He attributed the largest gathering in Purina Retriever Award history partly to a one-day free seminar that preceded the ceremony. Professional trainer Mike Lardy, a member of the Hall of Fame, presented "Preparing for a Retriever Field Trial."

"The seminar was so popular and successful, we plan to hold it annually," Reinke says. "Next spring, the Purina Awards banquet and program will be held in Kansas City, where professional trainer Bill Eckett and his wife, Becky, will lead the seminar."

The Purina Award program is administered and scored by a committee made up of experienced retriever enthusiasts: Eugene Anderson of Denver; Dennis Bath of Belleville, Ill.; Dr. Thomas Strickland of Albany, Ga.; Tom Sorenson of Wentzville, Mo.; and professional retriever trainers Mike Lardy, Danny Farmer, Bill Eckett, Dave Rorem and Jerry Patopea. Tina Ebner of *Retriever Field Trial News* tabulated point standings and assisted with program administration.



Owners Clint Joyner, left, and his wife, Kay, accept the Purina Outstanding Derby Award on behalf of "Big Boy" from Purina representatives Dean Reinke, center, and Bob West.

Poole's Ide Irish Water Spaniel Wins IWSCA National Specialty

Excellent breed type and clownish ringside antics helped Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Poole's Ide Got Water, RN, a 4-year-old male named "Keegan," win this year's Irish Water Spaniel Club of America (IWSCA) National Specialty.

The No. 1 Irish Water Spaniel in the country, Keegan has lived with professional handler and co-owner Stacy Duncan of Woodlinville, Wash., since he was 10 weeks old. "Keegan has renewed my passion for the Irish Water Spaniel," Duncan says. "He is not only structurally sound, which gives him balanced reach and drive, he is always looking to make me laugh."

Bred by Poole's Ide Irish Water Spaniel breeder Gregory Siner of Clifton, N.J., the 2010 Sporting Group Breeder of the Year, Keegan's pedigree is linebred on his dam's side to CH Oak Tree's Irishtocrat, the 1979 Westminster Kennel Club Best in Show winner and the top-winning Irish Water Spaniel in breed history with 33 Bests in Show. Keegan is co-owned by Siner, Colleen McDaniel



Professional handler and co-owner Stacy Duncan stacks Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS CH Poole's Ide Got Water, RN, after winning Best of Breed. From left are: judge Pluis Davern, Jack McDaniel, IWSCA president, and Debbie Bilardim, IWSCA secretary.

of Bothell, Wash., and Cathy Shelby of Corvallis, Ore.

Keegan was sired by AM/GBR/SWE/FIN/NOR/DAN CH Fynder Freethinker, a male from England who McDaniel brought to the U.S. after admiring his structural soundness and fun-loving temperament at the Crufts Dog Show in Birmingham, England. The dam, CH Poole's Ide Then There's Maude, is a two-time IWSCA National Specialty winner. The

breeding resulted in an all-champion litter of six that includes two Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS winners.

Keegan is the sire of the Best of Opposite Sex winner, a 22-month-old bitch, GCH Whistle Stop's Fire & Ice ("Annah"), out of CH Whistle Stop's the Wind Moriah, CD, JH, RA. Annah is

owned by Duncan and McDaniel, who co-bred the litter of eight that includes five finished champions and qualified Duncan as an American Kennel Club (AKC) Breeder of Merit. Both Siner and McDaniel have bred Irish Water Spaniels for over 30 years and were previously honored as AKC Breeders of Merit. It was Duncan's first time breeding a litter of Irish Water Spaniels. Annah's littermate, CH Whistle Stop's Wind on the Water

("Bella"), won an Award of Merit.

Keegan also won the Stud Dog Class with his progeny Annah and Bella. The winner of 13 Bests in Show and four Bests in Specialty Show, Keegan has won the breed at Westminster the past two years and took a Group Two and Group Four in 2010 and 2011, respectively. He currently is the No. 6 Sporting dog in the country.

A second-generation professional dog handler, Duncan's parents are the late Tad and Barbara Duncan. As a girl, Duncan accompanied her parents to dog shows. In 1993, she won Best Junior Handler at Westminster.

Duncan considers Keegan her "heart dog."

"He has true Irish spirit and is every handler's dream, wagging his tail the whole time he is in the ring and exuding a 'pick me' attitude," she says.

With a natural water-shedding coat, the Irish Water Spaniel was developed in Ireland to retrieve ducks. Duncan plans to handle Keegan in hunt tests after he retires from dog shows. Duncan feeds Keegan and Annah *Purina Pro Plan Performance Formula*.

'Kipp' Wins NBHA National Open & Runner-Up at National Amateur

Stylish, 5 1/2-year-old orange-and-white Pointer male, Gailen's Lotto Kipp, proved his intensity on game to win the National Bird Hunter's Association (NBHA) National Open Championship one month after taking Runner-Up at the National Amateur Championship.

Owner-handler Shannon Shields of Emporia, Kan., says, "I was shocked to win both events. 'Kipp' was very stylish on game at both championships, with his head held high and his tail up. He was well-mannered to the front and didn't let down."

The National Open and National Amateur walking trial championships were held in April and March, respectively. Kipp had five quail finds in the first series of the National Open in Grovespring, Mo., which earned him

the top spot out of 30 Pointers and English Setters competing. He continued to run an intense race in the two-hour call-back series.

"I was impressed that Kipp was as strong in the second hour of the final series as he was in the first," Shields says. "He ran a strong race with seven covey finds."

Outperforming 25 dogs at the National Amateur in Baldwin City, Kan., Kipp showed his independence early in both series by taking the front. Despite wet conditions, the Pointer ran consistently with manners and style.

Shields, who started competing in NBHA field trials in 2001, received Kipp from breeder Gailen Cooper of Oak Grove, Mo., in spring 2010. "My mother had just died," Shields says. "Gailen gave me the dog to run in

field trials because he didn't have much time to work him."

Kipp had won a U.S. Complete Open Championship but needed polishing on his groundwork, Shields says. "Every time I put him in a field trial, he seemed to win," he says. "We struck a chord."

After winning Runner-Up at the National Amateur Championship, Cooper made Shields the owner of Kipp, noting how well the pair worked together. Cooper scouted for Shields at both championships.

Kipp was sired by Gailen's Lotto, the winner of five NBHA championships, out of Delaware River Babe. Coincidentally, Kipp's dam is a littermate to the first Pointer Shields owned, a male named "Joe," who he bought from a family friend, Curt

Gatzmeyer, who helped him get involved in NBHA field trials.

Kipp is fed *Purina Pro Plan Performance Formula*.



Owner-handler Shannon Shields poses with Gailen's Lotto Kipp.

'Candy,' the No. 1 Samoyed, Smiles Her Way to Setting a Breed Record

Gracing dog shows with her smile and happy nature, the No. 1 Samoyed in the country, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH McMagic's Candied Ham of Pebbles' Run ("Candy"), is on a run to become the top-winning Samoyed in breed history.

Samoyeds are well-known for their "Sammy" smiles in which their black lips curl slightly at the corners into unmistakable smiles. "Candy has the Sammy smile that is so important," says co-owner Amy Kiell-Green of Readington Township, N.J. "She also has beautiful movement with proper extension that is not overdone. She has correct angles and body proportion, which give her style. She really enjoys the show ring."

Candy is the winner of three Bests in Show, including the Troy (N.Y.) Kennel Club and the Harrisburg (Pa.) Kennel Club dog shows. She won the breed and then placed fourth in the Working Group this year at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show

just before turning 2 years old. Breeder Patty McCallum of Barnegat, N.J., co-owns Candy with Kiell-Green and her husband, Andrew Green.

Currently No. 4 in the Working Group, Candy was sired by GCH Pebbles' Run Hammy Davis Jr. out



Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH McMagic's Candied Ham of Pebbles' Run casts a "Sammy" smile.

of CH White Magic's Rock N Roll Fantasy. Candy's litter of six includes four champions and the No. 1 Samoyed in Ireland, AM/IRISH CH McMagic's The Candy Man.

Candy's name combines the McMagic prefix of McCallum, the owner of the dam, and the Pebbles' Run prefix of Kiell-Green, who owns the sire. Kiell-Green finished Candy's championship when the Samoyed was 1-year-old before handing the lead to her husband, a professional handler.

Candy represents Kiell-Green's third generation of Best in Show Samoyeds, having bred her first litter in 1999. Kiell-Green bred the top-winning Specialty bitch in breed history, CH Pebbles' Run Lovey. Actually, the winner of five Bests in Show and the No. 1 Samoyed in 2007 and 2008. "Lovey" is a littermate to Candy's sire.

"I fell in love with Samoyeds years ago when I worked as a pet sitter," Kiell-Green says. "I was attracted to

their beauty and how majestic they look. They are great family dogs that love exercise. I could take them on a long walk, and they would enjoy it."

Candy's stunning white coat with silver tipping is conditioned daily. "The conditioning helps to keep the coat from getting dry," Kiell-Green says. "Whether on the grooming table or in the yard, we use a conditioning spray. Candy also is bathed weekly. She has great coat quality with a proper double coat and an undercoat that is dense but not too coarse and not too soft."

When she's not traveling to dog shows, Candy is a house dog whose favorite canine companions are a 9-year-old male Samoyed, BIS/BISS CH Pebbles' Run Fabulous Fairmont, named "Frisco," and a Lakeland Terrier named "James." The threesome exercises regularly in an outdoor play yard.

Candy is fed *Purina Pro Plan* Chicken & Rice Formula All Life Stages.

Purina SPO Beagle Sets Record & Captures Second Award for Owner-Handler

A super nose gave FC Valley View Lori, an 8-year-old 13-inch tricolor female Beagle, the ability to lock into the rabbit's scent and win a record 11 field trials and enough points to make her the 2010 Purina Outstanding SPO (Small Pack Option) Field Trial Beagle. Her win made owner-handler Josh Herring of Valley View, Pa., the first person in the 12-year history of the award to win two times.

"Lori" clinched the Purina Award last October, with two months remaining in the yearlong competition. During the year, she outperformed 3,500 hounds and competed in 25 of 35 qualifying trials for the AKC National Championship that make up the Purina SPO Award.

The win was bittersweet for Herring. Another female he owned and handled, FC Lone Willow Tiarae Hanna, had a chance to win, but he pulled her from the competition when she became ill from kidney disease. "Hanna" ended up

the top-scoring 15-inch female for the second consecutive year. Sadly, the 7-year-old succumbed to her illness and passed away last December.

Herring was the owner-handler of the 2007 Purina Award winner, FC King Hill Little Becky. As a teenager, Herring went rabbit hunting with his father, Dennis Herring. Eventually, they began competing in field trials, and in 2006, they co-owned FC Yagie's Brad-Ju Hunter Herring, the 15-inch male class winner and the sire of the 2010 15-inch male class winner.

Lori and Hanna had the same sire, FC Valley View Spinner II. Lori, who was out of Woodland's Sara, was bred by Bob Sweet of Beaver Meadow



Owner-handler Josh Herring, left, receives an oil painting of FC Valley View Lori, the 2010 Purina Outstanding SPO Field Trial Beagle, from Purina representative Eddie Wiley.

Beagles in West Fairlee, Vt.

Herring, along with the owner-handlers of the class winners, were honored at the Purina SPO Award Banquet in April at Beaver Dam, Ky., held in conjunction with the National Championship.

Purina Area Manager Rod Carter

emceed the event. "Purina is proud to recognize the immense interest in this sport by sponsoring the Purina SPO Award," he said.

As the owner-handler of the Outstanding SPO Beagle, Herring received coupons for one year's supply of *Purina* brand dog for one dog, an original oil painting of Lori by artist Valerie Dolan, an engraved Purina Award plaque and a satin award banner. He also received a \$1,500 cash prize that was doubled because he is active in *Purina Pro Club*. Herring feeds Lori *Purina Pro Plan* Performance Formula and *Purina Pro Plan* Shredded Blend Lamb & Rice Formula.

On hand for the festivities were Purina SPO Beagle Award Committee members, Tony Choate and Jim Tignor, and advisers to the committee, Mel Stewart of the AKC, Art Slike, former publisher of *Hounds and Hunting*, and Gary Hanks, president of the AKC National Championship.

TABATHA'S PRISTINE CAPTURES BEST OF BREED, BEST BROOD BITCH AT THE POTOMAC

The winner of the 36th annual Labrador Retriever Club of the Potomac Specialty is Multi-BISS CH Tabatha's Pristine, WC, an 8-year-old black bitch with extraordinary showmanship. The Potomac gave "Pristine" her 20th Specialty Best of Breed win.

Pristine outperformed 1,109 Labrador Retrievers in April at Frederick, Md., to win the Potomac, the largest Labrador Specialty Show in the world. Tabatha Labradors' breeder-owner-handler Carol Heidl of Sandusky, Ohio, says, "Pristine is the dog of a lifetime, and the Potomac win is the win of a lifetime."

Over the past 40 years, Heidl has bred 110 champion Labradors. She competes exclusively in Specialty shows and is known for producing English-style Labradors with an old-fashioned moderateness.

As a puppy, Pristine was called "Perfect Puppy" due to her outstanding temperament. "To be at the end of Pristine's leash is electric," Heidl says. "She dictates the ring



Best of Breed winner Multi-BISS CH Tabatha's Pristine, WC, center, is pictured with her female progeny, CH Tabatha's Princess, WC, left, and CH Tabatha's Plush, WC. Pristine also won Best Brood Bitch with "Princess" and "Plush."

procedure, the turn, the speed and when to look squarely at the judge. Pristine tips her head to show her lovely expression at just the right time."

Joy Quallenberg of Wurtsboro, N.Y., handled Pristine to her Best of Breed win at the Potomac, while Heidl handled CH Tabatha's Plush, WC, a 2-year-old black bitch out of Pristine.

Pristine was sired by CH Tabatha's Sport, WC, a yellow Labrador who contributed great head, coat and bone to his 22 champion offspring. Her dam is a black bitch, CH Tabatha's Pocket B., WC. Besides her Specialty Bests of Breed, Pristine has won six Specialty Bests in Sweepstakes and three Specialty Winners Bitch titles.

Pristine, her 13-year-old dam (CH Tabatha's Pocket B., WC) and her 2-year-old daughter (CH Tabatha's Plush, WC) went on to win the Generations class at the Potomac, a prestigious award bestowed on a breeder of three generations. "I was absolutely thrilled," Heidl says.

Pristine also won Best Brood Bitch from a class of 13 bitches and their progeny. Pristine was shown with "Plush" and "Princess" (CH Tabatha's Princess, WC) — both Specialty winners. It was the third consecutive year that Pristine won the class. In the past, CH Tabatha's Tease, WC, won the Brood Bitch class.

Heidl focuses on breeding happy, sound Labradors. Correct movement is imperative, she says. Her Labradors move effortlessly and free as indicated in the standard. Nearly all Tabatha Labs earn Working Certificate titles, a Labrador Retriever Club designation that indicates they are able to perform land and water retrieves.

Heidl feeds her Tabatha Labs *Purina Dog Chow*.

Purina Is New Sponsor of Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show

Signature purple *Purina Pro Plan* banners and signage will adorn Madison Square Garden at next year's Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, reflecting Purina as the official pet food sponsor of the highly esteemed all-breed dog show. Purina and the Westminster Kennel Club announced the multi-year sponsorship agreement in June.

Westminster Kennel Club President Peter R. Van Brunt says, "We are happy to welcome Purina to the Westminster family. This new and exciting partnership will further enhance our position as America's dog show and strengthen our ties with the purebred dog community."

"Westminster is a marquee dog

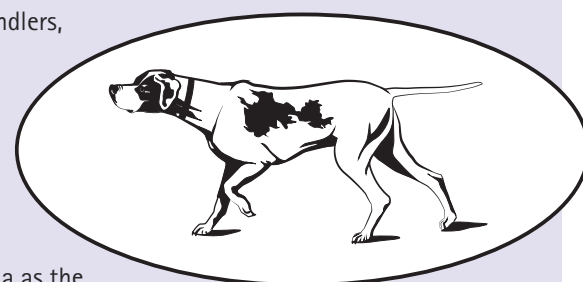
show, and it's known around the world," says Candy Caciolo, Purina Portfolio Director of Specialty, Breeder and Pet Acquisition. "Many Westminster winners, including the last five Best in Show winners, have been fed *Purina Pro Plan* brand dog food, so it's fitting for Purina to partner with this distinguished kennel club."

A longtime supporter of the dog fancy, Purina sponsors more than 100 all-breed and specialty dog shows a year. In 2010, Purina unveiled the Purina Event Center, a \$15 million 84,000-square-foot indoor dog show facility at Gray Summit, Mo., where six Westminster Best in Show winners, along with

their owners and handlers, participated in the Grand Opening.

Purina's support of the dog fancy contributed to the decision by the Westminster Kennel Club to choose Purina as the sponsor of its prestigious dog show. "Purina was selected due to its stature in the pet industry and visibility at dog shows," says David Frei, Director of Communications for Westminster. "Purina will be a very active partner, not just during the dog show but year-round."

The 136th annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show will be Feb.



13 and 14 at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Televised live on USA Network, the show, which is limited to 2,500 finished champions, reaches millions of people worldwide. The Westminster Kennel Club is the oldest organization in the country dedicated to the sport of purebred dogs.

GET CONNECTED TO PRO PLAN ON FACEBOOK

The *Purina Pro Plan* for Professionals Facebook fan page allows breeders and enthusiasts to connect using the popular social networking site. Fans can post photos, videos and experiences and share insights about breeding, handling and other topics.

Go to www.facebook.com/PurinaProPlanforProfessionals to become part of the conversation and share your passion for the sport with a community of dog enthusiasts.



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Pharaoh Hound Named 'Qing' Outperforms the Breed Record Times Seven

Sound conformation mixed with great desire and a mischievous soul has helped a 6-year-old Finnish-bred Pharaoh Hound called "Qing" become the No. 1 Hound in the country. Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Northgate's As You Like It also has etched a place in breed history as the winner of 36 Bests in Show, more than seven times as many as the previous record.

Recognized as a Multi-Best in Show winner in Europe when he arrived in the U.S. in March 2010, Qing had outperformed 25,000 dogs to capture Best in Show at the 2009 World Dog Show in Bratislava, Slovakia. He also had taken Reserve Best in Show at the 2008 World Dog Show in Stockholm, Sweden, and won the Hound Group at the 2009 and 2010 Crufts Dog Shows in Birmingham, England.

At European shows, dog fanciers were fond of Qing, commonly chanting his name when he entered the ring. In the first 10 months in the U.S., Qing earned 15 Bests in Show and 51 Group Firsts, handled by Brian Livingston. His fans dubbed him "Big Red" after Secretariat, the famous racing horse.

Livingston, of Aubrey, Texas, says,



Pharaoh Hound Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Northgate's As You Like It ("Qing") is the No. 1 Hound in the country.

"It takes more than great conformation to do as well as Qing has done. He has that added 50 percent, the drive and attitude that command presence in the ring. Though sight-hounds tend to be aloof and cautious, Qing immediately warms up to people."

The Pharaoh Hound's antics in the ring are noticed when Livingston stacks the dog, perfectly squaring his

legs, only to see Qing slightly move a leg while staring directly into his eyes. The dog's mischievousness also takes over when he steals food left on counters or tables.

Bred by Hanna and Kari Ukura of Tuposi, Finland, Qing was sired by Antefas Kahira out of CH Shema's Mia Arrowshaft, SC, an American Kennel Club (AKC) champion and

Senior Lure Courser. Jenny Hall, of Sweden, bought Qing, her first Pharaoh Hound, when he was 8 months old. She trained Qing and handled him to many wins in European shows. Realizing the hound's potential, Hall sold Qing to Jennifer Mosing of Youngsville, La., so he could be campaigned in the U.S.

Currently the No. 6 all-breed dog in the country, Qing's striking appearance is noted by his regal presence and effortless gait. He glows when he is happy or excited, his nose and ears turning a deep rose color, a blushing characteristic of the breed. An ancient Egyptian hunting breed, the Pharaoh Hound ranked 156 among all AKC breeds in 2010 based on the number of dogs registered.

When not traveling to dog shows, Qing is a house dog who enjoys the company of several toy dogs and Livingston's 4-year-old son, Skyler. "Qing thinks he is a toy dog," Livingston says. "He prefers playing with the toys to the larger dogs and loves to curl up in your lap. He has a super personality."

Qing is fed *Purina Pro Plan Performance Formula*.