

®

PURINA

Today's Breeder

A Nestlé Purina Publication Dedicated to the Needs of Canine Enthusiasts

Issue 78



BREEDER PROFILES
Brillow German Wirehairs
Alpine Falls AmStaffs

Juniors Handle the Future
GI Tract in Health & Disease
International Canine Festival

The READERS' PAGE

We are so proud of our pups out of Dual Grand Champion Poindexters Snoop Dawg and Grand Champion Shaker Hill Liz, owned by Jim Freeman of Beatrice, Neb. These 1-year-olds, raised on *Purina Puppy Chow*, already are making their mark.

Sugar Creek Rocky placed second and took 10th overall at the ACHA (American Coon Hunters Association) Little World Championship in

March in Glasgow, Ky. Lauren Weaver, who owns Rocky, also got High Scoring Black & Tan. The rest of the litter is doing well too.

Jim and I are proud to be platinum *Pro Club* members. Thank you, Purina, for supporting our sport.

Max Poindexter
Poindexter Black & Tan Coonhounds
Bonne Terre, MO



Glenn and Sandy Meyer are shown with CH Kellykerry Peggy Sue of Aerie, who won Best of Breed in May at the Irish Wolfhound Club of America National Specialty. Breeder-judge Jacqueline Carswell is left.

The Aerie and Kellykerry Irish Wolfhound kennels had a great week at the Irish Wolfhound National Specialty in May at Purina Farms. Our good friends, Glenn and Sandy Meyer of Manheim, Pa., took Best of Breed with CH Kellykerry Peggy Sue of Aerie. They are the breeders, owners and handlers.

We won Best of Winners and Winners Dog with Riverlawn Exit of Aerie, who earned his AKC Champion title that week. Keeping it in the family, "Exit's" daughter, Hound Hill Vale of

Aerie, trotted right along and was awarded Best Puppy in Show. We are the breeders, owners and handlers of both hounds.

We and the Meyers have fed *Purina Dog Chow* for over 30 years, are members of *Purina Pro Club* and participate in the Purina Parent Club Partner-ship Program.

Thank you Purina!

Doug Marx & Amy Benjamin
Aerie Irish Wolfhounds
Landenberg, PA

We enjoy hearing from our Pro Club members about their dogs. Please send your letters and photos to: Today's Breeder, c/o Editor, Nestlé Purina PetCare Company, 2T Checkerboard Square, St. Louis, MO 63164 or via e-mail at today'sbreeder@purina.com. Today's Breeder retains the right to edit and publish letters, including names and addresses, and photos, to a worldwide audience.



An Honored Beagler

Pro Club member Ron Roth of Herculaneum, Mo., pictured at the Missouri State Championship in March in Troy, Mo., holds a plaque signifying his induction into the National Brace Beagling Breeders Hall of Fame. Presented by the American Brace Beagling Association, the award is given to those who have bred a minimum of 15 brace Field Champions. Roth, who has finished more than 40 Top Spot brace Beagle Field Champions since 1956, says, "The joy of raising a puppy and training it to become a Field Champion never grows old."

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Professional trainer Jim West of Wild West Kennels and Rhonda Haukoos of Brillow German Wire-haired Pointers met at a field trial. He started training some of her dogs, and eventually they started dating. Today, on 300 acres in bird-dog paradise in southwestern Iowa, the couple works together training dogs for horseback field trials.

12 HANDLING THE FUTURE

Shaped by their experiences, junior handlers gain far more than practical knowledge and skills to succeed at dog shows and field trials. Driven by their love for dogs and guided by mentors, they learn lifelong lessons that build self-confidence, teach good sportsmanship and promote time-management skills.

20 THE GUT'S ROLE IN DISEASE

The key role the gastrointestinal tract plays in health and disease was the focus of the recent Nestlé Purina Companion Animal Nutrition (CAN) Summit. Long-held beliefs about the mechanics of disease processes are changing as scientists learn more about how the GI tract functions as a physical barrier against the outside world.

22 THE FIRE OF ALPINE FALLS

Having finished 16 Champions since breeding their first litter together in 2005, Alpine Falls AmStaff breeders Ed and Karen Thomason are fueled by a desire to produce top-winning dogs. Their BIS/BISS GCH Alpine's Highway, the No. 1 AmStaff since 2010, is a fiery blend who thrives on intense competition and the exuberance of winning.

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On Our Cover

FC Brillows Big Wild Western ("Wiley") is a 2-year-old male German Wirehaired Pointer bred by Rhonda Haukoos and handled by Jim West, both of Randolph, Iowa, and owned by Todd Tuls of Shelby, Neb. Cover photo by Adam Williams. See story on page 4.



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Partnership in Paradise

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ADAM WILLIAMS

While the sun casts fresh shadows across morning in southwestern Iowa, professional bird dog trainer and handler Jim West of Wild West Kennels stops his pickup next to an alfalfa field and sizable pond. Jim takes a last sip of coffee before setting his mug atop the dash, and then steps out to release dogs.



FC Brillows Big Wild Western ("Wiley"), a German Wire-haired Pointer

He and Rhonda Haukoos of Brillow German Wirehaired Pointers only had to drive from across the gravel road, where they make their home near Randolph, Iowa, during the spring and fall months. Jim and Rhonda live on 300 acres that offer plentiful bird dog training opportunities with fence rows, creeks, tree lines and crops. Their land is farmed by cordial neighbors, freeing Jim and Rhonda to focus on training bird dogs for field trials.

So, why did the trainers cross the road? The answer is as simple as the well-trod query about the road-crossing chicken: to get to the other side of bird-dogging paradise. Rhonda and Jim's neighbors allow them access to thousands more acres for unimpeded dog work.

"I hate to be confined," Jim says. "We have only four neighbors for miles and miles. They allow us to do whatever we need. We really do live in a dog trainer's paradise."

Professional handler Jim West of Wild West Kennels and NAFC/DC/AFC/GCH Ariel's Justa Gotta Go Now ("Louie"), the first Dual Grand Champion German Wirehair, look across an alfalfa field as the sun rises over Randolph, Iowa.



The fresh-air landscape that flows in all directions to a broad horizon lies beneath an equally gaping yawn of sky. Familiar though it is to Rhonda, it still inspires an of-the-moment description. "This is our castle in the clouds," she says.

One by one, Jim releases four German Wirehairs and three German Shorthairs into a neighbor's thick, green alfalfa field. He handles the top six Open Gun Dogs ranked by the German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America (GWPCA).

Jim started competing in horseback trials as an amateur handler in 1996. He worked with a variety of bird dog breeds, including German Shorthaired Pointers, Brittanys and Vizslas. Of 27 dogs in his kennel, there is one Vizsla, and the rest are divided equally between shorthairs and wirehairs. It's more than Jim had dreamed of when he began.

"It was an accident that I turned pro," he says. "People started paying me to handle their dogs, and I was getting to do something I enjoyed. I've been training and handling professionally since the fall of 1999."

His pastime was more compelling than how he was making his living in the mid- to late-1990s. Twelve years into the family catering business — Jim had taken over as an 18-year-old in Omaha, Neb. — he had had enough. "It was way too stressful," Jim says, while sitting at their dining table after this



day's training is done. "It was way too much work."

Rhonda laughs. "Because training dogs isn't stressful and a lot of work?" Jim smiles.

That familiar give-and-take threads through Jim and Rhonda's relationship of more than 10 years. They have been working together full time training and competing with dogs since Rhonda was laid off last year from her job in the printing department of a shoe company. They split time among homes and training grounds in Randolph, summer in Dunning, Neb., and winter in Jackson, Ga., and Masaryktown, Fla.

Rhonda also breeds a litter of German Wirehaired Pointers every year or two. She raises and trains puppies, and scouts for Jim during field trials. In trials, however, Jim focuses on clients' dogs, not the ones Rhonda breeds.

Jim walks toward a field as FC Jay-Mar's How Do You Like Me Now ("G-man"), FC/AFC I'm Maddie ("Maddie"), and Louie (partly hidden) race to find birds.





Standing on point are German Shorthaired and Wirehaired Pointers, front row, from left, Wiley and "Chloe," and back row, Maddie, Louie, "DeDe," "Sport," and G-man.

"I don't want anyone to perceive her breeding as a conflict of interest," he says. "We try to win with the dogs that come to me. I don't compete against those who pay me to handle their dogs."

Eyes on the Present

Jim grew up in Council Bluffs, Iowa, across the border from Omaha. He became interested in dogs as a 12-year-old whose family lived down the road from an amateur handler, D.D. Frenzen. "'Dee' had Brittanys," says Jim. "He trained a National Champion, NFC Gold Tone Duke, and a Futurity winner. I enjoyed learning about dog training from him. Dee became a grandfather figure to me."

Rhonda is from Albert Lea, Minn. Soon after she

graduated from the University of Minnesota-Waseca in 1989, she got her first purebred puppy, a German Wirehaired Pointer, from Liz Barrett of Spring Valley, Minn. Rhonda trained and handled DC/AFC Soo Line's Allied Freighter. Mike Edwards of Dassel, Minn., would breed to "Ansel," and Rhonda got CH Ansel's Brillow Ally as a stud-fee puppy. "Ally" would become Rhonda's foundation bitch and produce three litters, starting in 2000, including CH Brillow's Li'l Snippet and Brillow's Abigail.

"With Ansel I got my first exposure to field trials," says Rhonda. "The sport combines horses and dogs. I couldn't think of anything better."

Rhonda and Jim met in 1997 at a field trial. They became friends, and Jim started training some of Rhonda's dogs, including Ally. Rhonda and Jim started dating in 2001, and Rhonda eventually moved to Iowa, a central location that put her within reach of more field trials. Since that time, they've trained and trialed together, and Rhonda has continued breeding Brillow German Wirehaired Pointers.

"The name Brillow came from Ansel," she says. "He had such a phenomenal coat, and people would pet him and comment on his coat being like a Brillo pad. That's a good characteristic for a wirehair to have. The coat should be dense, harsh and protective with an undercoat that helps insulate the dog from hot, cold and wet conditions. I added the 'W' to Brillow, so there's no confusion with the brand name."

Breeder Rhonda Haukoos of Brillow German Wirehaired Pointers cleans the kennels.



Jim's first big-winning dog was NFC/FC Showtime's Rollin' Thunder. "Ricky' was a true all-age dog," Jim says. "He would run a mile out, and you'd find him standing point on birds. He'd run that big but never wanted to leave my side, either. He was incredibly loyal and willing to please.

"After I retired Ricky, he laid on my couch for a while. I started to feel bad for him. I took him out of retirement in 2009, when he was 12 years old, and ran him in a major one-hour stake: the German Shorthaired Pointer Club of America North Central Sectional Classic in Branched Oak, Neb. He came in third. It was all about heart."

Jim's first nationally ranked German Shorthair was FC/AFC West in Kojac's Gina in 1999. She was No. 1 in National German Shorthaired Pointer Association rankings, while another bitch Jim owned and handled, FC/AFC Kojac's Peggy, was No. 3. With those dogs and Ansel, Jim and Rhonda won 33 consecutive shooting dog trials.

Like many professional handlers Jim doesn't focus too much on tallying or touting his successes. He doesn't want to tempt bad fortune with self-jinxing swagger. He also prefers to look to the future and let past stars of the kennel rest in peace.

"Nothing will compare to your first big-winning dog," he says. "If I'm looking for another dog to be just like Ricky, it'll never happen. It's my job to make the dogs I have now great. Time moves on."

As Jim says this, part of the present walks into the room: No. 2-ranked NAFC/DC/AFC/GCH Ariel's Justa Gotta Go Now ("Louie"), who is owned by Bernee Brawn of New Hope, Penn., and MaryPat Ezzo, D.V.M., of Richboro, Penn.

"People don't believe I let a dog I don't own stay in our house, but there's proof," he says. "Louie just came out of the bedroom."

Peaks & Valleys

Rhonda owns one dog in the Wild West kennel: NFC/FC Brillow's Wild West Show ("Miss Kitty"), the first National Champion wirehair for the Brillow breeding program in 2009. Miss Kitty is the No. 6 German Wirehaired Pointer, having run in limited trials. Rhonda co-owns three German Wirehairs: Brillow's Upland Ally ("Allie"), with Christian Fisher



of Orange City, Iowa; Ebbtide's Justa Gotta Believe ("LuCee"), with Brawn and Garnett Persinger of Conneautville, Penn.; and Uodibar's Freebee, with Claire and Kelly Wisch of Brunswick, Md.

"She also is a professional trainer," says Jim. "She does a lot of the obedience work and handles juvenile dogs."

Rhonda juggles puppy raising, kennel maintenance and organizational responsibilities for the

A 4-week-old wirehair puppy sired by NAFC/DC/AFC/GCH Ariel's Justa Gotta Go Now ("Louie") out of NFC/FC Brillow Wild West Show ("Miss Kitty") romps in Jim and Rhonda's front yard.

Brillow and Wild West kennels. There are 4-week-old puppies sired by Louie out of Miss Kitty in the laundry room-turned-whelping room. A 10-week-old puppy sired by FC Brillows Big Wild Western (“Wiley”) bounds around a pen with Miss Kitty, the puppy’s granddam, outside the back door. Rhonda bred Wiley, the No. 5 German Wirehair who is handled by Jim and owned by Todd Tuls of Shelby, Neb. Sired by Brillows Jackson Flyer, Wiley is out of Miss Kitty.

Due to Jim’s caution about misperceptions that his interests conflict with his clients’, Wiley repre-

Jim has handled seven dogs to National Championship wins, totaling 14 first-places and six Runner-Ups. He credits Dee’s influence more than 25 years ago with shaping his training philosophy.

“Dee taught me how a dog learns,” Jim says. “When I was 14 years old, I was a hot-headed little kid. I once picked up a dog that wasn’t doing what I wanted and started to shake him. Dee came up and grabbed me.

“Then, Dee started asking me questions. ‘What’s your birthdate? What are your parents’ names? What’s your phone number?’ I couldn’t answer. I



Jim uses a pond on a neighbor’s farm to train dogs, like Louie, to retrieve in water. German Wirehairs must attain four points in retrieving competitions and pass water tests to earn Field Champion titles.

sents an infrequent opportunity in which Rhonda’s breeding and Jim’s skills mingle. The result has been success that started early with Wiley.

Rhonda handled the now 2-year-old Wiley to several puppy stakes wins and a 2011 GWPCA National Championship qualification. Then, Jim handled Wiley to win the National Derby Classic and take third place in the Field Futurity and Runner-Up in the one-hour National Championship in Ionia, Mich. With Wiley’s littermate, “Freebee,” Jim won the Field Futurity and went Runner-Up in the Derby Classic. He finished Wiley’s Field Championship the next week in Branched Oak, Neb., at 20 months of age.

couldn’t think of anything. Dee said, ‘It’s the same way for dogs. They want to please you.’”

Jim, who occasionally gives training seminars, has a string of anecdotes and metaphors that easily relate his training philosophy. Rhonda knows them by heart, and as Jim tells one or another, she sits patiently, occasionally nodding in agreement.

“Training is simple,” she says. “People make it complicated.”

“Dog training requires a teacher, not a prison guard,” says Jim. “I believe dogs need correction, but it should be done subtly.”

“By being calm, we can show dogs the right ways to perform until they get it right,” Rhonda adds.

Rhonda feeds DeDe (Sure Shot's Double Dare). Brillow and Wild West dogs are fed *Purina Pro Plan* Performance Formula.



"They will get it right, in time. It takes patience."

"Training and competing with dogs is a roller coaster ride," Jim says. "There are peaks and valleys. That's just how it is."

Good breeding aids a dog's potential, of course, and creates greater prospects for more peaks than valleys. Many top German Wirehair breeders send dogs to Jim to have strengths and weaknesses identified, and some have Jim train the best prospects.

For Rhonda, breeding Brillow German Wirehairs is about working toward the ultimate bird dog and proving the dogs in trials. "Most of our dogs go to hunters," she says, "but we believe field trials prove dogs' abilities and help to produce better hunting dogs. The emphasis is to produce a dog with a properly dense, coarse, water-repellant coat, one with good swimming abilities, even-keeled temperament and a strong retrieving drive."

Some German Wirehaired Pointer trials have a retrieving component. For example, when Jim handled 2XNGDC 2XCH FC/AFC Slicks' Cuttin' Wild ("Joker") to two AKC Pointing Breed Gun Dog National Championship wins in 2010, one required retrieving.

While pointers do not need to demonstrate retrieving abilities to earn a Field Champion title, some bird dog breeds, including German Wirehairs and Weimaraners, must attain four points in retrieving competition and pass water tests. That gives the pond Jim parks his truck by in the neighbor's alfalfa field special value in the Wild West training paradise.

After collecting the other dogs from the alfalfa field, Jim takes Wiley to the pond's edge and kneels next to him beneath the only tree. He tosses an orange training bumper and lets Wiley do what comes naturally — race to leap into a splash landing and swim to retrieve the dummy.

Wiley's drive and birdy enthusiasm are what Rhonda looks for when breeding, but given the relatively small gene pool of German Wirehairs compared to, say, pointers, it's especially necessary to reach beyond one's kennel for breeding partners.

Refining Priorities

As Wild West and Brillow have evolved, with Jim and Rhonda's dreams being achieved, they have learned to refine priorities.

"My parents are getting older," Jim says, "and I have two grandchildren, Aiesha and Jaden. I try not to be gone as much. That's another benefit of working more with German Wirehaired Pointers. There aren't as many championships as with other breeds. We travel less now."

Less is relative. Jim and Rhonda put 60,000 miles a year on their pickup and horse trailer, which is designed to hold as many as 30 dogs, five horses, a four-wheeler, and miscellaneous needs, and on



top of the trailer, as many square bales of hay as necessary to feed the horses. Living quarters are built into the front third of the 32-foot-long trailer.

Jim doesn't know when, but the seed is planted in his mind that there will come a day when he will slow down and raise puppies. That may be many years away. He bred a litter of German Shorthair pups once. It's hard work, but Jim has a way of closing a life chapter on hard work only to open a new one of ... hard work. Rhonda will be there, too, ready to impart expertise to Jim, as necessary, like he started doing for her 15 years ago with dog training and handling.

Wild West and Brillow are a partnership in paradise. ■

While Jim brushes one of their horses, Rhonda grabs a saddle from the customized 32-foot-long trailer that includes space for 30 dogs, five horses, a four-wheeler and living quarters for the couple.

"Ludo," left, a 2-year-old Shetland Sheepdog, takes the lead while running with "Thomas," an 8-year-old.



OZARK CREST'S *Silver Lining*

With golden sunlight bathing their silky sable-and-white coats, two spirited Shetland Sheepdogs race across the fenced front yard of Paul and Karen Hannah's picturesque farmhouse in Nixa, Mo. Beaming proudly, the Hannahs watch the dogs' stunning display of grace and agility. These playful Shelties represent the past and the future of their combined 92 years breeding, owning and handling the breed.

Joyously seizing the object of their pursuit, a red rubber ball nearly half his height, CAN CH/AM GCH GrandGables Jolie Victor Ludorum is the Hannahs' newest Special. Bred by Leslie Muhlhahn of Ithaca, N.Y., the 2-year-old, called "Ludo," earned his Canadian conformation championship with his prior owners, Guy Jeavons and Mark McMillan of Moffat, Ontario, before the Hannahs

brought him home in April 2011. Since debuting with Paul this past January, Ludo has earned his American Kennel Club (AKC) championship plus three Herding Group Firsts from 20 Group placements and 34 Bests of Breed. The Hannahs are confident the future is bright for Ludo. They know what it takes to succeed.

The top breed-winning Sheltie of all time, INTL/WLD/MEX/COA CH/AM GCH Kyleene Eden The Dragonslayer, HIC, 5CC, who the Hannahs retired in December, trots merrily alongside Ludo as he carries the ball to the shade of a towering oak tree. The winner of 553 Bests of Breed, 130 Group Firsts, 20 Bests in Show and 26 Bests in Specialty Show, 8-year-old "Thomas" is as handsome and proud today as when he was winning show after show.

"Thomas is an incredible companion and mentor to Ludo," Paul says. "We take Thomas ringside when

we watch Groups, and he exhibits for Ludo the outstanding confidence that made him so successful.”

Given to the Hannahs in 2005 by his breeder, the late Kathy Dziegiel of Chiefland, Fla., Thomas took Second Best in Show from more than 5,500 dogs at the 2007 World Dog Show in Mexico City. The next year he was the No. 1 Sheltie in all systems, and in 2011 he was No. 1 in all-breed rankings.

Thomas’ record-breaking career followed AM/CAN/INTL CH Ozark Crest Fortune In Gold, 5CC, OA, OAJ, a male Sheltie owned by the Hannahs who earned 526 Bests of Breed and held the breed record from 2005 to 2011. “Dusty,” who passed away in 2010, also was an accomplished agility competitor. His greatest achievement, however, was bringing Paul and Karen together.

Paul found his calling in dogs in the 1960s through his first wife, Susie, an avid obedience competitor and daughter of Ozark Crest Great Dane breeders Frank and Betty Sundstrom. Paul finished almost 30 Great Danes from 1965 to 1973. Then, he and Susie bought their first Sheltie for obedience, and the two began their own breeding program.

Meanwhile, Karen, a counselor and physical education teacher in Los Angeles, was making a reputation for herself as the owner-handler of five Best in Show winning Shelties. In 1996, Karen called Paul and Susie after seeing one of their Ozark Crest Shelties at a dog show and expressed interest in owning one of their dogs. Shortly afterward, she and her husband, Gene Dickinson, became Dusty’s co-owners and Paul and Susie’s good friends.

Sadly, Paul lost Susie to lung cancer in 2000, just eight months after Dickinson suffered a heart attack and passed away. Paul and Karen found the silver lining in the tragedies as their friendship blossomed into love. Married in 2002, they feel fortunate to share their greatest passion.

As Paul and Karen exchange compliments and opinions on who is more responsible for their success, it is clear each brings a wealth of knowledge, skill and experience to Ozark Crest.

Attending about 130 shows a year, the Hannahs show one or two of their own dogs and sometimes a few class dogs for clients. Paul handles the dogs, and Karen focuses on their daily needs, such as grooming and socialization. “It is the weeks and months before a show that make a dog look and perform the way it does,” Paul says. “Karen’s attention to detail ensures our dogs look and feel their best.”

“Paul’s talent and professionalism as a handler also have contributed to our dogs’ accomplishments in the ring,” Karen adds.

Committed to providing optimal nutrition for the dogs in their care, the Hannahs feed *Purina Pro Plan* Performance Formula to their Shelties and to the dogs at their boarding kennel. “*Pro Plan* gives our dogs clean, healthy coats and the ability to maintain a healthy weight and an active lifestyle,” Karen says.

The Hannahs own two female Shelties. Two-year-old Millcreeks Good Golly Ms Molly’s at Ozark Crest (“Molly”) is one major shy of her championship, and 3-year-old Blu Valley Oh So Fine of Ozark Crest (“Sophie”) will soon be bred to Ludo. The Hannahs breed one or two litters a year.

“We want dogs that are not only good show prospects but also wonderful companions,” Paul says.

Paul and Karen attribute the charismatic attitudes of their dogs to the care and attention they receive living in their home. “Our dogs are our family and our friends,” Karen says. “They’re our everything.” ■



Paul and Karen Hannah walk proudly with Thomas, left, the top breed-winning Sheltie of all time, and Ludo, the winner of 34 Bests of Breed since January.



Highlights of wins are, from left: Best of Breed with Ludo at the Greater Daytona Dog Fanciers Association Dog Show; Group First with Thomas at the Oklahoma City Kennel Club Dog Show; and Best Veteran Dog with “Dusty” at the American Shetland Sheepdog Club National Specialty.



Handling the FUTURE

BY SARAH MEYER

Devoted to their dogs, thrilled by competition and eager to learn, junior handlers gain hands-on education about what it takes to succeed at conformation shows and field trials. The knowledge and skills they cultivate through junior handler programs help to shape their future. Today's Breeder is pleased to feature these young handlers who represent the next generation of the dog fancy.

Left: Carolyn Kellerman cuddles with My Buddy It Iz What It Iz ("Izzy"), a Golden Retriever.

In a spacious living room, Carolyn Kellerman of Lawtons, N.Y., began honing her dog handling skills as a 4-year-old, practicing with a stuffed dog and a spare lead.

Inspired as she watched professional handler Jolene Bezingler, also of Lawtons, train her mother's Labrador Retriever, CH Ravenhill's Sir Winston, CGC, Carolyn began playing "dog show" in the living room. "'Winston' was my family's third Labrador, but the first to be trained for dog shows," says Carolyn, 13, a freshman this fall at North Collins High School. "I admired the relationship and control Jolene developed with him and was intrigued by the dog show world."

Over the next two years, Carolyn tagged along to dog shows with her mother, Heidi Kellerman. At 6 years old, she graduated from the living room to the show ring, where she began exhibiting her mother's black Labradors in class competition. Three years later, Carolyn became eligible to participate in the American Kennel Club (AKC) Junior Showmanship program, which she attributes to helping her grow as a handler.

"Judges select a Best Junior at each event and give valuable critiques that identify what you are doing well and what you need to improve," Carolyn says. "I am learning a lot about handling and am becoming more in tune with my dogs."

Carolyn has won more than 20 Best Junior awards in her four years in the AKC Junior Showmanship program. She also captured Best Junior at the



Carolyn walks Labrador Retrievers, Larkspur's Beatrice ("Beatrice"), left, and Wiscoy's Northern Lights Over Harbor Run ("Rory").



Labrador Club of the Potomac Specialty in 2011 with CH Wiscoy's Robin, a black Labrador owned by Jill Ickowski of Eden, N.Y.

Among her honors in open competition, Carolyn won an Award of Merit at this year's Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show with GCH Pucketts Super Charged, a black Labrador owned by Jen Hamon of Fonda, N.Y. In 2010, she captured back-to-back Bests in Specialty Show at the Mid-Jersey Labrador Retriever Club Specialty with CH Waifin's Fly Cabot to Tornгат, becoming the youngest handler to win both shows.

Carolyn's love for dogs has turned into a mother-daughter bonding activity. "Working with the dogs and traveling to shows together gives us opportunities to talk and hang out," Carolyn says. "My mom is incredibly supportive too. I appreciate her encouragement and her pride whether I win or lose."

At home, Carolyn plays a central role in caring for her mother's Harbor Run Labrador and Golden Retrievers, which has contributed to making her a well-rounded handler. "Carolyn is right there with me in the whelping box when puppies are born," says her mother, Heidi. "She feeds, exercises and trains the dogs, gives them medicine, and takes them to obedience and conformation classes. She puts their care and love first. Winning is a bonus."

As an assistant for handlers Rusty and Jennifer Howard of Huntsville, Ala., and Tim Terella of Erie, Pa., Carolyn has had the

opportunity to observe and learn from professionals. "The Howards taught me the art of presenting a dog and that you lose more times than you win, but you always leave with the same great dog you brought," she says. "Tim taught me how to condition Working dogs and build their confidence in the ring."

Competing with the Pros

For 12-year-old Vizsla handler Andrew Fidler of Oak Grove, Mo., field trials are a family activity that has taken root in his plans for the future. When Andrew's parents, Brian and Stephanie Fidler, acquired a Vizsla five years ago, they got involved in

AKC hunting tests and then horseback field trials.

The Fidlers bought their second Vizsla 18 months later, and in 2010, they bred their first litter, from which Andrew was given a female called May-C. After competing in one field trial with May-C, Andrew fell for the sport, too.



Left: Andrew Fidler trains May-C, a Vizsla, in a field near his home. Inset photo: Andrew hugs May-C.

The Fidlers compete at two national events and a handful of weekend field trials each year. Andrew and his father handle the dogs, while his mother serves as a field marshal, following the dogs on horseback to ensure they stay on track and are not missed on point. His 9-year-old sister, Kenzy, rides with the gallery on horseback.

"We enjoy going to field trials as a family," says Andrew's father, Brian. "You invest so much time, energy and resources, it is nice to share the experience."

Last fall, Andrew handled May-C to fourth place in Open Derby and third place in Open Puppy at his first trial held at the Ozark German Shorthaired Pointer Club in Grovespring, Mo. May-C also was the 2011 National Vizsla Association (NVA) National Quail Derby Classic winner and the Runner-Up Champion at the NVA National Derby Classic.

Because few youth compete in the sport and local Vizsla clubs do not offer youth programs, Andrew competes with amateur and professional adults. Usually the youngest participant, he benefits from the adult competitors who offer encouragement and advice. Professional trainer and Purina Field Consultant Gailen Cooper, also of Oak Grove, has been especially helpful, teaching Andrew how to train May-C and offering guidance.

"Gailen is an incredible mentor," says Andrew, an eighth-grader this fall at Oak Grove Middle School. "My parents gave me a strong foundation in the sport, and then Gailen helped me put that knowledge into action and master more advanced techniques. It is because of him that I learned how to properly handle a dog and how to train a dog to point with intensity and style. Gailen also helped me to realize the depth of the relationship required to have success with a dog."

Andrew's passion for Vizslas and field trials is evident. "I am interested in becoming a professional trainer and handler one day," he says. "I absolutely love this sport."

Outgrowing the Trophy Case

Nineteen-year-old Melinda Hicks of Camden, W.Va., found her first mentor in Southfork River Treeing Walker Coonhound breeder Megan Rimel of Rome, Ohio. "Megan sold me my first show-quality Coonhound and taught me the basics of the sport, including how to stack Coonhounds on a bench, how to gait them around the ring, and how to manage their weight and conditioning," says Melinda. "She also taught me about the Walker standard and how to evaluate a dog's conformation."

The daughter of an avid hunter, Melinda grew up pleasure



Melinda Hicks stacks CH 'PR' West Fork River Gossip Girl ("Blaire"), a Treeing Walker Coonhound surrounded by trophies Melinda won. Inset photo: Melinda practices gaiting with GRCH/GCH 'PR' Midnight Troubles Back In Town ("Roxy"), a Treeing Walker Coonhound.

hunting and watching her father, Bernard Hicks, bring trophies home from local nite hunts and place them in the trophy

case. When she was 14, Melinda discovered an interest in bench shows while attending one with her father. A few weeks later, she was competing with one of her family's hunting Coonhounds and looking for a show dog.

"Now, the whole house is a trophy case," Bernard says. "Melinda's focus, determination and understanding of the breed have made her enormously successful."

Over the past five years, Melinda has competed in AKC conformation shows and United Kennel Club (UKC) bench shows. She is an alumna of the AKC Junior Showmanship program and

UKC youth bench shows. "Youth events are a great opportunity to learn and improve," Melinda says.

The winner of the AKC Junior Handler Competition and a \$1,000 scholarship in 2009, Melinda went on to win the 2010 UKC Youth Nationals and capture Best Junior World Show Champion at the 2011 AKC World with West Fork River Rumor Has It ("Rumor"), a Treeing Walker Coonhound bred by Rimel.

Among her achievements in open competition, Melinda won Best Grand Champion Female in Show at the 2009 AKC National Coonhound Championship with GCH West Fork River Chyanne, her first Coonhound bred by Rimel. Last year, she captured Best of Opposite Sex at the UKC World Bench Show and Champion Female at Autumn Oaks with GRCH/GCH Midnight Trouble's Back in Town ("Roxy"), who she bought from the late Jim Hogan of Salix, Pa. Roxy also won the bench show at the inaugural Purina National Championship, an invitational event in which dogs qualify by winning a division at a Purina Points Series state championship.

"Jim helped me with Roxy's training and was a great role model," Melinda says. "That made winning with Roxy extra special."

Melinda's love for dogs extends beyond the trophy case. Though she stays busy traveling to UKC bench shows with three Treeing Walker Coonhounds, Melinda is preparing to breed her first litter.

This fall, she will begin her sophomore year at Fairmont (W.Va.) State University, where she is a veterinary technician student. "I've aspired to be involved with veterinary medicine my whole life," she says. "I want to dedicate my future to helping animals."

An Early Start Training Dogs

Seventeen-year-old Connor Wharton of Altoona, Pa., enjoys reaping knowledge from the adults who participate in English Springer Spaniel field trials. "Everyone has a lot of information to share," says Connor, who will be a senior this fall at Bishop Guilfoyle Catholic High School.

Connor followed his father, Greg Wharton, and older brother, Spencer Wharton, into English Springer Spaniel field trials as a 13-year-old. His uncle, Bob Montler, and cousin, Josh Montler, also are veterans in the sport.

Before he started competing in field trials, Connor had almost a decade's worth of experience training and competing in hunting tests with his family's dogs. From age 5, he helped simulate trials on his uncle's farm and duplicate the dis-



Connor Wharton signals to AFC Pinecroft's Princess Peyton, an English Springer Spaniel. Inset photo: Connor sits with "Peyton."





Amy Beard handles GCH Edelweiss Dirty Sexy Money ("Lexee"), a Chinese Crested, at a dog show at the Purina Event Center in Gray Summit, Mo. Inset photo: Amy holds Lexee, who she bred, owns and handles.



tractions dogs might encounter in the field. He learned how to plant birds and exercise dogs with an all-terrain vehicle. He also began to develop an ability to identify the needs of individual dogs and design drills and training techniques well-suited for each.

Mentors who have helped shape Connor's learning include professional trainer Marty Knibbs of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, and Purina Area Manager and professional trainer Dean Reinke of Elkhorn, Wis. "Interactions with professionals who are highly regarded in the game really help young handlers improve," his father, Greg, explains.

Knibbs, a family friend who helps train the Whartons' dogs, gave Connor his first dog to run in trials in 2008. "Lena' was slow starting out, and everyone doubted her, but she, Marty and I worked hard and she proved herself by qualifying for the 2010 Nationals," Connor says.

Connor and Expressway's Hershalea, WDX, made it through the third series of the National English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association (ESSFTA) National Amateur Championship, but ultimately Lena was eliminated after a long, difficult retrieve. Sadly, she died less than two months later of complications from grass awn infections.

Connor's latest field trial springer is AFC Pinecroft's Princess Peyton, a puppy out of two of the Whartons' Field Champions, who he recently handled to an Amateur Field Champion title and the first leg toward her Master Hunter title. A testimony to Connor's achievements, "Peyton" was among 21 dogs that finished the arduous six-course weeklong ESSFTA National

Amateur Championship last November in Beatrice, Neb. Of the 112 entries, Connor was the only teenager to compete.

"I was thrilled when I finished the National Amateur with Peyton," he says. "Not many people thought I could do it. Obviously, I would have liked to have placed, but it was exciting to compete alongside adults in such a big event, and I was proud of Peyton's performance."

Chasing a Dream

Earning more than 30 Best Junior awards in the AKC Junior Showmanship program, Amy Beard of Springfield, Ill., is setting her sights on becoming a professional handler. The 18-year-old is confident her experience as a junior handler will help her achieve her dream.

"Caring for and competing with dogs at a young age taught me how to handle a variety of situations," she says. "Through Junior Showmanship I learned how to problem-solve and how to maintain a positive attitude. Most importantly, I learned never to give up on a dream."

Amy represents the fifth generation of Edelweiss Kennels, which was founded by her great-great-grandfather, Franz Fleischli. From age 4, Amy grew up showing Edelweiss Shih-Tzu bred by her grandmother, Ana May Fleischli, and Edelweiss Chinese Crested dogs bred by her mother, Kathy Knoles. The challenges of these breeds — the constant grooming of the Shih-Tzu's long,

double coat and the unique hairless body of the rare Chinese Crested — provided valuable lessons.

When she turned 10, then the minimum age to participate in Junior Showmanship, Amy rapidly shot up the rankings. For the next eight years, she was among the Top Five Junior Handlers in the country, becoming No. 1 in 2008 and 2009. In the conformation ring, Amy has earned multiple Group placements and handled five dogs of different breeds to Top 20 breed rankings.

“Amy started out as a 4-year-old little girl who couldn’t lift a dog onto a table, and now she is a better handler than I am,” says her mother, Kathy. “Amy is a passionate and competitive young handler with a lot of potential.”

Amy’s success as a junior handler earned her \$1,500 in college scholarships from kennel clubs. Her goal is to use her education to help her succeed as a professional handler.

Amy also hopes to give back to the Juniors program. “I want to help juniors get to where I am,” she says. “By observing and talking to professionals in the sport over the past several years, I’ve learned everything from baiting and socializing dogs to evaluating

and grooming them. Now, I see young people watching me, and I know it is my turn.”

Sharing the Heart of Beagling

Eighteen-year-old Kaylynn Williams of Martinton, Ill., has trained and handled Beagles since she was 11 and been involved as a breeder since she was 14. Kaylynn, who currently writes for *Hounds and Hunting* magazine, plans to study English this fall at Kankakee Community College and make a career writing about purebred dog sports. She also manages a boarding kennel, KW Kennels, and handles dogs professionally.

Kaylynn got her start in field trials as a 10-year-old after attending a Small Pack Option (SPO) Beagle field trial with her uncle, Rusty Salyer of West Frankfort, Ill. Beagler Bruce Janssen of Otterbein, Ind., saw something special in the young spectator that day and stepped up to mentor her.

“Kaylynn had never competed, but I could tell from her reactions to the run that she was pretty knowledgeable about the breed and understood when my dog made an incredible move,” Janssen recalls. “I sought her out and told her I had a dog for her.”

Kaylynn went on to handle Janssen’s Stylish KW Pic to a Field



Kaylynn Williams sits on a truck bed with SPO field trial Beagles, from left, KW’s Red Rock (“Rock”), Sandy Run Cutter Cody (“Cody”) and FC Janssens Stylish KW Pic (“Pic”). Inset photo: Kaylynn grooms Pic.

Champion title and to his 2009 United Beagle Gundog Federation (UBGF) National Championship win. "Pic" is one of six Field Champions Kaylynn has finished. She also won the 2011 Illinois SPO Beagle State Championship with FC Little Creek's Payday, who she handled for Larry "Dobie" Powell of Chicago, and captured third place with MH Mo-Mo's Blue Bell, a female from the first litter she bred.

Kaylynn credits the Junior Beagle Field Trial Handler program of North America for motivating her to get involved in beagling and stay involved as an adult. "At that first field trial, a woman approached me and asked if I was a junior handler," she says. "I'd fallen in love with the sport that morning, so when she presented me with an opportunity to get involved, I jumped at it. My uncle hasn't been able to leave me behind ever since."

As she grew older, Kaylynn got more involved with the Junior Beagle Field Trial Handler program and worked with coordinator George Pirman of Leslie, Mich., to encourage youth to participate and create opportunities for junior handlers to earn recognition and scholarships. "The Junior Beagle Handler program gives juniors a valuable opportunity to learn about the sport," Kaylynn says. "I wanted to give back to the program that has meant so much to me over the years."

Kaylynn also hopes to give back by judging field trials and sharing her knowledge and experience through her writing. "As a junior handler and one of few females in the sport, I believe I have a unique perspective to share," she says. "I'd love to help show people the heart of SPO Beagling."

Valuable Life Lessons

Beyond knowledge of dogs and dog sports, junior handlers have the opportunity to learn skills and lessons that help them excel in other areas of their lives. "Field trials teach youth how to communicate with adults, how to look them in the eye, shake hands, and speak respectfully and confidently," observes proud father Greg Wharton. "The biggest change I've seen in Connor as a result of his involvement in field trials is greater self-confidence. He was a quiet, self-conscious boy a few years ago, but he has truly grown through this sport. That confidence will serve him well."

Good sportsmanship is another lesson learned by junior handlers. "Sportsmanship is emphasized in the AKC Junior Showmanship program by the judges, in seminars and at dog shows," says Carolyn. "The friendships I've formed motivate me to be happy for others' successes too."

Junior Handler Programs Cultivate Interest

Junior handler programs provide youth with opportunities to improve their handling skills, practice good sportsmanship and get hands-on experience that touches many facets of their lives. Among the programs that help cultivate the fancy's youngest competitors are the American Kennel Club (AKC) Junior Showmanship program, the Junior Beagle Field Trial Handler program of North America, and the United Kennel Club (UKC) Total Junior and Youth Education programs.

Amateur handlers ages 9 to 17 are eligible for the AKC Junior Showmanship program. Juniors may enter dog shows sanctioned by the AKC with a dog they or a family member owns. They are judged on the quality of their presentation rather than the conformation of their dog. Besides dog shows, juniors may participate in obedience, agility, rally, tracking, herding, earthdog, hunting tests, field trials, and lure coursing. Through the Junior Showmanship Scholarship program, the AKC annually awards scholarships to deserving junior handlers to encourage them to continue their education. For more information, please visit www.akc.org/kids_juniors.

Organized by professional beagle handler and past United Beagle Gundog Federation president George Pirman, the Junior Beagle Field Trial Handler program of North America invites handlers ages 9 to 17 to submit scores from any AKC or Canadian Kennel Club Beagle field trial for points toward rankings, recognition and prizes. The program encourages responsible pet ownership and awards bonus points when juniors own their dog. Purina donates a Junior Beagle Handler hat to each participant and a jacket to the Top Five junior handlers at the end of each season. Handlers earn T-shirts, sweatshirts and medallions based on their participation and achievements. In addition, the Scholarship Award program allows junior handlers to earn funding for college or a trade school. For information, please email Pirman at george@lynairkennel.com.

The UKC provides classes for handlers ages 2 to 18 at conformation events and agility, obedience and rally obedience trials. The Total Junior award program was created to encourage juniors to participate in conformation and performance events, breed dogs and promote responsible pet ownership. The UKC's Youth Education Program (YEP) assists coonhound clubs in holding educational activities for youth that culminate with a bench show and nite hunt. The UKC also sponsors a yearlong Coonhound Youth Championship Event Series that includes a Youth National Coonhound Championship bench show and nite hunt. For more information, visit www.ukcdogs.com/WebSite.nsf/WebPages/Kids

Andrew has been challenged to learn better time management since becoming involved in field trials. In addition to training and conditioning May-C every other day, Andrew is responsible for feeding, watering and cleaning the Fidler's kennel of six dogs as well as caring for the birds and horses.

"This is the ultimate responsibility for a young person," says his father, Brian Fidler. "The work ethic Andrew is developing will be with him for the rest of his life."

Though his workload can get stressful at times, Andrew is committed to his dogs. "You have to put a lot of time and effort into them, and you have to really know your dogs to do well in competition," he says. "It is all worth it." ■

The Gut's Role *in Disease*



Keszthelyi was one of 15 presenters at the Nestlé Purina Companion Animal Nutrition (CAN) Summit in March in Lisbon, Portugal. Attended by more than 100 veterinary experts from around the world, the conference featured the latest discoveries related to the GI tract in health and disease. Some of the information presented counters long-held beliefs about the mechanics of disease processes.

Purina Veterinary Nutritionist Dorothy Laflamme, D.V.M., Ph.D., DACVN, who organized and served as the chair of the conference, says, "The gastrointestinal tract serves a critical role in canine health, providing a physical barrier against the outside world on the inside of the body. Millions of microorganisms live in the GI tract. Collectively called the microbiome, these microorganisms are critical for the normal development of a healthy immune system."

A dog's gastrointestinal (GI) tract is the largest immune organ in the body. Over 65 percent of the immune cells in the body are found in the gut, where they protect the body against invading organisms, such as bacteria and viruses, while tolerating normal proteins and beneficial bacteria.

The notion that diseases begin in the gut focuses on the important role of the gut as the primary site of exposure to antigens, its barrier function in excluding invasive bacteria and its role in promoting healthy immune function. Alterations in barrier function along with increased intestinal permeability can be caused by or can lead to diseases, such as diabetes mellitus, says Daniel Keszthelyi, M.D., of Maastricht University Medical Center in The Netherlands.

The Leaky Gut

While traditionally it was thought that disease precedes the infiltration of harmful organisms into the body, or the penetration of macromolecules through the intestinal barrier, the discovery that a leaky gut may exacerbate disease presents a paradigm shift, says Keszthelyi, a fellow in human gastroenterology-hepatology.

"This new paradigm subverts traditional theories underlying the development of certain diseases," he says. "It suggests that unfavorable immune activation can be counteracted if the interplay between genes and environmental triggers is prevented by re-establishing intestinal barrier functions."

In his talk, Keszthelyi demonstrated that in genetically predisposed people and rats, a leaky gut is

a predisposing factor for of type 1 diabetes mellitus, an autoimmune disorder common in people and dogs. Dogs may share some common risk factors.

“Prediabetic people had the greatest increase in intestinal permeability (IP), which suggests that increased IP precedes the onset of clinical diabetes rather than is caused by type 1 diabetes mellitus,” he says. “This demonstrated that increased IP is observed not only in patients who have developed type 1 diabetes but also in those with a pre-clinical condition.”

The disturbance in intestinal barrier function is believed to play a role in the pathogenesis of several systemic diseases. Increased intestinal permeability — or leaky gut — may be associated with diabetes, celiac disease, inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and rheumatoid disorders among others. Though these diseases differ, they have one important thing in common — a disturbance in immune function. New research suggests that this disturbance in immune function may begin in the gut.

“When the finely tuned trafficking of macromolecules through the intestinal barrier is dysregulated, both intestinal and extraintestinal disorders can occur, particularly in genetically susceptible individuals,” says Keszthelyi. “Further studies are needed to verify the therapeutic potential of enhancing intestinal barrier function. Diabetes may provide an ideal disease model.”

The Gut-Brain Axis

Recent studies have shown a possible link between the gut’s microbiome and psychological disorders, such as anxiety and depression. These occur via the gut-brain axis, a two-way communication system between the central nervous system and the GI system. Intestinal bacteria are believed to play an important role as modulators and signaling components.

These studies in animals have generated interest in the role of intestinal microbes as key players in gut-brain communication, says Premysl Bercik, M.D., assistant professor and director of the clinical laboratory at the Farcombe Family Digestive Health Research Institute at McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada.

“The intestinal microflora is made up of a large and

diverse number of microbes that perform different functions, and that have developed a symbiotic relationship with their host,” Bercik explains. “These microbes play a crucial role in innate and adaptive immune responses and influence physiological systems throughout life by modulating gut motility, intestinal barrier stability, nutrient absorption, and distribution of somatic and visceral fat.”

Among the examples Bercik cited:

- Mice infected with *Campylobacter jejuni* displayed anxiety-like behavior. The abnormal behavior occurred very early in the infection, even before any significant immune response occurred, indicating that the nervous system can detect an acute change in the gut and selectively identify a pathogen in the gut.
- In patients with chronic bowel disorders, including inflammatory bowel diseases, anxiety and depression are common. In mouse models, low-grade inflammation induces anxiety/depression-like behavior that is normalized when mice are treated with a specific probiotic, despite no improvement in gut inflammation or in levels of circulating cytokines, the protein messengers between cells that regulate inflammatory responses.
- Altering mouse gut microbiota by antimicrobials can alter mouse behavior, transforming a shy mouse into a daring one with high exploratory drive. When germ-free mice (those born and raised without specific bacteria or viruses) are colonized with specific bacteria, it determines their behavioral phenotype and brain chemistry.

Though much remains to be learned about the microbiome, it is clear that the microbes in the GI tract have a greater influence on health and well-being than previously thought. Through emerging research, scientists are learning how to manage these diseases and how dietary changes may lead to positive changes in the microflora. ■

Editor’s Note: The 2012 CAN Summit was the third annual scientific meeting in which experts from around the world gathered to explore an important topic in veterinary medicine. The previous conferences focused on gerontology and obesity in 2010 and 2011, respectively.

The Fire

— OF ALPINE FALLS —

As BIS/BISS GCH Alpine's Highwayman stands in the backyard of Ed and Karen Thomason's house, his burning gaze catches reflections of the sky that sprawls across a thinly populated slice of the Pacific Northwest. "Jelly," the No. 1 American Staffordshire Terrier since 2010, is the No. 1 dog in the Thomasons' Alpine Falls AmStaffs kennel in Rochester, Wash. His mix of focus and playfulness mirrors that of his owners.

Laughs between Ed and Karen come spontaneously, often and with volume. Ed, a professional handler, has a game face for game time. Karen, a non-practicing licensed

veterinary technician, enjoys breeding more than showing.

"My whole life has been wrapped around competition," Ed says, "whether it's been basketball, football or fighting kumite."

Kumite?

That word usually causes fans of action movies to think of actor Jean-Claude Van Damme and the 1988 based-on-a-true-story film, "Bloodsport," about an international no-holds-barred underground martial arts competition held in Hong Kong. Ed knows people make that comparison, laughs about it

and can recite scenes and quotes from the movie. Ed, however, as a teenager lived in Manteca, Calif., and competed in sanctioned kumite events.

"At 18 years old, I was a semi-professional mixed martial arts fighter and had been involved in tae kwon do for eight years," he explains. "When I was

14 years old, I won the California state championship for the 14- to 17-year-old kumite division over a 17-year-old in the final bout."

So, rather than "Bloodsport," a more appropriate movie to think of might be "The Karate Kid." The 1984 story ends with a young teenage boy, likewise in California, competing in the championship ring of a martial arts competition to overcome the odds and win. Now a professional handler, Ed stands in conformation rings around the country and expects nothing less from himself.

"I'm competitive," he says.

"I don't go to dog shows to lose. I am honest about that, but isn't that how everyone feels?"

Taking the Lead

Karen grew up in Bonney Lake, Wash., 60 miles northeast of where the Thomasons live. Her uncle had Staffies as pets. Karen bought her first one in



Karen Thomason stands with CH Silver Ice's Super Cooper, an Alaskan Malamute; C.J. Fisher, center, holds GCH Snow Winds Masked Bandit, the No. 3 Parson Russell Terrier; and Ed Thomason kneels with GCH Kingslyne-Kimo NW, the No. 1 Bulmastiff. Ed professionally handles all three dogs.



BIS/BISS GCH Alpine's Catch Me If You Can, an American Staffordshire Terrier bred and owned by the Thomasons, is an up-and-coming dog in the U.S. who previously earned Champion titles in Luxembourg, Romania and Hungary.



BIS/BISS GCH Alpine's Highwayman ("Jelly"), the No. 1 AmStaff, has earned 21 Bests in Show handled by Ed.

1997 while attending Pierce Community College in Tacoma, Wash., to become a veterinary technician.

"I liked the breed's size, the minimal coat care required and that an AmStaff can go hiking but also wants to lie on the couch with me," she says.

Karen bought her first show dog, Timberland's Atomic Force, as a puppy in 1998. She finished the blue brindle-and-white dog's championship quickly, winning four majors. "I didn't really know what I was doing," she says. "'Truman' was so impressive I didn't even get to learn how to show a dog."

She bought CH Timberland's Pixie Stick, RA, TT, CGC, in 2000 and had a learning experience.

"'Pixie' ended up preferring to do anything other than show, though I did finish her," says Karen. "She would rather go hiking, fetch a ball or lie next to me."

In hindsight, Karen says that may have had more to do with her inexperience with show dogs than with Pixie's lack of interest.

"She showed me a lot more than Truman did about how to present a dog and how to teach motivation to a dog," Karen says. "I had to learn how to stack a dog and how to gait. I was so new to the sport, I didn't know how to train a puppy, how to get Pixie to free

stack, perk her ears or anything I needed her to do in the ring. So, I had a hard time motivating her to do those things."

Karen went to one dog show a month to work toward finishing her dogs' titles. She managed a dog day care and boarding facility in Seattle for four years during that time and started breeding AmStaffs.

"Working at the day care was wonderful for me when socializing my puppies," she says. "I took them to work with me."

Karen finished six champions through 2003.

Motivated to Achieve

Ed started with dogs in Northern California around the time Karen had in Washington. He used the Mustang Kennels name from 1998 to 2004. He honed his handling craft in the United Kennel Club (UKC), where he found his first opportunities.

"I'm a big motivation guy. I am driven by moments, events in my life. That led me to the UKC," he says. "At first, when I was 18 years old, I went to an AKC (American Kennel Club) dog show to watch the AmStaffs. I approached some breeders there and felt like they brushed me off. That lit a fire. I used that

Ed and Karen sit in front of their house in Rochester, Wash., with Jelly, left, and "Vixen" (CH Alpine's Jamaica Me Crazy).



experience as motivation to get involved, to find others who would talk with me about the breed. So, soon after, I went to another show; it happened to be a UKC show. There, I met Ron Ramos, who was from Fresno (Calif.) and had American Pit Bull Terriers, which is how the UKC registered AmStaffs at that time. I ended up buying two from him later."

Ed won more than 50 UKC Bests in Show the next three to four years, including with CH Hilltop's King Cobra, CD, ROH, CGC, TT, a Staffie he bought from Chris Lee of Hilltop Kennels in Richmond, Va. "Cobra" was registered in the UKC and the AKC. Ed finished Cobra and started handling other breeds, including American Eskimos and Boxers, for other owners. By UKC rules, Ed could not be a professional handler, but the volume of experience he gained in several years in those shows was beneficial.

Ed attended a handling class given by AKC professional handler Laurie Jordan-Fenner in 2002 in Sacramento, Calif., and has worked as a professional AKC handler since. "She put me through handling boot camp," he says. "I give her credit for teaching me everything I needed to know to compete in AKC shows."

Ed attended his first AKC show in the San Francisco Bay Area in April 2003 and finished Cobra's championship the next month at the Great Western Terrier Dog Show in Southern California.

"Because of my background in sports, competing with dogs was natural for me," says Ed. "You go into the ring with a dog you believe in, and, hopefully, you will win with that dog you've bred, trained, conditioned and shown. That's the goal."

When Karen and Ed met in 2004, true to their all-or-nothing form, they began a full-hearted but long-distance relationship.

A Team Effort

The Thomasons started Alpine Falls with a candid evaluation of what improvements needed to be made in breeding Alpine Falls AmStaffs. They decided to focus on shoulders and movement.

"No dog is perfect," Karen says. "We breed to minimize faults and get as close to the standard as possible."

To set goals as breeders, they considered who

in the fancy they admire and what those breeders have achieved. One person particularly stood out.

"Pat Trotter is somebody we look up to," says Karen. "She has been a successful breeder, one of the best ever, in my opinion. We look at people like Pat and aim to achieve at least as high goals as they have. We feel like we've only cracked the ice of what we're capable of doing."



The Thomasons have done well since their first Alpine Falls litter, whelped by Pixie in 2005. It included CH Alpine's Jamaica Me Crazy. "Vixen" was the 2009 and 2010 Top Producing Dam in the breed and has produced 10 AKC Champions, including BIS/BISS GCH Alpine's Ring of Fire. "Phoenix" won the 2010 Junior World and Junior Euro dog shows and was the top terrier in Hungary in 2010, the same year he won the National Specialty in Spain. Phoenix has won four Bests in Show and more than 50 Group Firsts since returning to the U.S., where he is shown by a friend of the Thomasons, professional handler Brian Livingston of Aubrey, Texas.

Breeding AmStaffs not only is at the center of Ed and Karen's teamwork, it's what brought them together. A thorough researcher of breeding lines, Karen looked into Cobra's line after seeing Ed handle him at the Northern California Terrier Association Dog Show in 2003 in Sacramento, Calif. She later learned that Cobra shared a common line with a dog

Ed cleans the Alpines Falls kennel, after Karen and C.J. have taken the dogs into the dog room in the Thomasons' house.

America's Terrier

The American Staffordshire Terrier is a muscular, agile dog of great strength. A cross between a Bulldog and a terrier, the breed was developed in England and brought to the U.S. in the late 19th century. The American Kennel Club registered the Staffordshire Terrier in 1936 but revised the name to American Staffordshire Terrier in 1972 to reflect the heavier breed type developed by Americans.

"This breed historically played an important role as guardians of children and the homestead on American farms," says Alpine Falls AmStaff breeder Karen Thomason. "They are great family pets that are incredibly versatile. They also are loyal and have great personalities. AmStaff owners often call them the 'clown of the household.'"



BIS/BISS GCH Alpine's Highwayman ("Jelly")

she co-owned and was looking to breed. She called Ed to talk about breeding the bitch to Cobra.

"We talked off and on and became friends," Karen says. "After the puppies were born, we sent pictures of them back and forth. It wasn't until January 2004 that we spent any time together at a dog show."

"The dogs brought us together," Ed says. "I moved up to Washington in the fall of 2004. It was intense. We knew early on this was where we were going with the relationship, and one of us needed to move."

Karen laughs. "I told him I wasn't interested in wasting my time if he wasn't going to be serious," she says. "I also told him I wouldn't move to California, that I wouldn't leave my family."

"You're crazy," Ed says, with a smile and a playfully mocking tone. "Who doesn't want to live in California?"

"Well, I would have been willing to move, but I really didn't want to," says Karen.

They bought their home on three acres in Rochester early in 2005. It's centrally located between Seattle and Portland, where they attend many dog shows. They built a covered outdoor kennel with 10 runs ranging from 50 to 160 square feet, plus a 20-by-65-foot run that allows extra space for two dogs. The dogs are rotated through the extra-large run. All dogs get 12 hours of free play in the fenced one-acre backyard, weather permitting.

While Ed and the Thomasons' assistant, C.J. Fisher

of Newburg, Ore., are traveling to shows, Karen tends to the kennel and the dogs at home. Three times a week, each dog gets additional exercise chasing tennis balls. When all are home, C.J. helps with kennel work and moving dogs between the kennel and the dog room inside the house. Karen grooms the dogs in the laundry room. Ed cleans the paver-block kennel runs and, when there is a litter of puppies, helps Karen with them. Karen starts puppies' training, and Ed trains them for conformation.

The 17-foot-long modified cargo truck Ed and C.J. take to shows sits in the shade, parked beside the small circle drive. Though Ed flies to some shows, he drives around 60,000 miles showing dogs about 50 weekends a year. That constant activity as a pro handler is a bonus for the Alpine Falls breeding program.

"We have a distinct advantage, because of what I do," says Ed. "I'm all across the country, getting to see dogs more than other breeders do. I can evaluate them and consider dogs we potentially would like to breed to."

While Ed and Karen learned much of what they know about dogs through experience and observation, they are mentors to C.J.. "I think anybody who wants to get into the sport should know all facets," Ed says. "With us, C.J. is learning the show and breeding sides."

Fulfilling Potential

Alpine Falls had three litters in 2011, and has had eight total. It was the first year Ed and Karen have bred more than one litter in a year. They don't breed unless they are ready to have a new dog for themselves.

Karen and Ed have bred 16 Champions. Dogs they have bred have won four National Specialties in the U.S. and Europe and 26 all-breed Bests in Show internationally. They conservatively estimate they have bred winners of more than 150 Group Firsts. The Thomasons are AKC Breeders of Merit, as well, meaning they have been involved with AKC events for at least five years, have bred or co-bred four or more champions in conformation, performance or companion events, are members of an AKC club, and can certify that their dogs receive health screening.



Vixen watches intently as Karen scoops *Purina Pro Plan* Sensitive Skin & Stomach Formula. Alpine Falls dogs also are fed *Purina Pro Plan* Selects Natural Turkey & Barley and *Purina Pro Plan* Performance formulas.

Still, Ed says the success of Alpine Falls AmStaffs is not all due to him and Karen. "A breeder can breed a good dog," Ed says, "but the owner you put a dog with can make the dog great."

Valerie Piltz of Bellevue,

Wash., owns and competes in dog sports with the dog the Thomasons consider to be the ultimate representation of the breed's versatility: INTLCH UNJ CA URO3 UAG2 FO UCD UWPS UGWPC UKC GRCH Alpine's Vintage Power Trip, RN, CD, ROH, CGC, TT, TDI ("Power").

"In my mind, there is no more versatile breed," Ed says, "and Power is the definition of what an AmStaff should be. Valerie deserves a lot of credit for what Power has achieved. She has helped him to fulfill his potential."

Ed has helped many other dogs fulfill their conformation potentials. He has handled the No. 1 American Staffordshire Terrier for five years. Besides Jelly, he handled CH Fraja NE Gold Ticket ("Brody") and CH GAFF's I'm Here for the Party ("Sally") to be No. 1 in 2008 and 2009, respectively.

Three to five client dogs live full time with the Thomasons for Ed to exhibit. He typically handles around 15 dogs at a show. He handles the No. 1 Bullmastiff, GCH Kingslynn-Kimo NW ("Fletcher"); the No. 3 Tibetan Spaniel, GCH Kolumbia's Rock N Roll Legend ("Elvis"); and the No. 3 Parson Russell Terrier, GCH Snow Winds Masked Bandit ("Zorro").

Ed has handled Best in Show winners in the Working, Terrier and Toy groups, and has shown Top 10 Terrier and Working dogs. He has handled 10 dogs of seven breeds to No. 1 rankings, including a Clumber Spaniel, German Pinscher, Bullmastiff and Tibetan Mastiff. Still, Jelly has a special place.

Jelly has been at the other end of the lead for 21 of Ed's 35 AKC all-breed Bests in Show. An up-and-coming Alpine Falls AmStaff with one of those Bests in Show is BIS/BISS GCH Alpine's Catch Me If You Can. A son of Phoenix, "Chase" has been showed sparingly by Ed in the U.S. but won Best Terrier in Show at the Northern California Terrier

Association Dog Show this year. Chase also is a Champion in Luxembourg, Romania and Hungary, handled by Norbert Tibay of Budapest, Hungary.

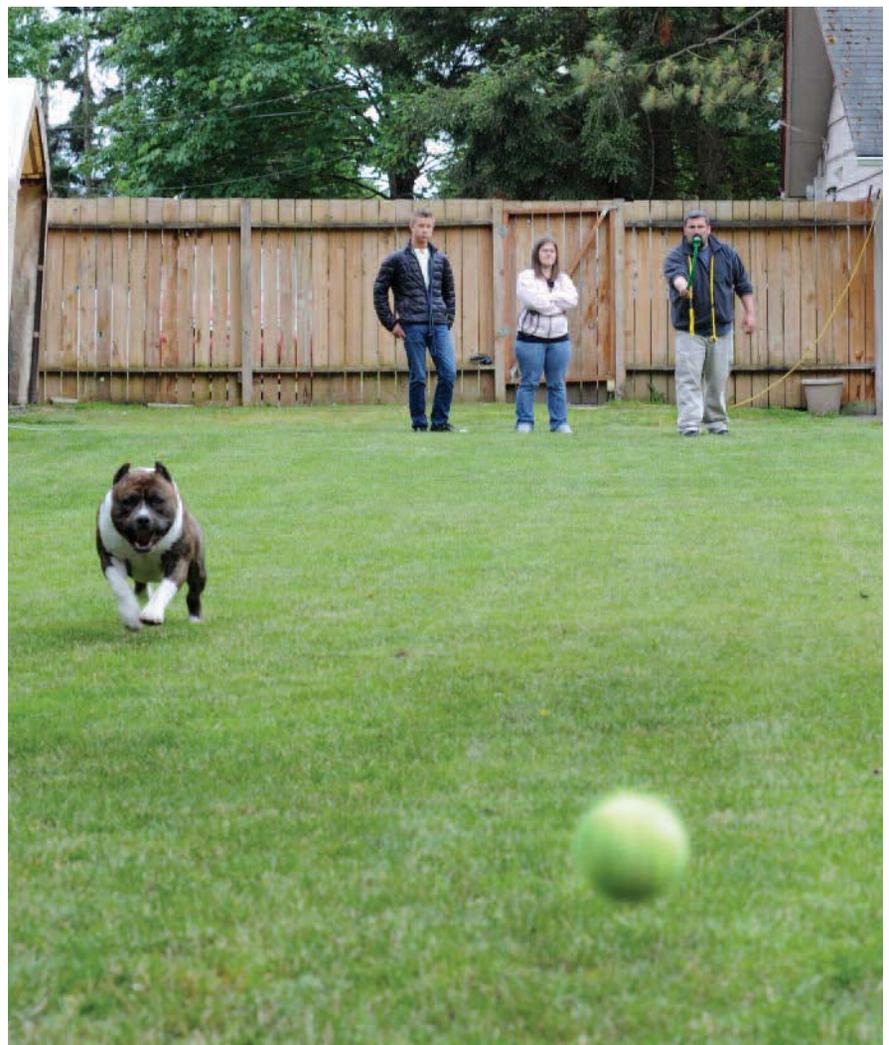
"Jelly is the top-winning dog I've shown," says Ed, "and we bred him, so that makes him extra cool."

"Jelly is very special to us," Karen says, "for how much he is like his grandmother, Pixie, in looks and behavior. Even if he hadn't ever won a dog show, he'd be special to us."

Jelly, though, has won many times. With his intense desire, he seemingly has taken to the fiery blend of intense competition and exuberance of winning that drives his breeder-owner-handler, Ed.

"I just don't believe in doing anything halfway," Ed says. "Karen and I have hefty goals and work to be the best at what we do to achieve them. We have dedicated our lives to this." ■

Jelly chases a tennis ball tossed by Ed, right, while C.J. and Karen watch in the Thomasons' one-acre fenced backyard.





Getting Started on Multiple Marks

BY MIKE LARDY

It is a big step for a young dog to retrieve memory birds. The ability to remember and go after a memory mark is something taught most effectively in a deliberate progression. If you attempt to run memory marks without such a progression, you may encounter significant problems, such as no-goes, spinning, popping or other attitude-related issues that can bog down your training or even limit your dog's potential.

The progression toward running multiple marks begins when you start simple single marks. Fundamental retrieving "mechanics" on single marks are the first prerequisite for running multiple marks. Your pup should watch the mark, go get it and bring it back. That sounds simple enough, but a lot of early problems on multiple marks stem from problems with marking mechanics. There are several issues with marking mechanics that must be addressed before you proceed with multiple mark training.

- Your pup should be somewhat steady on line. He should watch any marks to the ground without squirming around in your arms or tugging or twisting on a lead. It is best if your pup is "lead steady," or sits still on a taut lead.
- Get your dog accustomed to the "mark" cue. Tell him "mark" before a single is thrown. This cue will get him to focus on the thrower and will later be used as a cue prior to sending him on memory birds.
- Your pup should run eagerly after single marks and hunt aggressively when a single mark is hidden in moderate cover. Your dog's enthusiasm for memory marks will be less than it is for single marks, so you can't hope he'll be eager for memory marks if he's only mildly interested in singles.
- Your pup should be accustomed to getting "help" from the gun. Over the course of his training whenever he was completely lost on a mark, he should have learned to recover with help from the thrower.

Your dog is even more likely to get confused or lost on memory marks, so it is important to be able to take help.

- Your pup should return to you directly and deliver to hand. If your pup drops the bird away from you or if you are getting into delivery hassles, that is not the time to teach memory marks. This last prerequisite means your dog ought to have completed force fetch in the yard before being taught doubles in the field.

If your dog's retrieving mechanics meet the above criteria, then you ought to proceed toward multiple mark training.

However, before actually starting to teach doubles, there are a few steps in the marking progression.

- Get your dog accustomed to running singles off multiple guns. The guns don't have to be close together, but your dog should not be distracted by multiple stations in the field watching birds, going after the mark or returning.
- Get your dog accustomed to being sent on marks on his name after you put your hand down over and in front of his head. This creates a chain of events leading to his release, a chain that will help to trigger his going on future memory marks. This same chain will help you when you start lining your dog to a pile of bumpers in yard work.
- Get your dog accustomed to focusing on the next mark to be thrown when delivering a mark with multiple guns in the field. Ultimately, your dog should be comfortable watching the next mark being thrown while still holding the bird from the previous retrieve. This creates the mechanics of a memory mark. The dog comes in with the prior mark and focuses on the next mark to be retrieved before delivery. This also results in a sort of minimemory mark because there is a delay before you send for the single created by taking delivery.

Now, you're set to begin teaching doubles. Initially, your double setups should have the guns nearly 90 degrees apart to avoid confusion. You also want to keep the setup as simple as possible, so avoid using a field with heavy cover or aggressive terrain and generally throw the marks downwind. Above all, you should teach doubles on land. The water presents too many complications for your initial taught doubles.

I teach a double by running the memory bird as a single first, and then make it a double by throwing the memory bird and then the "go-bird." When your dog returns with the go-bird, have him deliver at your side, facing the memory gun. Cue with "mark" just before you take the bird from him, and then send with your hand down.

If your dog "no-goes," then you want to immediately offer

gunner assistance. That is, the thrower could stand up, wave his arms or even yell "hey-hey." The idea is that the dog will look out and remember the mark or will simply be intrigued enough to run out when you send him. Here's where the art of dog training comes in. You can often read your dog and determine whether he's going to go before you even send him. If you read any reluctance, you might have the gun offer some assistance, such as simply standing, before you attempt to send.

More likely, your dog will look ready to go and will rocket out after the memory bird. That's great, but it's just the beginning.

Now, over a period of several days, you will run a series of taught doubles in various places keeping the setup fairly simple and always being prepared to offer gunner assistance. You should continue to run singles off multiple guns as well, so your dog doesn't start head swinging in anticipation of seeing the next bird thrown.

As soon as your dog has successfully completed several taught doubles, you can proceed to running cold doubles, or running a double without first running the memory bird as a single.

It is important to have the gun ready to offer assistance.

You don't want to have your dog fail. A dog that starts no-going can develop a mental block about going on memory marks. To help ensure success, you should not increase the complexity of these early doubles. Just keep the guns widely spread, clearly visible and a relatively short length.

Once your dog successfully runs cold doubles, you should virtually never go back to running any memory mark first as a single. Now, all marks will have a unique address, so your dog won't fall into the pitfalls that can develop from repeating marks. One exception is that I might go back to taught doubles for the first few doubles on water.

The progression I've laid out for learning multiple marks is quite simple. It is often tempting to try a multiple your dog is unprepared for, especially in a competitive training atmosphere, but your long-term success will be greater if you keep to the simple progression. As with all aspects of dog training, the key is to read your dog, knowing when to simplify and when to challenge. Before you know it, your dog will perform memory marks with ease. ■

Professional retriever trainer and handler Mike Lardy has trained over 70 Field Champions and won the National Retriever Championship a record seven times. A member of the Retriever Hall of Fame, Lardy conducts training workshops, has produced three training videos/DVDs, and is the author of a three-volume collection of training articles. For information, visit www.totalretriever.com or call 800-848-5963.

As with all aspects of dog training, the key is to read your dog, knowing when to simplify and when to challenge.

Around the World AND BACK

BY ANGELA HE

Celebrating the origins of 41 breeds of dog at the International Cheese, Wine & Canine Festival in June at the Purina Event Center at Purina Farms, more than 750 people sipped wine and sampled cheese from around the world while learning about the breeds.

Ancient breeds like the Basenji, Afghan Hound and Saluki were featured as well as more recent breeds like the American Staffordshire Terrier and Alapaha Blue Blood Bulldog. Rare breeds, such as the L'epagneul de Saint-Usuge, a spaniel from the Bresse region of France, and the Portuguese Podengo, a rabbit hunting hound, also were represented.

Organized by the Missouri Rhineland Kennel Club, the inaugural event attracted area breeders,

Linny Linnemeyer's 7-week-old puppy, Linny's Dio, center, blends in with the stuffed toy Siberian Huskies.



fanciers and rescue groups, who decorated booths and dressed in festive clothing to show their breeds' countries of origin. People looking for a breed and those wanting to learn about purebred dogs attended. Flying disc routines by the *Pro Plan* Performance Team and rally obedience demonstrations combined with German and Irish dancers, musicians and belly dancers made for an enjoyable evening.

"This was a unique Meet the Breed event, where we paired dogs by country of origin with wine from those regions," said Susan Watermann, president of the Missouri Rhineland Kennel Club. "The members of our all-breed kennel club brought a variety of breeds. This was a wonderful opportunity to educate the public about dogs, dog breeds, competitive canine sports, and the many ways dogs enrich our lives."

As participants stopped at each booth, they were greeted by ambassadors eager to share their breed's history. Afghan Hound breeder Joy Atkins-Miller of Franklin County, Mo., said, "Afghans are believed to have descended from the Siberian Wolf and to have come from the deserts of Afghanistan in the 19th century. In Afghan lore it is said that during the



time of Noah's Ark, the Tazi, an ancient desert breed, was actually an Afghan Hound."

Atkins-Miller, who has bred Afghan Hounds under the Amon Rih prefix since 1974, brought adult dogs, GCH Suhden Nicholi Nigella ("Nicholi") and CH Elf's Evening Star of Entesar ("Savannah"), and 17-month-old puppies, Amon Rih Khemosabi ("Khemosabi") and Amon Rih Farouka ("Lovie").

A coursing breed that pursues its quarry by sight, the Afghan Hound is a natural hunter and scavenger. "These dogs were renowned for their skills in the field," said Atkins-Miller. "They were given as coveted gifts to Afghan nobles and royalty."

Depicting the breed's aloofness, Nicholi and Savannah sat elegantly on top a velvet-covered bench, while Khemosabi and Lovie playfully chased each other. "Afghans are a cheerful, dignified breed," Atkins-Miller said, holding tightly to the puppies' leads and adding, "with lots of energy."

Near the Afghan Hound booth was a village of Basenji lovers from the Show-Me and Route 66 Basenji clubs. Their decorative grass hut, synthetic fire pit and African tribal clothing earned them third place in the voting for Best Decorated Booth. One of the oldest breeds, the Basenji is prized for his intelligence and for not barking. Rather, these dogs yodel when excited.

Basenji owner Terry Colbert of Alton, Ill., said, "The Basenji is primarily a sighthound, though they also hunt by scent. They are definitely prey-driven.

"The Basenji is a high-energy dog that needs plenty of exercise and attention. They are not a good pet for everyone," she added.

Jon Curby of Columbia, Mo., has bred Basenjies under the Kibushi prefix since 1971 and has visited the Republic of Congo five times since 1987 to bring back native breeding stock. "Most European breeds are about 200 years old," he said. "In comparison, the Basenji goes back at least 2,000 years."

A few booths away, Golden Retriever enthusiasts wearing clothing with bright Scottish tartans proudly talked about one of the most popular breeds in the U.S. "These loyal dogs love sitting on your lap," said Suzanne Wakefield of High Ridge, Mo., as she stroked the glossy coat of AM/INT CH Blazen's Tx Twister, CD, RA, NAJ, AXP, MJP, OFP,

a Golden Retriever Club of America Hall of Fame member owned by Lesley Albin. The gentle retriever calmly laid down by Wakefield's feet.

A member of the Golden Retriever Club of Greater St. Louis, Wakefield handles breeder referrals and public education. "Goldens were developed in Scotland in the 19th century by Lord Tweedmouth, who wanted a dog that could hunt in the field all day and then come home at night and lie by the fire," she said. "These dogs remain true to that purpose.

They are hunting dogs with keen water retrieving abilities and also are friendly, trustworthy companions."

In the Asian area, a Nordic breed, the Siberian Husky, charmed all who stopped to visit with breeder Linny Linnemeyer of Union, Mo. Her three 7-week-old puppies are littermates with distinctive coat colors, gray and white, black and white, and mahogany red and white.

The puppies looked identical to the stuffed toy Siberian Huskies she brought to decorate the booth.

"Siberians were originally bred to be endurance sled dogs," Linnemeyer said. "They love running and are very intelligent with a sweet, determined disposition, though at times they can be stubborn."

The Siberians' beautiful blue eyes and thick, furry double coats distinguish them. "People imagine Huskies as very large dogs that weigh around 70 or 80 pounds. However, they actually are a perfect medium-sized dog that grows to be between 35 to 60 pounds," Linnemeyer said.

As the Husky puppies began howling, she added, "They are also quite vocal."

The relaxed pace of the event, combined with the breed education, entertainment and wine and cheese samples, made for an enriching experience. ■

For more information or to schedule an event at the Purina Event Center, please contact Kaite Flamm, Purina Event Center Manager, at 888-688-PETS (888-688-7387), or by email at kaite.flamm@purina.nestle.com. Please visit www.purinaproclub.com/eventcenter to learn more about the Purina Event Center.



Basenji lovers from the Show-Me and Route 66 Basenji clubs are, from left, Annette Muentner, Jan Kahl, Joe Stewart, Terry Colbert, Lisa Stewart, and Angela Anderson.

The Call of Duty

Purina has joined forces with the North American Police Work Dog Association (NAPWDA) as the official dog food sponsor. The organization, made up of more than 3,700 K-9 teams from across the country, provides accreditation, education and training for working police dogs and handlers.

Harold "Ben" Bennett, NAPWDA president, says, "Partnering with Purina has provided a platform to promote optimal nutrition for these hardworking dogs. We appreciate the opportunities that Purina's sponsorship has brought to broaden our programs and have an impact at the grass-roots level."

Purina Director of Marketing Steve Remspecher says, "Purina's sponsorship of NAPWDA recognizes the unique bond between police officers and their canine partners. These officers' concern for the health, conditioning, training and overall welfare of their canine partners could have life or death consequences as they protect the neighborhoods, towns and cities we live in."

Among the common breeds represented in NAPWDA are Belgian Malinois, Dutch Shepherds and German Shepherd Dogs. Annual certification helps to ensure thoroughly trained police canines assist in the prevention and detection of crime.

PurinaCare Pet Health Insurance is the official pet insurance for NAPWDA. When handlers sign up for PurinaCare Pet Health Insurance between April 1, 2012, and March 31, 2013, Purina donates \$25 to the NAPWDA memorial fund that benefits the families of officers killed in the line of duty. In 2011, 177 officers working in all areas of police work lost their lives.



Advancing Genomics Knowledge

Nearly 200 geneticists from 22 countries attended the sixth biennial International Conference on Advances in Canine and Feline Genomics and Inherited Diseases in May in Visby, Sweden. Sponsored by Purina, the five-day program featured genomic advances related to cancer, immunology, neurology, behavior, evolution, and morphology.



Among the latest discoveries presented were:

- the autosomal recessive mutation for polyneuropathy, a muscle atrophy disease that leads to paralysis, in Alaskan Malamutes
- an idiopathic epilepsy locus on a novel region of chromosome 37 in Belgian Shepherds, although epilepsy can be polygenic in this breed as well as many others
- a novel mutation causing a heterozygous form of progressive retinal atrophy in Golden Retrievers, making this the third form of PRA in the breed
- a deletion of the last exon of FAN1 in Basenjis, which causes a generalized proximal tubule reabsorption kidney deficiency known as Fanconi syndrome
- novel mutations in two closely linked genes associated with protein-losing nephropathy in Soft-Coated Wheaten Terriers, a fatal disease that occurs around 6 years of age and affects from 5 to 15 percent of the breed

"Purina has sponsored the international canine and feline genomics conference since the first one in 2002," says Purina Senior Research Scientist Rondo Middleton, Ph.D., a member of the scientific organizational committee. "This type of research highlights the advances in genomics technology and knowledge as it is applied to our companions. It is a huge part of improving the health and wellness of these animals. Research in genomics is fundamental to our work in molecular nutrition and, more specifically, nutrigenomics, in which we apply knowledge about nutritional effects on gene expression."

The genomics conference was followed by the first International Workshop on Enhancement of Genetic Health in Purebred Dogs, sponsored by Purina and organized by the Swedish Kennel Club.

The workshop, held in Stockholm, was attended by about 150 kennel club officials, dog breeders, veterinary geneticists, and representatives of genetic testing laboratories.

A President's Award

Honoring Purina for its longtime support, Bird Dog Foundation Executive Director David Smith presented Purina the President's Award during a ceremony in February. "Purina has been with us since day one offering funding support and sponsorship of our events," Smith says. "Purina is to be commended. Bob West and his team are tremendous to work with. They are always there to help us."

A recent contribution of \$4,059 from the American Field English Setter and Pointer associations was made possible through the Purina Parent Club Partnership Program. This program provides funding to support health, education and rescue when *Pro Club* members declare support for their parent clubs and submit weight circles from bags of participating *Purina* brand dog foods.

The funding, earmarked for the Michael R. Tuxon Education Fund, is providing two college scholarships and supporting youth education efforts. The education fund is named for Tuxon, a charter board member of the Foundation who passed away.

Founded in 1991, the Bird Dog Foundation in Grand Junction, Tenn., is dedicated to preserving the past and protecting the future for sporting dog fanciers worldwide. The Foundation's 24,000-square-foot facility includes the National Bird Dog Museum for Pointing Dogs, Retrievers and Spaniels, the Field Trial Hall of Fame and the Wildlife Heritage Center. In February 2012, the Foundation opened a new 6,000-square-foot annex featuring a variety of sporting breeds. ■



Bird Dog Foundation Executive Director David Smith, left, presents the President's Award to Purina Director of Sporting Bob West, center, and Purina Director of Marketing Steve Remspecher.

Resilient Retrievers & Mastiff Types

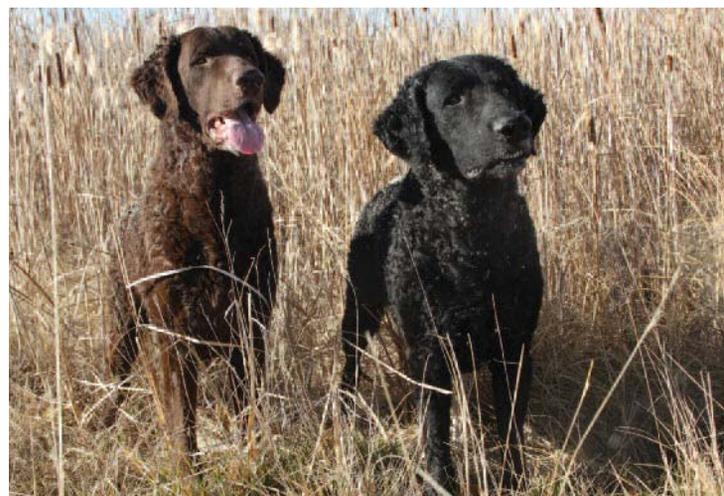
Flat-Coated Retriever

Originally known as the Wavy-Coated Retriever, the Flat-Coated Retriever is a versatile family companion and hunting retriever whose happy, active demeanor is reflected in his hallmark tail wagging. His ancestors include the "Retriever Proper," a cross breed that emerged from the Large Newfoundland, setter, sheepdog and spaniel-like water dogs.

Recognized by the American Kennel Club in 1915, the Flat-Coated Retriever dwindled to dangerous levels following the two world wars. Eventually the breed was put back on sound footing, thanks to the efforts of Stanley O'Neill, one of the greatest authorities on the breed. Slightly racier and more moderate in bone than other retriever breeds, the



Flat-Coated Retriever



Curly-Coated Retrievers



Great Dane

Flat-Coat has a solid black or liver coat that protects him from elements and lies straight and flat. Males are 23 to 24 ½ inches tall at the withers, and females are 22 to 23 ½ inches.

Curly-Coated Retriever

One of the oldest retriever breeds, the Curly-Coated Retriever is distinguished by his water-resistant black or liver coat of small, tight curls. A strong, robust breed developed in England to be a multi-purpose hunting retriever, the Curly-Coated Retriever descended from the 16th century English Water Spaniel, St. John's Newfoundland, the retrieving setter and the Poodle.

First exhibited in England in 1860, the Curly-Coated Retriever was introduced in the U.S. around 1907. A charming, gentle family companion that is also a determined, durable hunter, this retriever exudes graceful elegance somewhat uncommon among other retriever breeds. Males are 25 to 27 inches tall at the withers, and females are 23 to 25 inches.

Great Dane

An elegant, distinguished Mastiff-type dog, the Great Dane was developed in Germany more than 400 years ago despite his name sounding like he is from Denmark. The English adopted Great Dane from the old French name, grand Danois, or big Danish. Most of the finest Great Dane specimens came from Germany, where the

breed was developed to have the speed, endurance, courage and size to hunt boar.

Spirited, friendly and dependable, the Great Dane has a magnificent, regal appearance with a well-formed, smoothly muscled body. Great Danes may be brindle, fawn, blue, black, harlequin or mantle. Males are a minimum of 30 inches at the shoulders, and females are a minimum of 28 inches.

Neapolitan Mastiff

An ancient breed descending from Egypt, Persia, Mesopotamia and Asia, the Neapolitan Mastiff was rediscovered in Italy in the 1940s, where he was used as a guard and defender. Characterized by his massive size, loose skin, abundant wrinkles and folds on his head, and voluminous dewlap, his essence is a bestial appearance and astounding head.

Loyal to his family and wary of strangers, the Neapolitan Mastiff is generally peaceful, calm and steady despite his serious demeanor. This breed is best paired with experienced dog owners without young children. Males are 26 to 31 inches and average 150 pounds. Females are 24 to 29 inches and average 110 pounds.

Sources: *The Complete Dog Book*, Official Publication of the American Kennel Club (New York: Ballentine Books, 2006) and the website of the American Kennel Club (www.akc.org).



Neapolitan Mastiff


CIRCLE OF CHAMPIONS

Rocheuses Bouvier des Flandres Called 'Casper' Is the No. 1 Herding Dog

Solid breed type, a showy attitude and a proud, powerful gait have helped to make Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Rocheuses Me and My Shadow of Cornus the No. 1 Herding Dog in the country. "Casper," a Bouvier des Flandres, was co-bred by Doug and Michaelanne Johnson of Colorado Springs, Colo., and Karen Brown of Parker, Colo.

"With his short back, harsh coat, impressive head and good balance, Casper is a phenomenal breed representative," says Heather Johnson, also of Colorado Springs, who handles the dog and co-owns him with her husband, Colton Johnson, Brown, and Frank and Corrine Dreyfus of Goolsby, Ala.

Besides being the No. 1 Herding Dog, Casper is the second Bouvier in history to win Best of Breed and the Top 20 at the American Bouvier des Flandres Club National Specialty. The 3-year-old stood out among 226 dogs when he won the National

Specialty last October. His record includes winning 15 Bests in Show and five Bests in Specialty Show.

Casper was sired by Multi-BIS CH Rocheuses Oh What a Night out of CH Rocheuses It's All About Me.

For the Johnsons, campaigning show dogs is a family affair. Doug and Michaelanne Johnson have bred Bouviers under the Rocheuses prefix for 36 years and Old English Sheepdogs under the Bugaboo prefix for more than 30 years. The family owns two boarding kennels, Woodmen Kennels and Sunrise Kennels, in Colorado Springs. Colton and Heather Johnson work as trainers and run a dog day care from Sunrise Kennels.

As professional all-breed handlers, Heather and Colton Johnson devote two weekends a month to dog shows, usually taking 15 to 20 dogs. Of their own dogs, Heather handles the Bouviers and Colton the Old

English Sheepdogs. Doug and Michaelanne Johnson attend most shows to help with the dogs and granddaughters Taylor, 5, and Cameron, 3.

"Our teamwork has a lot of benefits," Heather Johnson says. "While Colton and I support Doug and Michaelanne by showing their dogs, they support us by caring for our children while we are in the ring doing what we love. As a result, we are all able to compete at a higher level and bring out the potential in outstanding dogs like Casper."

A friendly, laidback dog who loves to be around people, Casper "is an excellent companion during the commute to drop the girls off at school and a spirited spectator at their soccer



Heather Johnson wins the American Bouvier des Flandres Club National Specialty with GCH Rocheuses Me and my Shadow of Cornus. From left are show chairman Lee Calhoun, judge Judith Goodin, Johnson and Purina representative Diana Allen.

games," Heather Johnson says.

Casper is fueled by *Purina Pro Plan Sensitive Skin & Stomach Formula*.

'Dreamer' Sets Havanese Record with Back-to-Back Bests in Show

A handsome 3-year-old black-and-white Havanese, called "Dreamer," made history in April when he won his fifth Best in Show. Topping entries of more than 1,500 dogs per show, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Bellatak McDreamy captured back-to-back Bests in Show at the Terry-All Kennel Club dog shows and became the top-winning Havanese of all time.

"Dreamer was at the top of his game both days," says professional handler David Murray of Los Angeles. "He charmed the judges with his outgoing, animated temperament and beautiful conformation."

When Murray called breeder and co-owner Kathy Patrick of Sacramento with the news that Dreamer broke the record, she was ecstatic. "For Dreamer to have accomplished this is incredible and to do so with back-to-back wins is absolutely amazing," says Patrick, who owns the Havanese with her husband, Tom Patrick, John Oakes and Carole Shea of New Milford, Conn., and Jane Samson of Aliso Viejo, Calif.

Sired by CH Bellatak Cupid's Arrow out of CH Amor Good Golly Miss Molly, Dreamer inherited the best qualities of his sire and dam.



GCH Bellatak McDreamy is the top-winning Havanese.

"Dreamer fits the standard to a T," says Patrick, a Havanese breeder under the Bellatak prefix since 2002.

Dreamer has been the No. 1

Havanese in the country since January 2010, when he began his Specials campaign. He follows another Bellatak Havanese Special, CH Bellatak My Funny Valentine ("Vallee"), the No. 1 Havanese in 2009 and winner of the 2008 and 2009 Havanese Club of America national specialties and two Bests in Show. The seven Bests in Shows earned by Vallee and Dreamer constitute another record: The most achieved by a single breeder.

Dreamer is fueled by *Purina Pro Plan Shredded Blend Chicken & Rice Formula*.

'Aero,' 'Pogo' and 'Cisco' Win Purina Outstanding Retriever Awards

Three black Labrador Retrievers took top honors in April as the 2011 Purina Outstanding Field Trial Retriever Award winners. The retrievers, along with their owners and handlers, were recognized at the 28th annual awards banquet in Sedalia, Mo.

FC-AFC Landover's Right On Target ("Aero"), a 9-year-old male Labrador Retriever owned by David and Virginia Furin of Hibbing, Minn., and Paul Panichi of Chisholm, Minn., and handled by David Furin and Dave Rorem of International Falls, Minn., was the Purina Open All-Age Retriever winner after earning 30 points during the yearlong competition.

Aero, who overcame shoulder injuries as a puppy and Derby dog, suffered a torn cruciate in the fall of 2010 but recovered fully and put together his best year ever with five wins in 23 starts to earn the Purina Open All-Age Award.

"Aero is just a wonderful dog for an amateur to own," says David Furin. "He has a calm, focused disposition when he's going to the line, and his work ethic is fantastic. He's the same dog every day."

David Furin, who handled Aero to two of the Open wins, also credits Dave, Paulette and Ty Rorem of Rorem Retrievers for their work with Aero.



David and Virginia Furin hold the silk banner honoring their Labrador Retriever, "Aero," as the Purina Open All-Age Retriever.

The 2011 Purina Outstanding Amateur All-Age Award went to FC-AFC Trumarc's L'il Ms Pogo, a 10-year-old female Labrador Retriever owned by Martha and John Russell of Gainesville, Texas, and handled by Martha Russell. "Pogo" had a tremendous year, earning 30 1/2 points with three wins and eight placements in 18 starts.

Pogo has qualified for seven National Amateurs and is a four-time Finalist. She also is a double-header winner and has 127 All-Age Points.

"Pogo is a dog that likes to please," Martha Russell says. "What she's accomplished sometimes seems impossible. We saw that when Pogo did water marks at 5 months old. We knew then she was special and had the potential."

Martha Russell also

credits professional retriever trainers Judy Aycock and Danny Farmer for helping Pogo get off to a great start.

The 2011 Purina Outstanding Derby Dog is Keeno's Cisco, who earned 64 points with eight wins and 10 placements in 30 starts. The 2 1/2-year-old male Labrador Retriever, owned by Mark and Suzanne Medford of Memphis, Tenn., and handled by Mark Medford, was sired by NAFC-FC Cody Cut A Lean Grade out of Keeno's Callie.

"Cisco" ran against his littermate, Keeno's Leather and Lace ("Lacey"), throughout the Derby competition, and the pair accumulated 110 points. Mark Medford credits Cisco's tremendous focus and desire and the work of professional handler Chris Ledford and Wild Wind Kennels for the retriever's success.

The awards banquet was

held at Wood Dale Farms, the home of Bob and Barbara Hayden of Sedalia, Mo., in conjunction with the Kansas City Retriever Club's licensed field trial. The winners received engraved Purina Award plaques, oil paintings of their dogs by Ross Young of Springfield, Mo., satin award banners, and a year's supply of Purina Pro Plan Performance Formula for one dog. Rorem received a ring and \$5,000 as Aero's professional handler, and Pogo's owners each received a diamond ring.

The Purina Award ceremony was preceded by a one-day seminar, "Trialing Versus Training," presented by Bill and Becky Eckett of Blackwater Retrievers. Fifty handlers attended the second annual workshop, which was open to all attendees.

The Purina Award program is administered and scored by a committee 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.



John Russell, right, and his wife, Martha, receive the Purina Outstanding Amateur All-Age Award for their Labrador Retriever, "Pogo." Purina Director of Sporting Bob West is center.



Owner Mark Medford, left, and professional handler Chris Ledford pose with "Cisco," the Purina Outstanding Derby Dog. Medford credits Ledford for helping to develop the retriever's focus and desire.

Jessup Wins Fourth Straight Purina Award for the Outstanding Coonhound

A 4-year-old male English Coonhound, CH GR NITE CH 'PR' Hailes Red River, was honored as the 2011 Purina Outstanding Nite Hunt Coonhound. Co-owners Jody Jessup of Rural Hall, N.C., and Penny Jessup of London, Ky., received the 31st annual Nite Hunt Award presented to "Red," who outperformed 4,204 hounds. It was Jody Jessup's fourth consecutive year to handle the Purina Award winner.

During the yearlong competition, Red earned 600 points in 15 of 23 events, which included winning the Missouri and Minnesota state championships. Jessup handled Red to 10th place at the World Hunt and made the Grand 16, a new designation for the Top 16 finishers, at Autumn Oaks.

"Red is very intelligent and a steady tree dog," Penny Jessup says. "He has a distinguishing, consistent bark."

"He is a different dog in a Nite Hunt than when we pleasure hunt," Jody Jessup adds. "When it's time to compete, he knows and competes hard."

Bred by Shane Ireland of Pleasant Hope, Mo., Red was

sired by GR CH GR NITE CH 'PR' Herd's Barber Creek Ace out of 'PR' L&L Briar Creek Little Sweetie. "Ace" was the World Champion English Coonhound at the 2004 World Hunt.

Jessup handled a Black & Tan

Coonhound, GR NITE CH Chenoweth's Rebel, to win the 2010 Purina Award. He won in 2009 with a Treeing Walker, GR NITE CH 'PR' Tough Times Bodie, and in 2008 with a Black & Tan, NITE CH 'PR' Chenoweth's Sue. All were owned by Clair Chenoweth of Bridgeport, W.Va.

"This fourth award is the most special to me," says Jody Jessup, "because Red is our dog."

As owners of the Purina Outstanding Coonhound, the Jessups received an original oil painting of Red by Ross Young of Springfield, Mo., an engraved Purina Award plaque, a satin banner and a year's supply of *Purina* brand dog food. They also received a cash award with additional monies since they are active members of *Purina Pro Club*.

Red is fed *Purina Pro Plan* Performance Formula.



Jody and Penny Jessup, center, receive the Purina Outstanding Nite Hunt Coonhound Award for their English Coonhound, "Red." Members of the Purina Coonhound Award Committee and Purina representatives also are pictured.

'Swirl' Wins Eighth Annual Purina Outstanding Bench Show Coonhound Award

An American Leopard Hound known for her intelligence and willingness to please, GR CH C and M's Southern Swirl, a 2-year-old red merle, is the eighth annual Purina Outstanding Bench Show Coonhound Award winner.

Co-owners Mike Seets of Stonefort, Ill., and Curtis Elburn of Peru, Ind., received the honor for "Swirl," who outperformed 1,784 hounds to win the award.

"I compete with all coonhound breeds, choosing whatever dog has

what it takes to win, and Swirl stood out from the beginning," says Seets, who handled Swirl at 22 of the 23 events entered in 2011.

Seets has competed in bench shows and nite hunts since 1978. He and Elburn met soon afterward, showing and competing against each other. Bred by Elburn, Swirl was sired by CH GR CH Slipknot out of Poison Ivy. "Slipknot" was the first National Grand Champion American Leopard Hound and twice won the breed at the World Hunt.

Recognized initially by the United Kennel Club (UKC) as the Leopard Cur in 1998, the breed's name was changed in 2008 when the American Leopard Hound was classified as the seventh breed of coonhound.

Among her wins in the yearlong Purina competition that contributed to her earning 140 points, Swirl won Grand National Champion American Leopard Hound at Autumn Oaks and Best of Breed at the UKC World

Hunt. She won Best of Opposite Sex at the Georgia and Michigan state championships.

"Swirl stands out to judges with that red merle," Elburn says. "She has nice 'cat feet' that stay tight on the bench. We saw she had potential."

This Purina Award is Elburn's first. Seets won the Purina Bench Show Award in 2008 as the owner-handler of a Black & Tan Coonhound, GR NITE CH WSHOWCH GR CH 'PR' Shawnee Hills Beaujolais.

As co-owners of the Purina Outstanding Coonhound, Seets and Elburn received an original oil painting of Swirl by Ross Young of Springfield, Mo. They also were presented engraved Purina Award plaques, a satin banner, a year's supply of *Purina* brand dog food, and a cash award with additional monies since they are active members of *Purina Pro Club*.

Swirl is fed *Purina Pro Plan* Performance Formula.



Posing with "Swirl," the Purina Outstanding Bench Show Coonhound, are, from left, kneeling, Andi Elburn, Mike Seets and Chris Elburn, and members of the Purina Coonhound Award Committee and Purina representatives.

GCH Nexus Total Eclipse Wins Clumber Spaniel National Specialty

When Multi-BISS GCH Nexus Total Eclipse captured Best of Breed from more than 100 dogs at the Clumber Spaniel Club of America (CSCA) National Specialty in March in Kerrville, Texas, breeder and co-owner Jim Fankhauser of Schoolcraft Mich., was thrilled but not surprised considering the 2-year-old's precocious start.

"Eli" has excelled from the beginning," says Fankhauser, who owns the dog with Chip and Shelley Miller of Quincy, Ill. "He won two Best Puppy in Show awards, three Sporting Groups Firsts and a Group Three at his first four shows with Shelley."

At the 2011 CSCA National Specialty, Eli won Best Puppy and then repeated the honor plus cap-

tured Winners Dog and Best of Winners, for a 5-point major the next day at the CSCA Regional Specialty handled by professional handler Kassie Hamaker of Marshall, Mich. At his next show four months later, Eli won Winners Dog and finished his conformation championship title at the Jaxon Kennel Club Dog Show in Marshall, Mich. Later that day, he officially started his Specials career, winning Best of Breed at the Clumber Spaniel Fanciers Club of Michigan Specialty.

Eli, a fourth-generation Nexus Clumber Spaniel, was sired by CH Wild Cherries King of Hearts out of CH Nexus Jazzin Jenga. The breeder of more than 50 champions under the Nexus prefix, Fankhauser

considers Eli one of the best Clumbers he has produced in 15 years.

"In addition to stunning conformation and excellent movement, Eli has a lot of spark, drive and ambition," Fankhauser says. "He always is outgoing and commands attention wherever he goes."

Hamaker, who has handled more than 40 of Fankhauser's dogs, agrees that Eli is exceptional. "He is so exuberant," she says. "He has the whole package. That has helped him stand out at this young age. He is a wonderful example of the breed with his beautiful face, nice length of back and flawless movement. He has incredible potential."

Eli is fueled by *Purina Pro Plan Sensitive Skin & Stomach Formula*.



Professional handler Kassie Hamaker stacks "Eli," the Clumber Spaniel Club of America National Specialty winner. Judge Ralph Dunne is left.

FC Elder's Rebel Run Major Is Purina Outstanding SPO Beagle

Good line control, a super nose and keen intelligence helped FC Elder's Rebel Run Major, a 7 1/2-year-old 15-inch male tricolor Beagle, win the 13th annual Purina Outstanding SPO (Small Pack Option) Field Trial Beagle Award out of 4,600 hounds competing for the honor.

"Major" proved he has the confidence to keep on going after others stop working the line," says owner-handler John Elder Jr. of Tarentum, Pa.

During the yearlong competition, Major won 10 field trials and placed in 19 of the 20 Purina Point field trials he entered, accumulating 72 points. Elder describes his hound as both "good looking and hard running," noting that Major made the Grand Final at six field trials, a competition for dogs that excel in the field and in benched show competitions where they are judged for conformation.

Elder picked Major from a litter of five males when the Beagle was only 9 weeks old. The litter was bred by Joe Ow of Barnyard Kennels and Greg Rittner of Blue Hollow, both of Westdeer, Pa. "My sister,



John Elder Jr. and his wife, Colleen, are shown with the oil painting and plaque won by "Major," the Purina Outstanding SPO Field Trial Beagle.

Dana, had a male named 'Rascal' who sired a litter out of a female named 'Crickett,'" he says. "She allowed me to choose the pick of the litter.

"When Major was only 3 months old, he went into the brush tracking a rabbit and wouldn't come out," Elder says. "His persistence on a check is one of his top qualities."

The Purina Award competition, made up of 56 American Kennel Club (AKC) SPO field trials that are qualifiers for the AKC National Championship, was neck to neck

until the end. Major was lagging seven points behind the 15-inch female class winner when he won five consecutive trials at the Central, Conemaugh, York & Adams, Jacobus, and Indiana Beagle clubs in Pennsylvania.

Elder credits his father, John Elder Sr., for his love of Beagles. "My dad always had Beagles, and we frequently hunted with them," he says. "Years later, my good friend Jim Conley persuaded me to go to a field trial at one of the oldest beagle clubs in the country, Central

Beagle Club in Westdeer, Pa."

Purina Area Manager Rod Carter emceed the Purina Award Banquet held in April preceding the 2012 AKC National Championship. "Purina is pleased to honor these outstanding hounds," he said. "We recognize the tremendous amount of time it takes to compete at this level. This Purina Award was created to honor the country's most outstanding SPO Beagles, owners and handlers."

As the owner of the Purina SPO Award winner, Elder received a one-year supply of *Purina* brand dog food for one dog, an original oil painting of Major by Valerie Dolan of North Java, N.Y., an engraved Purina Award plaque, and a satin award banner. He also received a \$1,500 prize, which was doubled because he is an active member of *Purina Pro Club*.

Attending the award ceremony were Purina SPO Beagle Award Committee member Tony Choate and advisers to the committee, Mel Stewart of the AKC, Art Silke, former publisher of *Hounds and Hunting*, and Bill Emerson, president of the AKC National Championship.

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GCH Maverston Double Dutch Sets Best in Specialty Show Record for Cairns

Tammy Erickson wanted a companion Cairn Terrier but got much more when she set her heart on a charismatic male Cairn called "Bat." The winner of four Bests in Show and 19 Bests in Specialty Show — a record for the breed — Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCH Maverston Double Dutch stands out with his winning attitude

"I've been extraordinarily lucky to achieve this level of success," says Erickson of Carlisle, Md. "Before Bat, I knew little about the dog show world. Bat is a phenomenal dog with great conformation and a sparkling personality that shines at shows."

Erickson bought Bat in 2007 as a 10-week-old puppy from breeder and co-owner Marly Lucier, also of Carlisle, and became hooked on dog shows as she watched Lucier handle Bat to his conformation championship title. Teaming up with professional handler Geoff Dawson of Lincoln, R.I., in 2009, Erickson began campaigning Bat as a Special.



Tammy Erickson poses with "Bat," her Cairn Terrier who has won 19 Bests in Specialty Shows, a record for the breed.

The No. 1 Cairn in 2010 and 2011, Bat won the Greater Twin Cities Su-Mac Cairn Terrier Club and Central Florida Cairn Terrier

Club specialty shows in January, setting the Best in Specialty Show breed record. The previous record of four specialty show

wins was held by Bat's great-grand sire, CH Caledonian Berry of Wolfpit. In other honors, Bat captured Best of Breed at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show for the second time in February and won the breed at the World Dog Show in Paris in 2011.

Bat was sired by AM/CAN CH Paragon's Well Chosen out of CH Maverston Dutch Treat. Erickson also owns a female sired by Bat's sire, CH Paragon's Lasting Impression, who recently made her show debut with Dawson. Erickson recently imported a female Cairn from the Zalazar kennel in Denmark that she plans to breed to Bat.

A Scottish Terrier breeder, owner and handler since 1972, Dawson has been showing Cairns for 10 years and counts Bat as his first Special. "Bat's breed type is exceptional, and he has the stamina to consistently project a winning attitude. He is the ultimate Cairn," he says.

Bat is fed *Purina Pro Plan Selects* Salmon & Brown Rice Formula.