



DYNAMIC DUO

**Daybreak Kennel & Tiffany
English Springer Spaniels**

- REDUCING PREGNANCY PROBLEMS
- 25 YEARS: AKC CANINE HEALTH FOUNDATION
- CONDITIONING PERFORMANCE RETRIEVERS

PURINA AWARDS TOP ALL-AGE BIRD DOGS & HANDLER

Far-ranging, big-running Pointers with exceptional bird-finding ability stood out to win the 2019-2020 Purina Top Field Trial Bird Dog Awards. A dedicated, hardworking pro handler is the Purina All-Age Handler. Purina is pleased to honor their successes.

Proving his tough, competitive edge, a 7-year-old white-and-liver male Pointer called “Mack” won the Purina Top Field Trial Bird Dog Award. Handled by pro Randy Anderson of Cross Country Kennels in Vinita, Oklahoma, Valiant, as the talented bird dog is formally known, won the prestigious Quail Championship Invitational. It is one of four championships he dominated, in addition to winning two open all-age field trials and placing third at the Kentucky Quail Classic. Anderson, who handled the 2013-2014 Purina Top Field Trial Bird Dog, Touch’s Adam County, says, “Mack has stamina, style and speed. His strength is delivering multiple bird finds.” Mack gifted owner Jay McKenzie of Eureka, Kansas, with his first Purina Award. Bred by Patricia Kammerlocher of Norman, Oklahoma, Mack was sired by Miller’s Happy Jack, the winner of 42 field trials, including seven championships and seven runner-up championships, and the sire and grandsire of three National Champions.

A 4-year-old white-and-black female Pointer named “Jay” made the most of every opportunity to win the Purina Amateur Top Field Trial Bird Dog Award. Handler Larron Copeland, who co-owns Showtime Mocking Jay with his wife, Laura Copeland, says, “We did not make it to a lot of amateur stakes due to my running a farm, but Jay was all business and worked hard to find game.” The fast, hardworking female won the 2020 National Amateur Quail Championship, took second at the Continental Amateur and third at the Dan Bateman Amateur All-Age Classic. Copeland, who won the 2014-2015 Purina Amateur with Saddle Up Sally, got Jay as a puppy from breeder Kirk Swanson of Red Oak, Iowa, and started and developed her for field trials. Jay was bred by Just Irresistible out of Thin Ice.

Making finding birds look easy, a 2-year-old white-and-orange male Pointer called “Fred” won the Purina Derby Top Field Trial Award. Handled by Ike Todd of Somerville, Tennessee, Touch’s Breakaway Fred won the Georgia Derby Championship and took two first places and a third in derby field trials. Owned by Eddie Sholar of Leesburg, Georgia, and Ted Dennard of Haddock, Georgia, Fred was bred by Keith Wright of Covington, Indiana, who won the 2010-2011 Purina Top Field Trial Bird Dog Award with Touch’s White Out and the 2017-2018 Purina Amateur Top Field Trial Bird Dog Award with Touch’s Fire Dance. Todd, who handled Touch’s White Out, says, “Fred excelled when conditions were tough. His sharp bird-finding ability is his greatest virtue.” Fred was sired by Touch’s Mega Mike, the 2017-2018 Purina Top Field Trial Bird Dog.



Pro handler Mark McLean is the 2019-2020 Purina All-Age Handler.

Winning his second Purina All-Age Handler Award, having also won in 2017-2018, Mark McLean of Moultrie, Georgia, says, “It takes a lot of hard work and a concerted effort by good owners and good dogs to win this award. We traveled some 16,000 miles going to trials from Canada to Florida.” McLean’s string of 10 dogs achieved 17 points-earning placements, putting him on top to win the Purina Award.

These powerful all-age dogs are fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT*

Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula. Congratulations to these outstanding Purina Award winners! ■



Purina Top Field Trial Bird Dogs are, from left: Valiant, Showtime Mocking Jay, and Touch’s Breakaway Fred.

4 STEPS TO PREVENT PREGNANCY PROBLEMS

Along with following best practices, dog breeders should partner with a veterinarian throughout breeding, pregnancy and delivery.

8 SOVEREIGN BRITTANY'S DUAL CHAMPION DOGS

Sovereign Brittany breeders Joe and Dawn Droel strive to produce dogs that excel in dog shows and fieldwork and are great family companions.

10 AKC CANINE HEALTH FOUNDATION CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

Founded in 1995 by the American Kennel Club, the AKC Canine Health Foundation is the largest funder in the world of health research exclusively for dogs.

14 WINNING WAYS

Laura King and Robin Novack have long stood out as top show dog handlers, whose winning ways are tied to first winning over their show dogs.

20 FARM DOG OF THE YEAR

A 12-year-old Australian Shepherd named "Flint" is the 2020 Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year.

22 CONDITIONING RETRIEVERS FOR FIELD TRIALS

Adding a conditioning program to training retrievers for field trials helps prepare them for competition.

REGULAR FEATURES

- 2 Purina All-Age Bird Dog Awards
- 25 Purina SPO Beagle Award
- 26 Circle of Champions
- 30 Purina Top Shooting Dog Awards
- 32 Breed Snapshot

ON THE COVER

MBIS/MBISS CAN/AM GCHS Vanderbilt 'N Printemp's Lucky Strike ("Striker") is a 4-year-old male Samoyed bred by Mengru Wu and Judi Elford, owned by Correen Pacht-Ralsky, Marc Ralsky, and Judi and Blair Elford, and professionally handled by Laura King. Striker is the No. 5 dog in the country, No. 2 Working dog, and No. 1 Samoyed all systems. See story on page 14.

THIS PAGE

A conditioning program for retrievers can contribute to improved performance. See story on page 22.



Today's Breeder Advisory Board

Gianna DeiSanti, Brand Director, Breeder-Enthusiast Marketing

Sherry Bresnahan, Senior Brand Manager, Breeder-Enthusiast Marketing

Christina Schneider, Senior Brand Manager, Breeder-Enthusiast Marketing

Jim Allen, Brand Manager, Breeder-Enthusiast Marketing

Scott Smith, Managing Director of Field Operations

Ann Viklund, Director of Conformation

Connie Wagner, Senior Area Manager (Southeast), Conformation

Annie Balotti, Area Manager, Purina Event Center

Marci Sale Crawford, Plains Area Manager, Conformation

Corey Benedict, Northeast Area Manager, Conformation

Diana Allen, Field Representative, Conformation

Heidi Hartman, Field Representative, Conformation

Karl Gunzer, Director, Sporting Group

Greg L. Blair, Area Manager, Sporting

Mark Cascio, Area Manager, Sporting

Ray Voigt, Area Manager, Sporting

Kaite Flamm, Senior Manager of Programming, Purina Farms

Today's Breeder is produced and published by Nestlé Purina Public Relations.

Bill Etling, Vice President

Barbara Fawver, Editor, *Today's Breeder*

Today's Breeder is sent as a courtesy to members of *Purina Pro Club*. Articles may be reprinted if the following credit is included: Used with permission from *Today's Breeder*, Nestlé Purina PetCare Company.

Trademarks owned by Société des Produits Nestlé S.A., Vevey, Switzerland.

© 2020 Nestlé Purina PetCare Company

Please note that the handlers or owners of dogs featured in *Today's Breeder* may have received *Purina Pro Plan* dog food as a Purina ambassador.



▶ Visit *Today's Breeder* on the *Purina Pro Club* website (purinaproclub.com)



Your Pet, Our Passion.®

STEPS TO PREVENT PREGNANCY PROBLEMS IN BITCHES

Breeding the next generation of champions involves preparing for the unexpected. No pregnancy is the same. A bitch that whelped a healthy litter of puppies the first time may require assistance to deliver her second litter.

Experienced breeders understand the importance of ensuring that a bitch is a good candidate for breeding. Over the nine weeks of pregnancy, they provide optimal care and vigilantly monitor for potential problems. Importantly, they partner with a veterinarian to guide them through all facets of breeding, pregnancy and delivery.

Veterinarians who specialize in reproduction, neonatology and genetic diseases are known as theriogenologists. With only

about 400 board-certified theriogenologists in practice across the U.S. — and not all work in companion animal theriogenology — there is an indisputable shortage of these experts trained to assist breeders.

Helping to bridge the gap, a theriogenology residency program was introduced in 2014 by the Theriogenology Foundation, American Kennel Club and AKC Canine Health Foundation. Since then, the program has funded more than 10 residents providing \$100,000 per resident to support their training.

“These bright specialists are critical to breeding programs and the health of current and future generations of dogs,” says Calvin Carpenter, DVM, MBA, DACLAM, Executive Director of the AKC Canine Health Foundation. “As genetic testing options for dogs expand with ongoing technological advances, specialists trained in clinical genetics will be invaluable to help breeders make sense of the resulting information.”

Coordinator of the three-year theriogenology residency program at Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, Julie T. Cecere, DVM, MS, DCAT, clinical associate professor of theriogenology, got hooked on reproduction while working on a research project during veterinary school. The project investigated hypothyroidism in bitches and its effect on the heat cycle and offspring. “I loved the process of managing pregnancy and puppy rearing,” she says.

In the Virginia-Maryland referral practice, more than 50 percent of the dogs are from breeders involved in performance sports like field trials, coonhound nite hunts, agility, and obedience or are working canines trained for bomb detection, search and rescue, military service, and police dogs. Experience working with breeders has given Dr. Cecere great respect for breeders. “They teach us as much as we teach them,” she says.

Growing up in southwest Virginia, Dr. Cecere trained and conditioned event horses and enjoyed her family’s pet Miniature Schnauzers. She continues to ride horses today but also trains upland dogs, a Vizsla and a Weimaraner, named “Luna” and “Fionn,” respectively. Breeder-trainer Meredith Wadsworth



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VIRGINIA-MARYLAND COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

Enthusiasts at heart, Dr. Julie T. Cecere is shown with her Weimaraner, Southpaw N Palimar’s Jus Fionn JH, and Dr. Alyssa Helms is pictured with her Pembroke Welsh Corgi, CH Kiawah’s Two Doors Down N Bayouland.

DETERMINING WHETHER A BITCH SHOULD BE BRED

Breeding Soundness Examination	Prebreeding Checklist
Complete physical examination to assess a bitch's general health and identify any genetic conditions	Physically and mentally mature, which usually occurs around 2 years of age
Vaginal examination to check for anatomic abnormalities that could inhibit a natural breeding	Appropriate body condition with an abdominal tuck when looking from the side, a waist when looking down from above, and ribs easily felt. As pregnancy advances, the abdominal tuck and waist will not be as easily seen
Familial reproductive and genetic history review	Completed breed-specific health testing and proved her breeding value based on factors such as temperament, health, conformation, and working ability
Medication history, diet, and lifestyle review	Current on core vaccines: distemper, parvovirus, parainfluenza, and rabies. Breeding females should receive bordetella and canine influenza vaccinations for protection against kennel cough and H3N8 and H3N2 influenza viruses, respectively. Vaccinations help to ensure passive transfer of immunity across the placenta during pregnancy and while pups nurse. Bitches due for vaccination during the time they are to be bred or during pregnancy and lactation should receive boosters at least a month before coming into heat
Brucellosis test for <i>Brucella canis</i> , a highly infectious bacterium that is transmitted sexually and via nasal and urine secretions. Brucellosis is the leading cause of reproductive disease in dogs	Tests negative for heartworm and tick-borne diseases and is current on heartworm and flea and tick preventives that are safe for breeding animals. These diseases can reduce fertility, and the stress of heartworm disease on a pregnant bitch puts her at risk for abortion or delivering unhealthy pups
Sources: Julie T. Cecere, DVM, MS, DCAT, and Alyssa Helms, DVM, of Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine	



The theriogenology team at Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine performs a fetal ultrasound prior to C-section surgery.

handles Fionn in bird dog trials, and Dr. Cecere trains and handles him in North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association land and water tests.

Current theriogenology resident at Virginia-Maryland, Alyssa Helms, DVM, plans to practice in a private veterinary clinic when she finishes her residency in 2021. While in veterinary school

at the University of Tennessee, Dr. Helms was involved in a retrospective study of risk factors for intervertebral disc disease in Dachshunds and a prospective study looking at whether the inherited eumelanic (black) coat color in Schipperkes is linked to a dermatological condition that causes lightening of the coat and truncal alopecia.

Dr. Helms also was involved with the local kennel club during veterinary school. “My first conformation bitch was a gorgeous Australian Shepherd, a beautiful example of the breed, that did all the work for me in the ring,” she says. “A highlight was winning Reserve Best in Show in Owner-Handler competition.

“Through these experiences I gained a respect for the breeder community,” says Dr. Helms. “I knew I wanted to help preserve the health and integrity of the purpose-bred dog with my career in veterinary medicine. That was a big part of why I chose to pursue specialty training in theriogenology.”

Now a small hobby breeder with her husband of Pembroke Welsh Corgis under the Bankston prefix, Dr. Helms says, “The goal of our breeding program is to selectively produce healthy, behaviorally sound dogs that adhere to the breed standard. Our dogs are our passion. We enjoy showing and competing with them in conformation and at performance events, but mostly we enjoy our Corgis as members of our family.”

Both Drs. Cecere and Helms are attuned to the goals of breeders and are focused on the health and preservation of purpose-bred dogs. One clinical observation they have made is how easily bitches in prime fitness and optimal body condition whelp their litters. “High-performance dogs tend to whelp a large litter of pups in just three to four hours,” Dr. Cecere says. “It is the couch potato bitches that often get into trouble.”

Reflecting on best practices for dog breeders, they offer their perspectives on how breeders can help things go smoothly. Although nothing is guaranteed with breeding and delivering puppies, these guidelines provide worthy considerations.

■ SHOULD A BITCH BE BRED?

“Once breeders have identified a bitch as having desirable attributes and having passed breed-specific health clearances, they then must choose an appropriate male with complementary attributes. This is when we get excited about helping them raise the next generation of their bloodline,” Dr. Cecere says. “We advise them to have a breeding soundness exam to be sure she is healthy and has no genetic conditions or abnormalities

that would hinder her pregnancy. We also run through a pre-breeding checklist that is important prior to breeding.

“Generally for most breeds, a bitch is not developmentally or physically mature to be bred until she is around 2 years of age,” she continues. “However, for toy and small breeds, they may reach maturity as early as 18 months of age.”

On the flip side, most breeds are considered senior dogs at age 7, which corresponds with a decline in fertility. “Older bitches also are at increased risk for health conditions and comorbidities that could negatively affect their ability to carry a litter to term, whelp naturally and lactate properly,” says Dr. Cecere.

“Only bitches in excellent physical and nutritional condition as determined by a veterinarian should be considered for breeding past age 7,” adds Dr. Helms.

■ HOW OFTEN SHOULD A BITCH BE BRED?

Back-to-back pregnancies can be OK – up to a point, says Dr. Cecere. “From a physiologic and nutritional standpoint, a bitch should not be bred on more than two consecutive heat cycles without a non-pregnant cycle off,” she says.

PREGNANCY CARE FOR BITCHES

Pregnancy Stage	Care Steps
FIRST TRIMESTER (weeks 1 to 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition the dam to a complete and balanced all life-stages or puppy food to ensure she receives the appropriate levels of nutrients, including protein, fat, minerals, and vitamins • Continue feeding the dam’s normal quantity of food, as increased calories are not needed at this stage. Do not feed vitamin or mineral supplements, as this could unbalance the diet and cause problems in late gestation and early lactation • Allow the dam to receive regular exercise to help keep her fit. Dams in optimal condition whelp easier than those that are not
SECOND TRIMESTER (weeks 4 to 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to practice strict biosecurity due to the risk of canine herpes virus infection, a cause of death in neonatal puppies. New dogs should not be introduced to the kennel, and dogs exposed to outside dogs via dog shows or sporting events should not come in contact with the dam • Deworm the dam with fenbendazole (Panacur®) around the sixth week of pregnancy to aid in preventing transplacental and transmammary migration of parasites to puppies • Continue feeding the dam the prebreeding quantity of food, though if she is carrying a large litter, you may need to increase the amount fed by 5 percent • Continue regular exercise
THIRD TRIMESTER (weeks 7 to 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up the whelping box, so the pregnant dam can become acclimated before whelping the puppies • Have a prewhelping radiograph taken during week eight or nine for an accurate puppy count, which is especially important for a natural whelping • Adhere to strict biosecurity practices, which is critical during the third trimester and until puppies are 3 to 4 weeks of age • Continue regular exercise • Begin taking the dam’s rectal temperature twice a day at the same time each day. Once her temperature drops to or below 98.5 degrees, she should start Stage I labor within 24 hours

Sources: Julie T. Cecere, DVM, MS, DCAT, and Alyssa Helms, DVM, of Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine

“The total number of litters a bitch should have over a lifetime depends on the individual dog. Most of this will depend on genetics, temperament, health, conformation, and other traits she brings to the breed as a whole. If she requires a cesarean section or intrauterine insemination to get pregnant, this must be taken into consideration as well,” Dr. Cecere says.

■ IS INFERTILITY REAL OR NOT?

One of the most common concerns of breeders is whether their bitch is fertile. “Many of the infertility cases that are referred here are due to a bitch being bred at the wrong time,” Dr. Cecere says. “Poor timing during a bitch’s heat cycle, or estrus, can cause a missed breeding or small litter.”

Progesterone testing is key to knowing the appropriate timing for breeding. “If you know when the bitch is ovulating, or when the eggs are released from the follicles, this tells you the fertile window to optimize the chance of pregnancy and having a full-sized litter,” Dr. Cecere says. “It also allows for the calculation of an accurate due date and aids in appropriate timing of intervention at whelping should a C-section be needed or desired.”

In the bitch, progesterone is a reproductive hormone that increases in the bloodstream just before ovulation. As the progesterone level increases, lutenizing hormone is released from the pituitary gland, triggering the release of eggs from the follicles. Progesterone testing can be done every two to three days starting about five days into the heat cycle.

When poor timing results in a singleton puppy or small litter, problems can occur. “With a singleton pregnancy or one with two or three puppies, the dam is at risk of dystocia (a difficult delivery) as there may not be enough signal to begin parturition, or birth,” Dr. Cecere explains. “Additionally, there is increased risk of an oversized puppy or puppies, which can lead to dystocia or death of the puppy or puppies.”

■ HOW CAN YOU AVOID A C-SECTION?

The majority of breeders referred to Virginia-Maryland prefer their bitches to free whelp litters, though a planned C-section, rather than an emergency, is their second choice for a healthy litter. Breeders often ask for tips on how to avoid a C-section.

“One way breeders can reduce the risk of a C-section is by selecting for bloodlines with individuals that free whelp,” Dr. Helms says. “You also want to be sure that the bitch is in her best physical condition before breeding and throughout



Dr. Cecere holds newly born Golden Retriever puppies.

pregnancy to set her up for smooth whelping. This means continuing daily exercise and feeding a complete and balanced all life-stages or puppy food during pregnancy.”

The bottom line, notes Dr. Cecere, is to intervene early rather than too late if labor and delivery are abnormal. “When it comes to doing your best to protect the safety of the bitch and puppies, the first step is to recognize a normal versus an abnormal whelping and to understand the stages of labor in the bitch,” she says.

Dr. Cecere cites these signs of a normal, progressing labor:

Stage I Labor: Panting, nesting, digging, pacing, and whining occur within 24 hours of a

bitch’s rectal temperature drop to 98.5 degrees. Stage I Labor normally lasts up to 18 hours. If it goes longer or if a temperature drop occurs without signs of labor within 24 hours, you should call your veterinarian.

Stage II Labor: As soon as the bitch starts pushing in response to contractions, this initiates Stage II Labor. Breeders should call their veterinarian if there is more than an hour of active pushing before the birth of the first puppy or more than 30 minutes of active pushing for subsequent puppies. Vaginal discharge is also important. Green vaginal discharge means there is placental separation. If no puppy is produced 30 minutes after the green discharge is observed, the bitch should be evaluated by a veterinarian.

Stage III Labor: This is the passage of the placenta, which can happen concurrently with Stage II or be delayed due to the immediate passage of another puppy. A foul-smelling, purulent discharge after whelping warrants calling the veterinarian.

“Anytime during whelping breeders notice black vulvar discharge, moderate to large amounts of fresh blood or are concerned, they should not hesitate to call their veterinarian,” Dr. Cecere says. “Importantly, breeders should involve their veterinarian during the whole pregnancy to avoid any surprises.”

Planning and preparing for the next generation is a rewarding part of being a dog breeder. Knowing that you have a veterinarian whom you trust and rely on to help you is comforting. Thanks to the theriogenology residency program for supporting the training of future specialists like Dr. Helms at Virginia-Maryland as they prepare to partner with breeders on their journey to produce a healthy litter of puppies. ■

SOVEREIGN BRITTANYS' DUAL CHAMPION DOGS

Keeping up with a high-energy Brittany named “Hobey” hunting quail in the gun dog horseback stake at the 2020 Iowa Brittany Shooting Dog Championship is intense. His forward-running race, skirting the edge of the prairie where coveys roost in tangles of bluestem and goldenrod, is explosive and stylish.

The 10-year-old male, a Dual Champion — No. 678 in the Brittany record book — is stamped with Field Champion and Show Champion titles and is a mere 2 points from becoming an Amateur Field Champion. Handled in the one-hour stake by breeder-owner Dawn Droel of Sovereign Brittany's in Marine on St. Croix, Minnesota, Hobey is scouted by bird dog trainer Bob Burchett of Conway, Missouri. Partnering with Dawn as a breeder

of Brittany's under the Sovereign prefix is her husband, Joe Droel.

A late bloomer who did not train for field trials until age 3, Hobey caught on quickly to the game of finding birds and holding steady to wing and shot. Field trials were an alternative to hunting tests where he ran so big he'd be found hunting a mile away. “He has tremendous drive to find birds,” Dawn says. “You ride up, and there he is beautiful on point. His whole body quivers, yet his tail is straight up steady as a rock.”



Above: Dawn Droel and “Hobey” high-five after he wins Best in Show in 2013. Below: A Dual Champion fueled by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula*, Hobey did not start training for field trials until age 3.



Started by Ed Tillson and Jessica Carlson at their 2013 summer camp in Montana, Hobey honed his fieldwork with Burchett. "Hobey's tenaciousness to find birds is seen when he digs into the cover," says Burchett, who has put Field Champion titles on some 40 dogs that became Dual Champions. "His feats have never been accomplished."

A Brittany history maker, Hobey is the only Dual Champion to have won an all-breed Best in Show, which he did in 2013 at the Coulee Kennel Club show in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and to have won Best of Breed at the American Brittany Club (ABC) National Specialty, which he did in 2015 from the field trial dog class. With Dawn as his handler, Hobey also won the ABC Top 20 Invitational in 2016 and was a Top 10 Brittany in 2013, 2015 and 2016, despite limited showing due to field trialing.

"Hobey is our dream come true," Dawn says. "He is the epitome of the total package that we love and try to produce in our breeding program. He is fun to show and a pleasure to hunt behind, but mostly he is a joy to have as a companion to our family."

A third-generation Dual Champion and fifth-generation Field Champion, Hobey, formally known as BIS/BISS DC GCHS Sovereign's Chasing Legends, was the keeper male from a frozen semen litter. Hobey was sired by BISS AM/CAN CH Alar's The Rocketeer AM/CAN CD SH out of DC Sovereign Copley Kiss My Chips, No. 515 in the Brittany Dual Champion record book. The Droels, who bred the dam, "Zelda," leased her from owner Robin Tomasi of Copley Brittanys for the breeding. Zelda had first earned her show champion title, becoming a Top 10 bitch campaigned by pro Amy Booth, and in 10 months on the field circuit with pro trainer Scott Johnson became a Field Champion.

Joe and Dawn Droel have had Brittanys since 1993, though their beginning in dogs was as junior handlers. Joe followed his pro handler parents, Darrel and Romelle Droel, to shows, helping condition, train and show dogs, particularly the Weimaraners they bred. Dawn helped show and put obedience titles on her parents' Australian Shepherds. Her mother, Lynn Westman, took her to shows, and her veterinarian father, Dr. Charles Westman, an equestrian who had qualified for Olympic hunt jumping, gave her a love of horses.

Joe and Dawn worked 12 years handling dogs professionally, giving it up in 2000 to start a construction business that would allow them to stay home and raise their sons. Their beginning in Brittanys came four years into the marriage, when a retired 8-year-old show champion named "Cody," officially known as Multi-BIS/BISS CH Cheabrits Code of the West CD, once the No. 1 Brittany in the country, came to live with them. Campaigned by Shirley and Roy Murray of Texas, Cody won nine Bests in Show, outdoing a 30-year record.

"Cody was our first Britt, and we got him from Joe's parents after he retired to live with them," Dawn says "We got him in shape and entered him in a couple of specialties, which he won

from the Veterans class. We entered him in the 1993 ABC National Specialty, and he won Best of Breed from the Veterans class."

Before their hiatus in showing dogs, Joe and Dawn finished a male Brittany called "JR," who then went out with trainer Jim John, and later Ed Tillson, to earn his Field Champion title and become Dual Champion No. 506 in the Brittany record book. DC AFC Sovereign's Who's Ya Daddy JH taught them about the versatility of the highly biddable breed.

Since those early years, their Sovereign Brittany breeding program has produced more than 50 show champions. Dawn and Joe look for pups with the independence and conformation



PHOTO: ADAM FREEMAN

Joe and Dawn Droel, pictured with Hobey, fell in love with the dual-purpose versatility of Brittanys. American Brittany Club officers, Dawn is third vice president and show chair of the 2019 and 2020 National Specialties, and Joe is a member of the board of directors.

needed for dog shows and fieldwork. "The most important thing we breed for is dogs that will be perfect family companions," says Dawn, noting they are on their second- and third-generation puppy buyers.

"Hobey has contributed so much to our breeding program," she says. "He has sired over 30 show champions, multiple hunt-test titled dogs and field trial winners, and agility- and obedience-titled dogs."

This brings us to their latest Dual Champion, "Jackson," owned by Dr. Barbara and Wayne Pepin of Cross Creek Brittanys and co-owned by the Droels. Not yet officially entered in the Brittany record book, Jackson will be Dual Champion No. 683. DC Cross Creek Sovereign Pop-A-Top, a 3-year-old male, was sired by DC Hope's Tap-A-Keg out of CH Sovereign's Legendary Chocolate JH, a Hobey daughter.

"Cody and Hobey are once-in-a-lifetime dogs," Joe says. "They are related, too. Cody is Hobey's great-great-grand sire. Our goal is to produce another record-setting Brittany."

In the meantime, more fun days afield await Hobey and Sovereign Brittanys. ■

AKC CANINE HEALTH FOUNDATION CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

PHOTO: NOLAN CONLEY



Carillon Bedlington Terrier breeder Lucy Heyman

Celebrating its 25-year anniversary, the AKC Canine Health Foundation stands proudly today as a radiant leader of canine health research. This nonprofit organization holds tenure as the largest funder in the world of health research exclusively for dogs. Its pioneering spirit is alive today, and the future promises good things are coming.

When Carillon Bedlington Terrier breeder Lucy Heyman bred her first litter of the rare lamblike breed in 1981, copper toxicosis affected 75 percent of the breed. The fatal inherited disease was a thorn in her side that ignited her passion and led her to build her breeding program on health advocacy.

“I endured my share of losses due to copper toxicosis,” says Heyman, an AKC Platinum Breeder of Merit and AKC delegate for the Bedlington Terrier Club of America.

Copper concentrations in affected Bedlingtons could be more than 15 times the normal amount, resulting in severe liver disease. Without treatment, most dogs died at 3 to 7 years of age. When geneticists at Michigan State University and the University of Michigan began studying

copper toxicosis in Bedlingtons in 1989, Heyman gathered blood samples and pedigree information from anyone who would contribute to the cause.

Using DNA markers generated by sequencing many parts of the canine genome in a first-of-its-kind study, the researchers identified a genetic marker linked closely to the mutation. The discovery led to a linked marker test for the autosomal recessive disorder. Vilma Yuzbasiyan-Gurkan, PhD, now professor of microbiology and molecular genetics and small animal clinical sciences at Michigan State, initiated the study with geneticist George Brewer, MD, of the University of Michigan.

The test empowered breeders to identify unaffected, affected and carrier dogs. They could selectively breed away from producing affected dogs. Importantly, they could breed quality carriers to non-carrier dogs and then replace the carrier parent with a quality non-carrier offspring in one or two generations. This breeding strategy maintained breed quality without producing affected dogs and helped to promote genetic diversity by reducing the risk of a genetic bottleneck and the proliferation of deleterious genes caused by a reduction in breed population size.

In 1995, Carillon produced the first Bedlington Terrier identified as a non-carrier of copper toxicosis. CH Carillon Fuzzy

The AKC Canine Health Foundation aims to advance the health of all dogs and their owners.



Logic came from a selective breeding in which Heyman used the linked marker test.

At the inaugural AKC Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference in 1997 in St. Louis, Heyman met the lead investigators, including Dr. Yuzbasiyan-Gurkan, with whom she had corresponded frequently over the years. “It was wonderful to talk with them in person after many phone calls,” Heyman says.

In 2006, a direct DNA test became available for copper toxicosis in Bedlington Terriers. Funded by the AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF), researchers at the Animal Health Trust in the United Kingdom identified a deletion mutation eliminating a major section of the copper metabolism gene, *COMMD1*.

Today, fewer than 5 percent of Bedlington Terriers are affected by copper toxicosis, Heyman estimates. Copper toxicosis in Bedlingtons is a success story as told by the dramatic reduction in dogs dying early from liver disease.

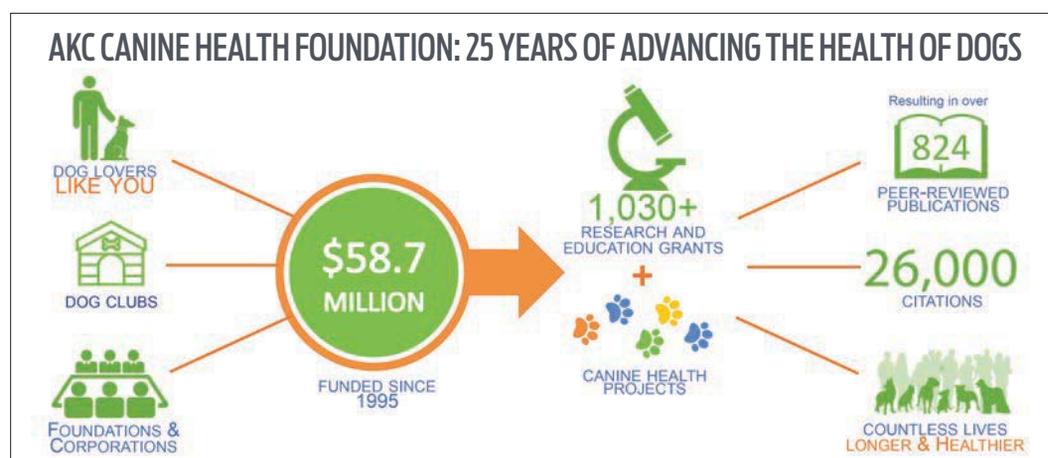
Founded by the American Kennel Club in 1995 with a \$1 million grant, the AKC Canine Health Foundation in 2020 is providing \$3.29 million in funding. This supports 23 program areas, ranging from blood disorders, dermatology and allergic diseases to infectious diseases, oncology and ophthalmology.

Altogether, the AKC Canine Health Foundation has provided over \$58.7 million in support of more than 1,030 research and educational grants. Over \$25 million has come from AKC donations. CHF aims to advance the health of all dogs and their owners, a mission that resonates universally with dog lovers and aids fundraising efforts. The mantra is to prevent, treat and cure canine diseases.

“The AKC Canine Health Foundation has been integral to the evolution of canine health, including mapping the canine genome and developments in canine cancer, tick-borne diseases and many other ailments that affect our dogs,” says Dennis B. Sprung, President and CEO of the American Kennel Club. “This research has led to important developments that contribute to the health and well-being of dogs everywhere.”

Purina has supported the AKC Canine Health Foundation as a corporate partner since 1997, investing more than \$14 million in canine health research to benefit all dogs. Purina also is a charter sponsor of the biennial AKC Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference.

“Our shared mission to advance canine health research and education is truly making a difference for all dogs,” says Ann Viklund, Purina Director of Conformation and member of the CHF Board of Directors. “We are partners in helping to educate dog owners about canine diseases and increase awareness about



the outcomes of funded studies. Our passion is to help dogs live long, healthy lives.”

The broad scope of the work of CHF impacts many groups. “The AKC Canine Health Foundation works closely with breed clubs, breeders, veterinarians, and leading canine experts to find and fund research studies with real potential to improve the health of all dogs, purebreds and mixed breeds,” says Calvin B. Carpenter, DVM, MBA, DACLAM, CHF Executive Director. “Thanks to 25 years of donor support and our longtime partnership with Purina, we continue to fund humane research that addresses the diverse health needs of dogs across their entire lifetime. CHF also invests in the future with opportunities to train veterinary researchers and reproduction specialists through our educational grants.”

Susan LaCroix Hamil, one of the longest-serving members of the CHF Board of Directors and chair of the AKC Delegates Canine Health Committee, says, “The AKC had a great vision for the Canine Health Foundation to advance the health of all dogs. The success of the Foundation has been in supporting top scientists, setting the standard high and having a clear vision about its goals. Importantly, the Foundation gives dog breeders valuable hands-on information.”

An early CHF-funded scientist, Elaine Ostrander, PhD, now Chief and Distinguished Investigator of the Cancer Genetics and Comparative Genomics Branch of the National Human Genome Research Institute (NHGRI) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), wrote the white paper that resulted in the dog being chosen for genome sequencing in 2003.

“The AKC Canine Health Foundation can be proud that they led the way, displaying remarkable vision, as much of the preliminary data that convinced NIH to sequence the dog resulted from grants funded by the Foundation,” Dr. Ostrander says. “The Foundation helped dog breeders and owners understand that genomics would be good for canine health. They helped parent clubs understand that the more samples they provided from dogs of specific breeds, the more likely it was that the genetic results would improve the health of their dogs.”

A Boxer named “Tasha” was chosen for the canine genome sequence, which was completed in 2005. The advantage of using this particular Boxer was that she had reduced amounts of variation across her genome. The genome sequence determined the 2.4 billion letters that make up the blueprint for how a dog is formed and functions, essential information for geneticists trying to find genes responsible for canine diseases.

The dog sequence also provided an important tool to help advance One Health collaborative studies in which information from canine health is used for studies in human health and biology, and vice versa. The AKC Canine Health Foundation funds a plethora of One Health research, with 37 percent of the grants awarded in 2020 having a One Health application.

William I. Christensen, MD, MPH, a member of the CHF Board of Directors and Scientific Review Committee, says, “The research the Foundation funds is chosen to benefit dogs, but this research may also benefit humans. Research of vector-borne illnesses, such as Chagas disease and Lyme disease, are examples. A study evaluating the efficacy of cannabidiol (CBD) oil in treating dogs with drug-resistant epilepsy could potentially translate to helping humans who don’t respond to anti-seizure medications.”

The 2009 discovery of the *SOD1* gene mutation causing the fatal neurological disease degenerative myelopathy (DM) was led by veterinary researchers at the University of Missouri in collaboration with scientists at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. This research found that the mutation responsible for DM in dogs was the same mutation that causes amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig’s disease, in people.

In another study, geneticists at the Broad Institute working with University of Missouri investigators analyzed DNA samples of Tibetan Terriers to identify in 2011 a truncating mutation in the *ATP13A2* gene responsible for neuronal ceroid lipofuscinosis (NCL). The progressive neurodegenerative disease causes loss of brain and nervous function in young adult Tibetan Terriers. Mutations in the human *ATP13A2* gene were known to cause an early-onset form of Parkinson’s disease, Kufor-Rakeb syndrome. The Tibetan Terrier study correctly predicted that human Kufor-Rakeb syndrome was an NCL.

Similarities in canine and human cancers are not surprising considering that both are exposed to the same environmental conditions and often eat the same foods. Of over 77 million owned dogs in the U.S., one-fourth will develop cancer, according to the AKC Canine Health Foundation. Thus, CHF has provided over \$14.7 million, about one-third of its total funding since 1995 to support studies of canine cancer that aim to advance earlier diagnoses and treatment for better outcomes.

CHF RESEARCH INITIATIVES

In 2018, CHF launched the Hemangiosarcoma Initiative to learn more about this aggressive, common canine cancer. Known as the silent killer, hemangiosarcoma (HSA) is often not detectable until a dog suffers internal bleeding or even sudden death. Since 1995, CHF has provided \$4.1 million to support 28 grants focused on HSA. Insightful research at North Carolina State University has found a possible link between the vector-borne *Bartonella* and HSA. As *Bartonella* invades and hides inside the cells of blood vessel walls, it may trigger an infectious state that leads to HSA.

A newly funded HSA grant, known as the Shine On continuation study, will enable researchers at the University of Minnesota to follow 209 Golden Retrievers, Boxers and Portuguese Water Dogs, deemed highly affected breeds, over their lifetime. In the initial Shine On project, they developed a blood test to detect cells associated with HSA in a dog’s circulation and used artificial intelligence (AI) to analyze the results.

In the lifetime study, researchers will use AI to detect early-stage HSA based on the Shine On Suspicion (SOS) blood test. Dogs will be assigned a risk category for developing HSA, and those considered at high risk will be treated with the drug eBAT to strategically prevent tumors before they form. This research may contribute understanding about the rare cancer angiosarcoma in humans.

Novel funding for the first Shine One study involved a three-way funding team comprised of the Golden Retriever Foundation, American Boxer Charitable Foundation and the Portuguese Water Dog Foundation. CHF, which administered the first grant and followed its scientific progress, is helping to fund the new grant.

The Tick-Borne Disease Initiative, launched in 2016, and the Epilepsy Initiative, begun in 2017, have both enjoyed funding boosts with AKC matching gift programs. Studies of tick-borne diseases, including Lyme disease, the most common tick-transmitted disease in the U.S., are closely monitoring the expanding geographical range of tick species and the increased disease incidence among dogs and humans. Co-infections, or simultaneous infection with multiple vector-borne organisms, are being investigated for accurate diagnosis and early and comprehensive treatment. Efforts to understand why some tick-infected dogs remain asymptomatic are also part of this work.

Research addressing epilepsy, the most common neurologic disorder in dogs, is evaluating the effectiveness of dietary supplements in treating affected dogs, as well as the underlying genetics and disease mechanisms. The role of the gastrointestinal tract and the microbiome in the development and subsequent treatment of epilepsy also is being investigated. The knowledge gained from canine epilepsy research, partic-

“Misapplication of genetic tests in a breeding program can lead to excessive neutering and unnecessary removal of individuals, which cause loss of genetic diversity and a reduced gene pool.”

Anita M. Oberbauer, PhD, co-author of
“Review of the Current State of Genetic Testing in Dogs”

ularly of dogs that are unresponsive to anti-epileptic drugs, may help researchers better understand human epilepsy.

WHITE PAPER ON GENETIC TESTING

The recent release of the “Review of the Current State of Genetic Testing in Dogs,” a project co-funded by the AKC Canine Health Foundation and the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA), depicts a commitment to help dog breeders, owners and veterinarians interpret and understand genetic test results. Its origin was inspired by William J. Feeney, chair of the 2019 AKC Board of Directors and Vice President of OFA. Intended to be periodically updated, the 30-page white paper offers hands-on understanding about canine genetic testing.

“While scientific advances in canine DNA testing are exciting, they have also led to a desperate need for continued education,” says Eddie Dziuk, OFA Chief Operating Officer and member of the AKC Delegates Canine Health Committee. “The dog community and even veterinary professionals often struggle with questions such as test purpose, accuracy, breed specificity/appropriateness, and interpretation of results. This is a long-awaited and needed resource to address today’s most pressing questions and make better use of these powerful tools to breed healthier dogs.”

Available online via the Foundation’s website, the manuscript was written at the University of California-Davis by Liza Gershony, DVM, PhD, an AKC Canine Health Foundation Clinician-Scientist Fellow and postdoctoral scholar, and her advisor, professor Anita M. Oberbauer, PhD, a CHF-funded researcher and recipient of the 2019 Asa Mays, DVM, Excellence in Canine Health Research Award. Geneticist Leigh Anne Clark, PhD, of Clemson University, also a CHF-funded investigator, contributed editorial input.

“Misapplication of genetic tests in a breeding program can lead to excessive neutering and unnecessary removal of individuals, which cause loss of genetic diversity and a reduced gene pool,” Dr. Oberbauer says. “Panel and diversity genetic testing provide information that thoughtful breeders may want to include in their breeding deliberations if — *and only if* — the testing data is pertinent to their breed and to their lines while being mindful of the health of the breed as a whole.”

As with copper toxicosis in Bedlington Terriers, the object is to avoid genetic bottlenecks and preserve as much genetic diversity as possible while reducing the frequency of disease alleles. Notably, CHF continues to fund research of copper-associated liver disease in dogs including affected Bedlingtons, as not all affected dogs have the *COMMD1* deletion genotype, meaning *COMMD1* may not be the sole cause of the disease in the breed.

Carillon Bedlington Terrier breeder Heyman made a life-long commitment to help advance the health of her beloved dogs when she began sending blood samples and pedigree information to the researchers studying copper toxicosis.

DOG LOVERS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

As the AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) celebrates its 25-year anniversary, here are ways you can support the important work of this nonprofit organization.

- The CHF Board of Directors is matching donations up to \$150,000 from new and lapsed donors in support of the 25th Anniversary Endowment Campaign. Providing financial stability and sustainability for the research mission and organizational needs of the Foundation, the endowment campaign ensures that CHF will continue to positively impact canine health for years to come.
- A planned gift to the Heritage Society helps to secure the future of your beloved dog breed and advance the mission of CHF so that all dogs live long, healthy lives. By including CHF in your estate plans, you can be sure that your legacy honors your best friend.
- Participate in the Purina Parent Club Partnership (PPCP) Program to help your parent club fundraise for canine health studies that support your breed. PPCP provides funding directly to participating parent clubs and to their Donor Advised Fund held at CHF. Funding is based on the annual submission of proofs of purchase of qualifying *Purina* pet products from parent club members who are members of *Purina Pro Club* and who designate their participating parent club to receive credit for their submissions.



Heyman has attended every AKC Canine Health Foundation National Parent Club Canine Health Conference and frequently volunteers to work at the CHF booth at events. She is a member of the CHF’s Heritage Society, having included a planned gift in her estate.

“I am absolutely passionate about the AKC Canine Health Foundation,” Heyman says. “I love telling people about the good work of the Foundation and encourage them to donate and become members. For me, the joy of breeding healthy dogs that live the best lives possible wouldn’t be possible without the AKC Canine Health Foundation.”

The American Kennel Club provided a straightforward beginning for the AKC Canine Health Foundation with its \$1 million grant and the vision of advancing health for all dogs. Carrying that mission onward, the Foundation has wowed us with its impressive portfolio of work that serves to prevent, treat and cure canine diseases. Congratulations, AKC Canine Health Foundation on 25 years! ■



WINNING WAYS

DAYBREAK KENNEL & TIFFANY ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIELS

Running playfully, chased by a bunch of Cavalier King Charles Spaniel girls, Laura King is spontaneously frivolous and fun. Her animated gestures and happy voice turn exercise time at Daybreak Kennel into an ecstatic, catch-me-if-you-can game.

Sitting on the ground, watching them frolic, Robin Novack laughs heartily. "Laura is extremely talented. I love to watch her show dogs. She is very good at reading a dog, its faults and virtues, and adapting her handling and touch as needed," she says.

Once part of a huge corn farm, Daybreak Kennel is located outside Milan, Illinois, near the Quad Cities. Grouped in six exercise paddocks by their personality



Top: Laura King, left, and Robin Novack hold 9-week-old English Springer Spaniel puppies from a recent litter they co-bred under the Tiffany prefix. Above: Laura, who is a breeding advisor to Gayle and Tom Reardon of KilbridesPride Cavalier King Charles Spaniels, is chased by Cavalier girls in the exercise paddock.

and athletic compatibilities, a string of show dogs sprint around, chasing balls and carrying toys.

Celebrities on the circuit, a Samoyed named "Striker," an English Springer Spaniel called "Kimmie" and a Bearded Collie known as "Max" are living it up. Add to the mix a Portuguese Water Dog named "Beluga," a Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier who goes by "Fannie" and a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel called "Elliot." Eight English Springer Spaniel puppies, the first litter born under the Tiffany prefix co-bred by Robin and Laura along with Beth and Bill Fink, romp with joy in the puppy play yard.

Exercise in the spacious, grassy paddocks lets the dogs be dogs and lets the handlers

and their assistants observe the dogs' behavior and physical condition. Intentionally having no indoor-outdoor kennel runs, Daybreak was designed to be a hands-on kennel with frequent daily interactions among the dogs and the team.

"The dogs' mental condition is every bit as important as their physical condition," Laura says, pausing to talk to Cavalier girl "Classy" and looking smack into her eyes. "We start by letting dogs have fun as we get to know them. The time spent outdoors in the paddocks where we play and interact with them is good for their mental stability."

Everyone knows the best show dogs are born with natural talent, and the way they move is important. "Just like an athlete, the best ones have a natural gait or trot," Robin explains. "You can't force it or teach it. It feels like you are floating at the end of the lead."

The red-and-white Siberian Husky bitch "Amaze" (MBIS/MBISS GCHP/CAN CH Nanook's This Girl Is On Fire), whom Laura showed from 2017 to 2019, had "it" — good foot timing. "It's hard to explain, but when you see it, you know it," Laura says.

Amaze amazed Laura and Robin from the git-go when she arrived from Canada for the 2017 Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. "The first time we saw her was at the Piers," says Laura. "I put a lead on her and moved her in the back and turned around. You could see the brilliance in her eyes."

The serendipitous career of Amaze included winning 61 Bests in Show, setting a record as the winningest Siberian bitch in history and topping a 30-year record. As she settled in at Daybreak Kennel, Amaze was wicked smart, opening latches at her whim. She won more than 180 Working Group Firsts and was a two-time winner at the Siberian Husky Club of America National Specialty.

Everyone knows the best dog handlers have a natural affinity for showing dogs. Count Robin and Laura among them. Partners since 2010, they have a combined nearly 60 years' experience as pro handlers. Laura has put Bests in Show on dogs in all seven AKC Groups, an impressive range with many winning multiple Bests in Show, and has



At Daybreak Kennel dogs spend time daily outdoors exercising. Clockwise, from top left are: "Striker," a Samoyed; "Kimmie," an English Springer Spaniel; Robin with "Max," a Bearded Collie; "Nancy," a Wirehaired Dachshund; an English Springer Spaniel puppy; and Laura with "Classy," a Cavalier.

Shown with her current Special Kimmie, Robin has been breeding Tiffany English Springer Spaniels since 1991. She also was a longtime partner in the Telltale English Springer Spaniel breeding program. “Springers are very people-oriented,” she says. “You must be positive with them and have a good time.”



won National Specialties with dogs of five Groups. Robin has handled dogs to more than 300 Bests in Show, a huge number that is notable because she specializes in the highly competitive English Springer Spaniel.

As a girl, Laura loved to go to dog shows with her mother, Sandra King, a breeder of Sandevel Belgian Shepherds and Schipperkes. “I was really shy and would stalk the handlers’ setups,” she says. “I would sit around all day and watch them. I never wanted to do anything else.”

Her mother’s influence shaped her love of the sport. “She taught me that when you work hard you’ll see the results in the dogs,” says Laura. She also learned from her mother’s friends with whom they traveled to shows like Tebue Collie breeder Barb Browner and Landmark Schipperke breeder and pro handler Doris Hearing.

Laura’s early handling experience at age 9 was in Novice A obedience. It took her four years to put a Companion Dog Excellent title on “Bridget,” a Schipperke. “I was too little to show my mom’s Belgian Sheepdogs,” she grins.

As a girl growing up in Michigan, Robin caught the show bug when her sister, Diane Lalone, recruited her to show her obedience dog, “Bobby” (CH Venetian Bobby Bear CD), a liver-and-white English Springer Spaniel. In high school, Robin worked at the boarding kennel owned by Lorrie Carlton of Belle Creek Bichon fame.

This connection led to a second Novack family springer. Bred by Karen Prickett Miller, “Tiffany” (CH Loujon Elegance) was a black-and-white bitch whom Robin finished as a junior handler and for whom she later named her breeding program. Tiffany helped Robin get an apprentice job after high school working for Miller caring for her Loujon English Springer Spaniels.

“It was priceless working for Karen,” she says. “I trimmed the kennel dogs for her comments and guidance and learned to condition and present dogs. I learned about breeding dogs from Karen and her co-breeder Monica Bowers of Esspecial English Springers.”

After a dedicated six-year apprenticeship with Miller, Robin went out on her own in 1991. Her

family wanted to be involved with breeding dogs and supporting Robin, so her parents, sister and brother-in-law moved to Jackson, Michigan. They converted a garage to a kennel. There is still a kennel in Jackson with a full-time staff.

Robin's first clients were the Telltale English Springer Spaniel breeders Delores Streng of Farmington Hills, Michigan, and Celie Florence of Manakin-Sabot, Virginia. "They were waiting for me, as their handlers, George and Mary Ann Aliston, had retired," Robin says.

Streng began the famous Telltale line in the 1960s, producing over 600 champion show dogs before her death in 2019 and the subsequent retiring of the Telltale prefix. Eventually, Robin joined Telltale as a partner on breeding and showing decisions.

"Delores was like a mom to me," says Robin. "She and Karen (Prickett Miller) taught me to stay positive and that all dogs have something to offer."

Robin took her first Best in Show in 1993 with the liver-and-white male "Zeke" (CH Telltale

Eclipse) at the Battle Creek Kennel Club show. She was 26 years old. The win fueled her confidence and that of Delores and Celie in their new handler.

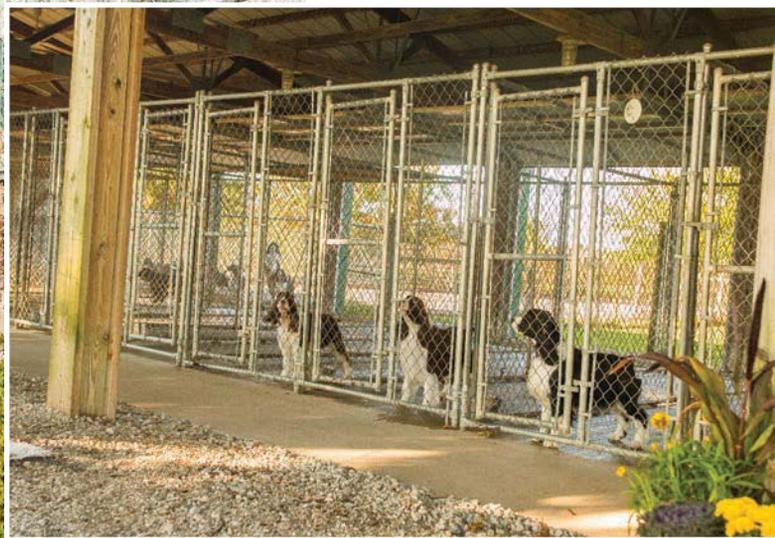
Meanwhile back in Illinois, Laura's dream of showing dogs was on hold until she satisfied her parental requirement to first go to college. Four years later, with a degree in exercise physiology from the University of Iowa, she returned to the Quad Cities and set up six dog runs at a house she rented. Mostly showing her mother's friends' dogs, Laura trained whenever she could with pros like terrier handler Susan DePew and Boxer expert Audrey Gerhardy.

In 1993, Laura went pro. "I wasn't doing any serious winning, but I felt like I was," she says. "I handled an American Staffordshire Terrier named 'Bill' to four or five Group Firsts."

Then came "Bud" (CH Seabrook's Headmaster Tabu ROM), a black male Newfoundland. Laura, who was 27, handled Bud to Working Group First under Houston Clark at the Tennessee Valley Kennel Club show. Next, she took him around



Left: Cavaliers run to play. The double-fenced Daybreak Kennel ensures dogs do not escape. Below: Protected outdoor kennel runs are used to hold dogs temporarily and when the weather is inclement.



Right: The puppies enjoy a meal of *Purina Pro Plan* Puppy Shredded Blend Chicken & Rice Formula. Below: Laura prepares *Purina Pro Plan* Sensitive Skin & Stomach Salmon & Rice Formula for the adult dogs.



the Best in Show ring under revered judge, the late Anne Rogers Clark. “Mrs. Clark walked out and just pointed,” recalls Laura. “I exclaimed, ‘Holy, shit!’

“When we were taking the picture, Mrs. Clark said, ‘Let me give you a bit of advice. It’s best not to curse when the judge awards you Best in Show,’” Laura says, smiling.

In 2003 and 2004, Laura handled a black male Newfoundland, “Polo” (MBIS/MBISS Pouch Cove’s Politician), to 19 Bests in Show. Years later, in 2014, she handled the top-winning Newfie bitch in history, “Jordan” (Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS Pouch Cove’s Seabrook Enough Said), owned by co-breeder Kathy Griffin, the owner of Bud, Laura’s first Best in Show winner.

Honing her handling skills on sporting breeds, and the occasional Borzoi or Bouvier, Robin touched magic when she handled the liver-and-white male, “RB,” for Robin’s Boy, (MBIS/MBISS CH Telltale Salute CGC), the winner of 43 Bests in Show. “He was the total package. He had excellent bone and face. His tail set and topline were perfect,” she says.

RB was another dog that had “it” — natural foot timing. “In 2008, after two years in retirement, we brought him out, and he won the prestigious ESSFTA (English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association) Eastern Specialty under judge Edd Bivin. RB thrilled the audience with his effortless movement and soundness,” she says.

Robin and Laura crossed paths showing dogs in the Sporting Group in 2005. Laura was handling a standout red male English Cocker Spaniel, “Copper” (MBIS Chestnuts Selling The Drama), who took his first Best in Show at 18 months. Copper was the first American-bred solid color English Cocker to place in the Group at Westminster when he took Group Third in 2005.

Following RB, Robin showed a bitch for Karmadi English Springer Spaniel breeder Diane HERNs. “Madam” (MBIS/MBISS AM/CAN CH Karmadi’s Madam President) was the No. 1 Sporting dog in 2007 and ranked No. 5 among all dogs. The top-winning black-and-white English Springer of all time and the top-winning bitch in breed history, Madam won 29 Bests in Show. “Madam had a great heart,” Robin says.

While Robin campaigned Madam, Laura was showing a male Mastiff named “Ivan” (MBIS/MBISS CH Lazy D’s Family Tradition CGC). The No. 1 Mastiff all systems in 2007, Ivan took 12 Bests



From far left: Laura dries the coat of Cavalier “Tori” before leaving for a weekend of dog shows. Kimmie jogs on the treadmill in the kennel, which is used to build athleticism. Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier “Fannie” gives Laura a friendly hug.

in Show with Laura. He also was a two-time breed winner at Westminster and a two-time winner at the Mastiff Club of America National Specialty.

Other top winners Robin has campaigned include 2012’s No. 2 dog in the country, No. 2 Sporting dog and No. 1 all-system English Springer Spaniel, “Peyton” (MBIS/MBISS GCH Wynmoor Champagne Supernova). The liver-and-white male won 82 Bests in Show and was the 2011 ESSFTA National Specialty winner. In 2019, she campaigned “Jace” (MBIS/MBISS Brightwater Gilchrist Dreaming Out Loud), the No. 1 Sporting dog and winner of 30 Bests in Show and over 100 Sporting Group Firsts.

Their partnership in 2010 brought new opportunities. “I was mostly known for handling sporting dogs, so this is when I began broadening the breeds I show,” Robin says. “It was a learning experience for me to fully understand the importance of exercise for dogs’ mental and physical well-being.”

Likewise, Laura says, “Robin helped me learn to evaluate a dog by first finding its positive aspects. You want to look at all a dog has to offer. As a breeder and handler, she considers form and function in looking for its best virtues.”

Robin, a breeder at heart, credits Delores Streng for teaching her to evaluate puppies. “I still hear her voice,” she says. “She taught me to judge dogs for what they are, not what you want them to be. You need to read the standard and believe in what they should look like and not fall into fads.”

Key to their success is taking time off from their busy work schedules. “We take a couple of vacations a year,” Robin says. “It is so important to keep everything in perspective.”

Winning Best in Show is as exciting for them today as the first time they won. Far more than just another rung on the rankings’ ladder, it drives their passion. It keeps them running around in the exercise paddocks, talking to dogs and having silly fun. ■



Traveling with about 25 dogs to shows, Laura and Robin typically take two assistants along, while some helpers stay behind to care for dogs not traveling. Pictured front row, from left, are Alex Gerber, Laura, Robin, and Trey Behm, and back row, from left, Lorrie Minear and Sam Hanle.

RANCH DOG 'FLINT' IS THE 2020 FARM DOG OF THE YEAR

Across the rugged cowboy terrain of central Utah, an 8-year-old blue merle male Australian Shepherd named “Flint” gathered cattle for the first time. Steady and sure, he drove the stock with moxie, blending instinct and intuition. A ranch dog he became.

“Flint acted like he had spent his whole life as a ranch dog, though he hadn’t had many opportunities to do ranch work,” says Beth Crandall of Smithfield, Utah. She picked the Aussie pup when she was a teenager from a 2008 litter sired by a prominent stud dog of her veterinarian grandmother, Rebecca Powers Anderson.

Ranch dog Flint, now 12 years old, is the 2020 Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year. The esteemed award celebrates farm dogs that work alongside farmers and ranchers as loyal partners and enrich the lives of their farm families. A thoughtful,

biddable worker, Flint (J Bar D Lor A Flint’s Dee-Light CGC STDD RN DNA-VP) fetched a leading role as the main ranch dog on the Crandall family ranch with his low-stress cattle handling and stock-savvy judgment.

Zippy Duvall, president of the American Farm Bureau Federation, which presents the award with support from Purina, says, “Flint is an inspiration to people on and off the farm. Doing what he loves, Flint is a true partner with the Crandall family doing the work of multiple ranch hands.”

Beth was hooked on the versatility, loyalty and intelligence of Aussies when her grandmother offered her the pick of the litter sired by her stud dog “Ranger” (Lor A Iyanbito Flint Lex) out of “Dee” (WTCH Makin’ 8 Hanging In The Dees PATDcs RTDcs), a Hall of Fame dam from the J Bar D line begun in the 1960s by

Working on the ranch with Rhet and Beth Crandall, “Flint” took naturally to being a stock dog. As part of his Farm Dog of the Year winnings, Flint received a year’s supply of *Purina Pro Plan*, the dog food he is fed.



Jerry and Sharon Rowe. Already Beth owned a 1-year-old male Australian Shepherd, “Guantes” (Lor A Guantes), from her grandmother’s line.

Rebecca Anderson began breeding Aussies in 1969 as a 4-H project with help from her mother, Loretha Powers, a wonderful dog trainer, breeder and enthusiast for whom Lor A is named. Living on a farm in Andover, Kansas, Rebecca trained the dogs for 4-H herding and showmanship. The foundation behind Lor A Australian Shepherds includes prominent early working lines, such as J Bar D, Silverledge, Crown Point, and Las Rocosa.

Growing up on a ranch in Taos, New Mexico, Beth got involved in 4-H with Guantes and Flint, mastering rally, obedience, agility, and showmanship. She certified Flint as a Canine Good Citizen (CGC) when he was 1 ½ years old and took him to senior centers where he lifted the spirits of residents with his comforting demeanor and extended paw. “Although Flint didn’t work on our farm, he helped me exercise my goats for 4-H and FFA. At the time, I had no idea how helpful a dog could be on a ranch,” she says.

When Beth left for college at Utah State University, Flint went with her. Four years later in 2016, Beth married — and Flint adopted — a fellow Utah State graduate, Rhett Crandall, whose family settled in the rugged mountainous state in the 1850s. Running Hereford and black Angus cattle on 26,000 acres, the Crandalls understand how a good stock dog comes in handy.

Beth and Rhett began taking Flint to the ranch, where he worked cattle alongside two Border Collies owned by Rhett’s father. “One of my favorite things about Flint is how he watches us to understand what we want,” Rhett says. “As he comes to obstacles like gates, creeks, trees, and brush, he figures out what he needs to do to get the cattle through. His biggest strength is wanting to please us.”

Having just begun her second year in the Utah State-Washington State College of Veterinary Medicine program, Beth proudly carries on the Lor A Australian Shepherd breeding program of her grandmother and great-grandmother. Flint has sired six litters, and his semen has been shipped to Europe. She and Rhett are raising one of his blue merle male pups, “Sage,” 2 years old, and a blue merle female named “Rein,” 2 years old, whom they bought from Sagecreek Aussie breeder Pam Watson.



“Our Lor A dogs are the same type, style and build of those my grandmother started when she was a girl,” Beth says. “She has shared her unlimited knowledge and mentored me in breeding and raising dogs. We want to preserve the foundation lines and produce versatile, level-headed dogs. It is our goal to breed dogs that have sound minds and bodies and a strong desire to work.”

A new adventure came for Flint in May 2019 when he and Beth competed in a herding trial sanctioned by the Australian Shepherd Club of America. Although he had never worked sheep and ducks, he earned the Started Trial Dog title in ducks and was only points away from earning the title in sheep and cattle.

“It was challenging for Flint to work different stock, but he loved it. He loves anything involving working livestock,” Beth says. “We plan to continue with this.”

Up the road, Beth and Rhett also plan to work full time at the ranch with their trusted, loyal companion Aussies. “The dogs are truly part of our family,” Rhett says. “They live with us in our house and travel everywhere we go.”

A ranch dog Flint became. Although his passion for working livestock was realized relatively late in life, his legacy will continue through his offspring and service to the Crandall family.

“One day he will have to retire, but I will never be able to replace him. He has made such a long-term impact to my life,” Beth says. “He has changed our lives and made ranching the best job in the world.” ■

Beth’s special relationship with Flint has changed her life. The male Australian Shepherd stole her heart with his biddability, intelligence and loyalty.



CONDITIONING RETRIEVERS

FOR FIELD TRIALS

Trainers of retrievers often lament there is not enough time to train and condition dogs, yet both are needed to prepare dogs for highly competitive field trial stakes. A combined approach enhances performance and also prevents injury.

Pro trainer Mike Lardy of Handjem Retrievers in Montello, Wisconsin, took time a few years ago to add a comprehensive conditioning program to the regimen of 26 Labrador Retrievers training for field trials. Jennell Appel, DVM, CCRT, a canine rehabilitation therapist and founder of the SportVet Canine Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine Mobile Clinic, developed the program and monitored the dogs' progress.

"Field trials are incredibly competitive and the difference between winning and getting a JAM (Judges Award of Merit) can

be quite small. Anything that gets you a 1 percent advantage is worth doing. Field trial tests are physically demanding, and a dog's ability to discriminate scent and think clearly can be profoundly affected by his level of conditioning," says Lardy, a Retriever Hall of Fame member who has trained over 100 Field Champions and won a record seven National Retriever Championships.

At Handjem Retrievers, dogs were divided into compatible groups with older dogs receiving shorter exercise timed intervals than younger dogs. The speed of the exercises varied based on the dogs' sizes and condition status. "I think many dogs do better with less training and more conditioning," Lardy reflects. "Conditioning not only physically prepares a dog for training and competition, it also mentally strengthens them."

Today's Breeder interviewed Lardy and Dr. Appel about the conditioning program used with the Handjem Labrador Retrievers. Here are their insights about how to effectively combine conditioning and training.

Q: SHOULD A DOG BE PHYSICALLY FIT GOING INTO THIS CONDITIONING PROGRAM?

Dr. Appel: The purpose of this program is to build strength and endurance at the dog's own pace and ability. Thus, it doesn't matter the level of conditioning a dog starts the program. A dog that has consistently been involved in a conditioning program but has taken a few months off will start at the same level as a dog coming into the program for the first time. However, this dog will advance through the program faster than the dog that has never been conditioned.

Q: WHAT IS THE TRAINING TIMELINE OF THIS CONDITIONING PROGRAM?

Dr. Appel: Although retriever trials are year-round, the easiest time to begin this regimen for dogs and trainers alike is early January. Since most trials get into full swing in March, this gives trainers a full eight weeks leading into a busy trial season to focus on getting dogs conditioned to help prevent injuries.

Dogs that have never participated in a conditioning program begin with three times a week sessions until they reach a maintenance phase. This can take from eight to 12 weeks, depending on the rate at which the dog progresses through the program.

Q: WHAT ARE THE FACETS OF THE CONDITIONING PROGRAM?

Dr. Appel: This program is designed to build a dog's strength, balance and endurance. For starters, a land-based harnessed roading system encourages muscle strengthening and improved cardiopulmonary performance. Dogs are harnessed and connected to an ATV or four-wheeler via a bungee system that helps maintain a consistent trotting pace. This pace is critical for building muscle and cardiac endurance. The first week consists of a 10-minute trot at an average of 5 to 8 mph. Time intervals are increased every

week until dogs reach a maintenance level of 30 to 35 minutes.

Endurance swimming helps to build cardiac endurance and core strengthening. One of the most demanding exercises for dogs, swimming uses every muscle of the body as well as their core musculature. Swimming also stresses the cardiopulmonary system, especially when a dog retrieves a bird or bumper, as this decreases air flow to the airways. The goal of endurance swimming is for the dog to stay

in the water beginning with three to five minutes and working up to 20 minutes.

Balance training works well with an inflatable peanut-shaped ball. Standing a dog on the ball promotes core and muscle strengthening and balance/proprioceptive awareness. To introduce the exercise, you should ask the dog to place the forelimbs on the ball and gradually advance to all four limbs using treats for motivation. This exercise begins with one-minute intervals during which the dog stands on the ball and balances on all four limbs. The time is slowly increased over the course of six to eight weeks until the dog reaches a maintenance level of standing on the ball five minutes once weekly.

Q: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A DOG REACHES MAINTENANCE STATUS?

Dr. Appel: Once a dog has adapted to a maintenance level of conditioning, the goal is to evaluate subsequent conditioning based on the level of activity planned on a weekly basis for that dog. In other words, if a dog is performing in a trial and has only four days available for training and conditioning, you need to tailor the exercise program that week to not exhaust the dog physically yet still maintain the established level of condition. During weeks of heavy work, you may decrease the exercise time intervals, or during weeks of light work, you may increase the intervals and number of days.

Q: WHAT DO YOU RECOMMEND FOR RECOVERY AND REST FOR RETRIEVERS IN THE PROGRAM?

Dr. Appel: Minimum rest required is 24 hours. I typically recommend a full two days of rest following four days of training and a three-day trial, especially if the dog has performed in multiple stakes.

Q: HOW DOES THIS PROGRAM HELP TO REDUCE THE RISK OF INJURIES?

Dr. Appel: One of the leading causes of injury is muscle fatigue. Muscles aid in supporting joints as well as other soft tissues, such as tendons. When muscles become exhausted, they are not able to provide the same degree of protection. Therefore,



Dr. Jennell Appel introduces a peanut ball to this dog using treats for motivation. Eventually the dog will stand on the ball with all four limbs to promote core and muscle strengthening and balance control.



Labrador Retriever "Jerry Lee" won an Amateur field trial with owner Lynne Dubose at 11 1/2 years of age after participating in Handjem Retrievers' conditioning program.

PHOTO: MARK L. ATWATER/CLOSE PHOTO



exercises that will help strengthen a dog's musculature and improve the ability of muscles to decrease stress placed on other tissues is critical for the prevention of injury.

Q: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF NUTRITION IN THIS PROGRAM?

Dr. Appel: Nutrition plays an important role in stress management as well as augmenting recovery. The nutritional requirements of canine athletes are very different than those of the average pet dog. Athletes require a delicate balance of fat and protein, which aids in maintaining lean muscle mass, provides the proper fuel for their metabolic needs, and optimizes oxygen metabolism for increased endurance. I feed and recommend *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula* for these reasons.

Mike Lardy: A top-notch retriever needs the best training, the best nutrition, the best health care, and the best conditioning possible. It's hard to excel overall if any part of that foundation is missing.

Our hardworking retrievers are fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Formula*.

Q: HOW HAVE YOU MEASURED THE SUCCESS OF THIS CONDITIONING PROGRAM?

Dr. Appel: During the first two years of this program, I focused on evaluating objective data using 26 professionally trained dogs. Muscle girth measurements and respiratory/recovery rates were evaluated at the conclusion of every month of the program. I then extrapolated duration and frequency of conditioning exercises based on those findings. The dogs gained 1 centimeter of mass on average every two weeks of conditioning and leveled out around the six-week mark.

Mike Lardy: We successfully competed with 10- and 11-year-old dogs after they participated in this conditioning program. I don't think we could have done that prior to the program. For example, an 11 ½-year old retriever named "Jerry Lee" (FC-AFC Great Bunny of Fire) won an Amateur with owner Lynne Dubose.

Q: CAN THIS EXERCISE PROGRAM BE USED WITH OTHER BREEDS THAT PARTICIPATE IN OTHER TYPES OF FIELD TRIALS AND SPORTS?

Dr. Appel: These exercises are beneficial for all canine athletes, as they help to build strength and cardiac endurance. It is important to tailor a conditioning program so it is somewhat sport specific. I encourage anyone working with a dog to reach out to a canine sports medicine specialist or rehabilitation therapist for guidance in creating a program specific for their dog. ■



Now semi-retired, pro trainer Mike Lardy operates Handjem Retriever Day School working with owners to improve their training and handling skills.

BEAGLE NAMED ‘MOE’ WINS 2ND PURINA SPO AWARD

One year older, one year more experienced, a standout hound named “Moe” consistently tracked the rabbit with independence and finesse to become the 2019 Purina Outstanding SPO (Small Pack Option) Field Trial Beagle. A repeat winner who also won in 2018, FCGD Rapid Run Big Moe D clinched his spot on top by the end of September, earning 189 points during the yearlong competition.

A natural rabbit-tracker with keen accuracy on the line, the 4-year-old 15-inch tricolor male is owned and handled by the father-son team of Richard Sawyer, of Chickamuaga, Georgia, and David Sawyer, of Frankfort, Kentucky. After 27 years in SPO field trials, they competed for the Purina Award for the first time in 2018.

“To win the Purina Award a second time with Moe has been very exciting,” says David Sawyer. “Moe is calm and controlled and doesn’t let things

bother him. He is super level-headed. I’ve never owned a dog like him.”

Bred by Dickie Atkinson of Terra Haute, Indiana, Moe was sired by the Sawyers’ male, NGBC FCGD Rapid Run Big Easy B, out of NGBC FCGB R & R Plenty Of Since. The sire represents 21 years of Rapid Run hounds, including two Hall of Fame sires, FC Cranks Chicken, inducted in 2017, and FC Rapid Run Lil’ Caddy, inducted in 2018.

Richard Sawyer, a former professional SPO beagle handler who finished 300 Field Champions, bought Moe as a puppy before he was started on tracking rabbits. He showed promise early winning the 2016 United Beagle Gundog Federation Derby Runoff at 11 months old. Their top-performing hound was fueled to his Purina Award win by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 26/16 Formula*. ■



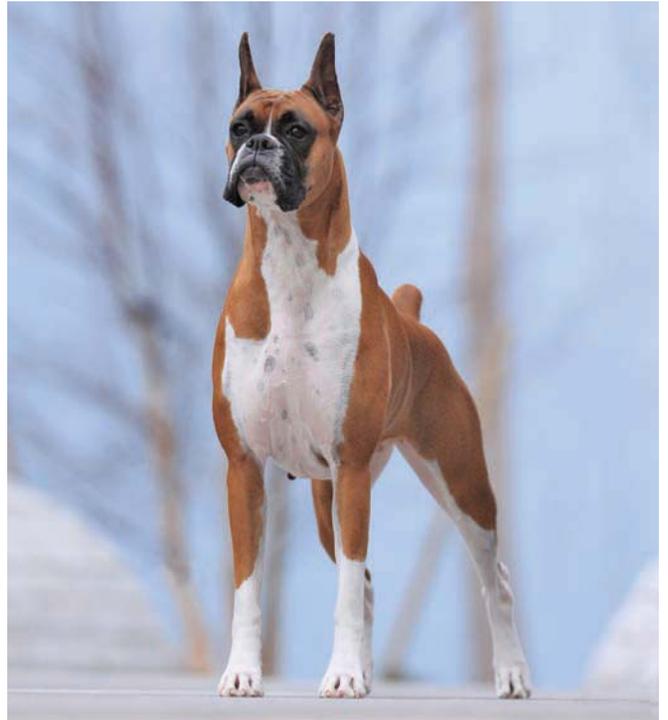
FCGD Rapid Run Big Moe D wins his second Purina SPO Award in back-to-back years.

Circle of Champions

WINNINGEST BOXER IN BREED HISTORY IS 'WILMA'

A dazzling flashy fawn female Boxer named "Wilma" has won a knockout as the breed's new top title holder. Taking 126 Bests in Show, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCHP2 Cinnibon's Bedrock Bombshell surpassed the 121 win record set in the early 1950s by the legendary male Boxer CH Bang Away of Sirrah Crest. Handled by Michael Shepherd of Aubrey, Texas, Wilma has won 553 Bests of Breed and 342 Working Group Firsts on her way to becoming the heavyweight titlist. The No. 1 Working dog and No. 1 Boxer all systems since 2018, Wilma has won 80 Bests in Specialty Show, including winning Best of Breed at the 2019 American Boxer Club National Specialty. "We knew Wilma was special and hoped she would do well in the ring," says Cinnibon Boxer breeder Bonnie Wagaman of Fallbrook, California. "What she and Michael have accomplished in just three years is more than I ever imagined possible." Co-bred by Nicole Manna of Flower Mound, Texas, Wilma is co-owned by Keith and Cheryl Robbins of Tybee Island, Georgia; Dave Berrey of Toronto; Deborah Caywood of Stanton, Virginia; and Wagaman. The top-winning Boxer is fed *Purina Pro Plan* Adult Sensitive Skin & Stomach Salmon & Rice Formula.

An eye-catching female Boxer, "Wilma" won the Working Group at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in 2019 and 2020.



'ROCKY' IS THIRD ALL-TIME WINNINGEST UKC BENCH SHOW MALE BLUETICK COONHOUND



The third top-winning bench show male Bluetick Coonhound in United Kennel Club history, based on having won 62 Grand Champion shows, is "Rocky," an 8-year-old. NGRCH CCH GRCH 'PR' HOF Spanky's Rockin Blue Popacap counts among his wins the 2017 National Grand Show Championship at Autumn Oaks and the 2015 Purina National Overall Bench Show Championship. In 2020, Rocky was elected to the UKC's newly begun Hall of Fame, which requires 40 Grand Champion wins. "Rocky has a commanding presence," says owner-handler Lory Galbreath of Cabot, Arkansas. "He is a big dog, structurally sound, and his movement is exceptional." Besides Galbreath, Rocky is co-owned by Autumn Huffman of Newcastle, Virginia, and the late Kris Tracy of Fincastle, Virginia. The handsome Bluetick is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula.

Recently inducted into the United Kennel Club's Hall of Fame, "Rocky," a Bluetick Coonhound, has won 62 Grand Champion bench shows.

Editor's Note: Due to the disruption of show and sporting events across the country in 2020 caused by COVID-19, we are featuring dogs that have had tremendous career success, many setting breed records, in this issue of Circle of Champions. Congratulations to all!

WESTMINSTER SPORTING GROUP WINNER IS 'DANIEL'

A consummate show dog, "Daniel," the Golden Retriever who took Sporting Group First at the 2020 Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, fed off the energy of the crowd chanting his name at Madison Square Garden. In his signature style, Multi-BIS/Multi-BISS GCHP Hillock's Jack Daniel's RA JH CA RATN CGC WCX OS SDHF VC trotted confidently around the ring and stacked like a king for handler Karen Mammano of Webster, New York. "I truly believe he is one of the best," says Mammano, who took the 5-year-old male to No. 1 Golden Retriever all systems in 2018 and 2019. "It was so surreal, and unexpected, to win, which made it even better." Taking his 26th Best in Specialty Show at the 2019 Golden Retriever Club of America National Specialty, Daniel's record includes an impressive 19 Bests of Show and 61 Group Firsts. The sixth generation of Hillock Golden Retrievers, Daniel is the highest achiever for breeder Tammy Tomlinson of Ligonier, Pennsylvania. "Daniel is one of those dogs in which you can just look into his soul. He is sensitive and can pick up on what you want him to do. He has what I call 'heart,' the willingness to walk into the ring and give 100 percent," she says. Co-bred by Lisa and Jim Cohen of Virginia Beach, Virginia, Daniel is co-owned by Tomlinson, Jim Cohen, and Robert Samios of Jamestown, Pennsylvania, who is training the versatile Golden for his Senior Hunter title. Now retired though he will be shown at select shows and specialties, Daniel is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula*.



A high achiever, "Daniel" is one of three Golden Retrievers to win Sporting Group First at Westminster.

ENGLISH SPRINGER SPANIEL 'ANNIE' IS ALL-TIME HIGH-POINT FIELD DOG



The all-time High-Point English Springer Spaniel Field Dog is a black-and-white female named "Annie," whose versatility as a flushing bird dog capable of big finds and pinpoint retrieving is second to none. Trained by Jim Keller of Wildwind Kennels in Knox, Maine, NAFC FC AFC CNAFC CFC CAFC Flushingwing Annie, now retired at 13 years old, earned a career 248 all-age points, consisting of 192 points in the American Kennel Club and 56 points in the Canadian Kennel Club. "Annie is one of the best dogs, definitely the best bitch, I've ever trained," Keller says. "She is the consummate bird dog, an incredibly gifted retriever who can figure out difficult situations." In 2014, Annie was the U.S. High-Point All-Age Dog, buoyed by her placing second in the English Springer National Field Championship, followed by earning top High-Point All-Age Dog honors running in the U.S. and Canada in 2015 and 2016. With owner Fred Musone of Tiverton, Rhode Island, Annie, who took over half her total career points running for Musone, won the 2010 English Springer National Amateur and the 2013 Canadian National Amateur. Bred by Jim and Cynthia Bell of Nova Scotia, Canada, Annie was sired by Hall of Fame Springer NFC AFC FC CFC FC Crosswinds War Path, also trained by Keller, out of CFC Flushing Wings Flash on Fire. Annie was powered to her incredible achievements by *Purina Pro Plan Sport Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice*.

"Annie" tallied a career 248 all-age points on her way to becoming the all-time High Point English Springer Spaniel Field Dog.

TOP-WINNING PYRENEAN SHEPHERD OF ALL TIME IS ‘SILENE’

The winningest Pyrenean Shepherd in breed history is a 7 ½-year-old female named “Silene,” who drives energy and enthusiasm as she glides around the show ring, arriving with sparkling vigilance, ready to take on any challenge. MBIS/MBISS GCHG Isaby De Terra-Blue TCQ AOE STDsd has set a few records along the way. Handler Brendan Coleman of St. Cloud, Florida, has campaigned the rough-faced female to No. 5 and No. 8 in the Herding Group in 2020 and 2019, respectively — the first of her breed to make the Top 10 — and to No. 1 Pyr Shep all systems both years. In winning the Shenandoah Valley Kennel Club show in June 2019, she became the first bitch of her breed to win a Best in Show. “Silene gives 200 percent every time we show,” Coleman says. Owner David Clayton of Quincy, Florida, a longtime breeder of SunFire Australian Shepherds and Swedish Vallhunds, chose Silene as a 6-week puppy. He finished her at 1 year of age at the 2015 Pyrenean Shepherd Club of America (PSCA) National Specialty. That same weekend, they took Best in Show in the Owner-Handler Series at the Atlanta Kennel Club show — another first for the breed. “Silene has wonderful breed type in her alert expression, solid conformation and proper movement,” Clayton says. He went on to handle her to Best of Breed at the 2017 PSCA National Specialty and repeat Best in Show in the Owner-Handler Series that weekend at the Evansville (Indiana) Kennel Club show. Bred by Terra-Blue Pyr Shep breeder Joni A. Monney-McKeown of Nashville, Tennessee, with co-breeder Jennie Williams of Vesper Aussies

in Flinstone, Georgia, Silene is from Monney-McKeown’s “dream litter” sired by her Belgian male, CH Korto de la Tuile au Louip, and French dam, CH Arbouse de l’Oustaou de Padel TCQ HOF. The ever-mischievous Silene is powered by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula.



Besides being an outstanding show dog, “Silene” is true to her breed’s beginning as a French herding dog, as she holds a Started Trial Dog title in sheep and ducks and has earned one leg toward the title in cattle.

TREEING WALKER COONHOUND ‘EMMY’ EXCELS IN UKC, PKC NITE HUNTS



An independent, hardworking Treeing Walker Coonhound, “Emmy” proved her natural ability at nite hunts by winning multiple championships.

“Emmy,” an 8-year-old female Treeing Walker Coonhound, owned and handled by Lane Denny of Jay, Oklahoma, is the first Professional Kennel Club (PKC) Platinum Champion to win the prestigious United Kennel Club (UKC) World Championship. Her accomplishments in nite hunt championships in both registries show her tremendous ability to track and tree raccoons. WRLDNITECH CH GRNITECH(2) ‘PR’ Spavinaw Creek Insane Emmy won the UKC World Championship in September 2019, outperforming more than 500 coonhounds. Having earned more than \$50,000 in PKC events, Emmy is listed on the PKC’s Top 24 Lifetime Female Earnings. “Her greatest virtue is her heart, and that is something they are born with,” says Denny, who got his start in the sport as a 12-year-old. “Emmy has more drive and determination than any hound I’ve ever owned or hunted. She was a natural from the beginning.” As the winner of the 2018 PKC Senior Showdown, Emmy gifted Lane with a Ford F150 pickup truck, after being chosen as an alternate in the competition that was based on a dog’s top earnings in 2017. Emmy was bred by David Berry of Christiana, Tennessee. The fast-running, independent female is fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Salmon & Rice Formula and *Purina Pro Plan* Sensitive Skin & Stomach Salmon & Rice Formula.

POINTER NAMED 'HAMMER' IS 2019-2020 COVER DOG OF THE YEAR

In his hard-hunting, forward-running, classy style, an 8-year-old white-and-orange male Pointer named “Hammer” drove the most points in a comeback after being retired to be named the 2019-2020 Cover Dog of the Year. Among his wins that contributed to the honor, 3XCH RUCH Titanium’s Hammer triumphed at the 2019 Grand National Grouse Championship and the 2019 Lake States Grouse Championship. In 2018, he was Runner-Up Champion at the Wisconsin Cover Dog Championship. Original owner Doug Baumann of Plymouth, Wisconsin, retired from field trials and offered Hammer back to breeder-handler Bruce Minard, and his partner, son Neal Minard, of Hifive Kennels in Beulah, Michigan. “After a few short months of regular workouts, it was clear that Hammer had more wins to come,” says Minard, who teamed up with Hammer’s new owner Bob Leet of Paw Paw, Michigan. Prior to running cover dog trials, Hammer competed in shooting dog horseback stakes, winning the 2015 Midwest Shooting Dog Championship as a 3-year-old. “Making the switch to the cover dog circuit with ease shows his great versatility and ability to adjust easily to new situations,” Minard says. The talented Pointer was sired by Dateline Blacklist out of Hifive’s Wrangler – both dogs were bred and trained at Hifive Kennels. His sire won the inaugural Northern Michigan Cover Dog Championship in 2010 and was Runner-Up Champion at the 2011 Grand National Grouse and Woodcock Invitational. His dam won the 2009 National Amateur Grouse Championship. Hammer is fueled by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula*.



“Hammer,” a male Pointer, proved his finesse in cover dog trials where pointing breeds are judged for their ability to range in the pursuit of wild game yet be handled easily by handlers on foot.

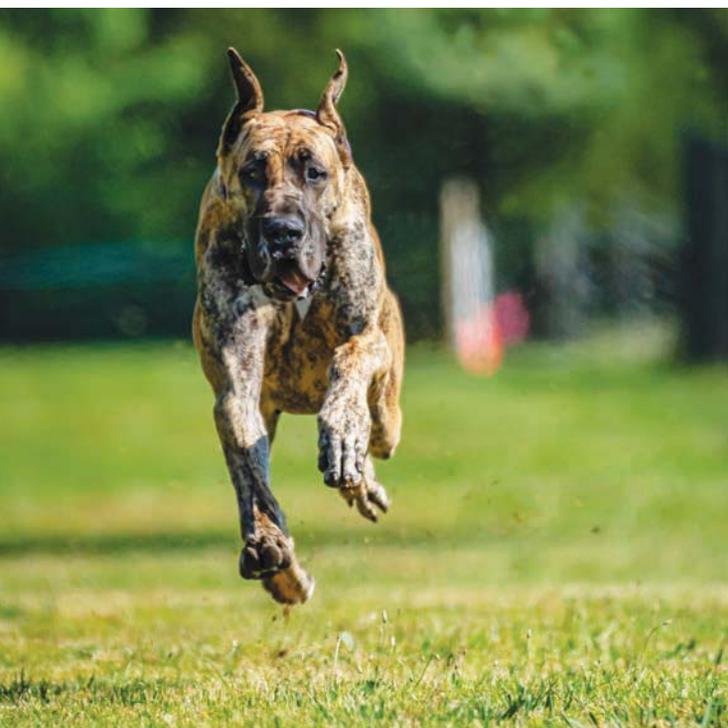


PHOTO: PHIL DUNN/FASTCATPHIL.COM

FAST CAT GREAT DANE 'DILLY PICKLES' SETS BREED RECORD

The highest-titled Great Dane in the sport of Fast CAT (coursing ability test) is a 2-year-old brindle female called “Dilly Pickles,” who also is the first Grand Champion of her breed to earn a FCAT title. Intent on chasing the lure as she runs with fury down the 100-yard straight course, GCH Ellenni Blkstone Ashella True Friend of the Crown FDC CAA FCAT3 THDA CGC TKN ATT took to Fast CAT naturally. Breeder-owner-handler Kristi Allison of Blackstone Great Danes in Bealeton, Virginia, says, “Dilly Pickles loves to run and chase things, so it is not surprising she loves Fast CAT.” Starting in Fast CAT in December 2019 at 18 months of age, Dilly Pickles already has earned FCAT3, the highest title requiring 1,000 points plus 500 points for each additional FCAT. With titles on both ends of her name, including lure coursing, therapy dog advanced, trick dog, farm dog, and now Fast CAT, Dilly Pickles received a Versatility Award in 2020 from the Great Dane Club of America. Co-breeders and co-owners of the talented female are Brittany Cipriotti and her daughter, Angele Cipriotti, both of Bealeton, Virginia, and Janet Petrella-Ashby of Ontario, Canada. Dilly Pickles is fueled to her achievements by *Purina Pro Plan SPORT Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula*.

“Dilly Pickles” averages 25 mph and is ranked among the Top 5 Great Danes in Fast CAT.

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

PURINA AWARDS SHOOTING DOG WINNERS

The 2019-2020 Purina Top Shooting Dog Award winners are Pointers, two males and a female, known for their bird-finding talents and graceful style on point. The Purina Top Shooting Dog Handler is a veteran pro trainer, one who works hard to achieve success. In this highly competitive sport, their accomplishments are noteworthy.

An 8-year-old white-and-liver male Pointer called “Bolt” secured his third Purina Top Shooting Dog Award by consistently delivering a stellar performance. The second three-time winner in history, Chelsea’s Thunder Bolt follows in the footsteps of Hall of Fame Pointer Elhew Swami, his great-granddam. During the yearlong circuit, Bolt captured five championships and a runner-up championship. The winningest shooting dog



Pro handler Shawn Kinkelaar is a six-time winner of the Purina Top Shooting Dog Handler Award.

of all time, Bolt has won 21 open shooting dog championships during his career.

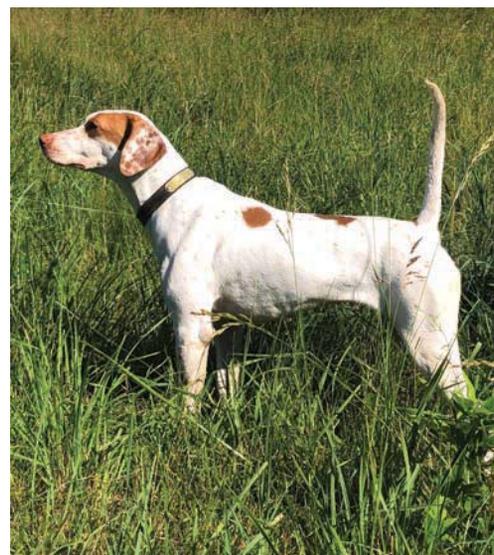
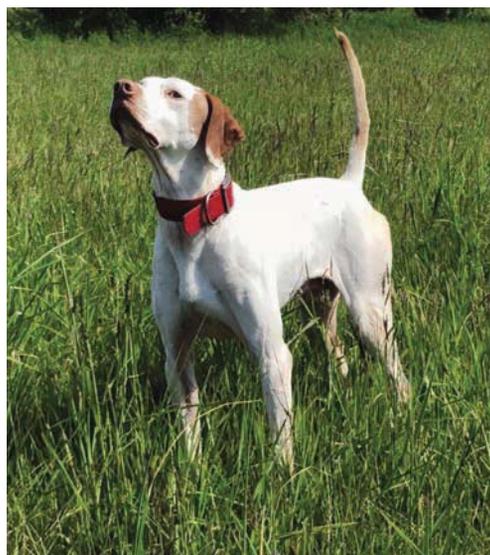
Handled by the Purina Top Shooting Dog Handler Shawn Kinkelaar of Effingham, Illinois, and Carson, North Dakota, Bolt is owned by bird dog trainer George Hickox of Ochlocknee, Georgia, and Bismarck, North Dakota, and bird dog enthusiast Dr. Tom Jackson of Columbus, Indiana. Brad Sadler of Chelsea Plantation in Ridgeland, South Carolina, is the breeder. Bolt’s powerful delivery combined with the performances of nine

bird dogs that won 12 championships and seven runner-up championships gave Kinkelaar his sixth handler award. “Winning is all about the dogs and their owners and being a team together,” Kinkelaar says. “We all take pride.”

With spirited determination, a 6-year-old white-and-orange male Pointer named “Will” proved his natural drive and instincts to become the Purina Amateur Top Shooting Dog. Handled by owner Brian Sanchez of Great River Kennel in Central Islip, New York, Miller’s Unbridled Forever won three championships, including the National Amateur Invitational Championship, a runner-up championship and a classic. Trained by George Tracy, and his son, Mike Tracy, both of Glenville, Pennsylvania, Will is co-owned by Sanchez’s parents, Jack and Audrey Sanchez of Central Islip, New York, and Neil Walker of Leslie, Georgia. “Will is a great bird dog, and he keeps me on my toes,” says Sanchez, who has now handled five Purina Amateur Top Shooting Dogs.

Will was bred by Jack and Fran Miller of Barwick, Georgia, who repeated the breeding of Just Irresistible and Miller’s Bring the Heat to produce the Purina Derby Top Shooting Dog, a 2-year-old orange-and-white female called “Doll.” Handled by pro Mike Tracy for owner Joe McHugh of Boston, Georgia, Miller’s Extreme Heat earned seven derby placements, including three first places, two second places and three third places. “Doll may be small in size, but she is big in heart,” says Tracy, a top handler in the sport who has won the Purina Handler Award 12 times. “Doll has poise and attitude and is very sharp on game.” Doll is McHugh’s first Purina Award winner after 50 years in the sport.

All of the shooting dog winners are fed *Purina Pro Plan SPORT* Performance 30/20 Chicken & Rice Formula. Congratulations to these powerful teams and their dogs! ■



Purina Top Shooting Dog Award winners are, from left: Chelsea’s Thunder Bolt, Miller’s Unbridled Forever, and Miller’s Extreme Heat.

From The Makers Of The

#1

VETERINARIAN
RECOMMENDED

Probiotic Supplement*



CONVENIENT
CHEWABLE TABLET!
AVAILABLE IN 45-COUNT
AND 90-COUNT

Everything you love about
Purina® Pro Plan® Veterinary Supplements
FortiFlora®, in an easy-to-feed tablet.

DIETARY MANAGEMENT
OF PUPPIES AND DOGS
WITH DIARRHEA

PROMOTES
A STRONG
IMMUNE SYSTEM

EASY TO FEED

ORDER TODAY ON PROPLANVETDIRECT.COM.
ALSO AVAILABLE AT PET SPECIALTY RETAILERS AND YOUR VETERINARIAN.



*Kynotec, Probiotic Recommendation Study, March 2019.

Purina trademarks are owned by Société des Produits Nestlé S.A.



Your Pet, Our Passion.®



Tell us how Purina®
Pro Plan® has helped
you and your dog on your
journey to success at

proplan.com/reviews

Today's Breeder
Nestlé Purina PetCare
Checkerboard Square
St. Louis, MO 63164

Prsrt Std
U.S. Postage
PAID
St. Louis, MO
Permit No. 475

Breed Snapshot

GERMAN WIREHAIED POINTER: A VERSATILE HUNTER

The wire-coated, bushy-browed, short-bearded Deutsch-Drahthaar, as the German Wirehair is known in his native Germany, is well-equipped for his work as an all-purpose gundog. This rugged, versatile hunting dog was developed in the late 1800s to point and retrieve on land and in water. Even today, the breed represents the standout qualities of his ancestors: the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon, German Shorthaired Pointer, Stichelhaar, and Pudelpointer.

His distinctive, wiry coat is water-resistant and protects the body when working in heavy cover and cold weather. A dense undercoat provides insulation in winter and is shed in summer. The grizzly-faced Wirehair features a heavy brow that guards his eyes from injury and a short beard and whiskers that protect from brush and briars. This all-weather, medium-sized breed is known for his energetic, determined spirit.

With his sound, reliable temperament and natural intelligence, the German Wirehaired Pointer is easily trained. His versatility is reflected in his diverse activities, including hunting tests, horseback stakes, conformation, agility, obedience, therapy dog, and drug detection. Males are 24 to 26 inches at the withers, and females are smaller but not under 22 inches. Most of all, it is the German Wirehaired Pointer's loyal, affectionate nature that make him a beloved companion.

Source: *The Complete Dog Book*, Official Publication of the American Kennel Club

Right: GCH Wireswest Honestly Earned At Claddagh NA1 SH is a 5-year-old male German Wirehaired Pointer owned by William and Courtney Bastian and Meg Eden.



Your Pet, Our Passion.®