



BCOA/ AKC Delegate Report June 11, 2002

The June Delegate meeting held in San Antonio, Texas, was one of the more poorly attended AKC meetings that I have been to in many years. The major concern was whether there were enough Delegates to constitute a quorum. A majority of Delegates continue to request that the Quarterly NYC area meetings be rotated around the country, bi-annually. If this meeting is an indication of how small attendance will be at future rotating meetings, the idea may not be feasible, and we will need to return to holding the meetings at the same location every time.

In any case, I found this meeting to be quite productive. I think that because the Delegate body was smaller, it seemed more intimate, and it was much easier to express an opinion or ask a question without the worry of monopolizing everyone else's time, or dragging the meeting out.

I flew in early to attend the High Volume Breeder meeting, held Sunday evening. Due to a continually growing agenda, Sunday was the only time left open. Based on that meeting, I strongly recommend to any one involved in dogs to be on the alert for, and attend, any talks or presentations offered on this topic. AKC's HVB Committee members are making themselves available to attend all-breed kennel club meetings, where they will explain AKC's proposed position and policy on this crucial matter, and answer all questions.

The following is a brief synopsis on the HVB issue. Throughout its history, AKC has always registered commercial breeders' puppies, while we, the breeders of quality, well-raised puppies have separated ourselves from any hint of commercialism. We looked on with relief several years ago, as AKC began to clamp down on the commercial breeder, closing out whole colonies of dogs because of improper care and/or record keeping, and fining the owners. This caused a huge reduction in AKC registrations as many commercial breeders went out of business. They soon solved their problem by setting up their own registration entities, copying AKC.

More recently the commercial breeder has become organized. Many with the help of a major leader, which is the trucking firm and dog middleman; "Hunte Corp." Through the help of Hunte Corp, Government grants that continue to number in the millions of dollars became available to down and out Midwest farmers. With these loans they have built what we are told are "state of the art" breeding kennels. Here they raise puppies on demand for the pet shop trade, Hunte Corp. being one of the major brokers. As a broker they examine, buy,

vaccinate, worm, microchip and resell, and then ship out thousands of puppies (weekly) to major pet shops.

An AKC Committee was formed to study the matter. Committee members are actually visiting and meeting with these so-called High Volume Breeders, or "HVBs". Technically, an HVB is defined as anyone breeding seven or more litters a year. The committee members have met with Hunte Corp. representatives, and others, and continue to visit commercial breeding kennels, even inspecting their records. They report that the kennels they have visited are clean, efficient, and well maintained with all records in order. They are now looking into ways to work with HVBs who will abide by AKC rules and registration policies, so that the AKC may ultimately sanction them.

While still in the formative stages, what I understand is that AKC will begin promoting the HVB with a new campaign to "Buy an AKC Puppy," rather than the former "Buy From A Breeder." The reason for this change, according to the AKC, is that the reputable breeders do not and cannot produce enough puppies to meet the demand for purebred dogs. This may be true and even necessary, but we must look carefully at how this new policy will effect existing breeders and

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exhibitors, who are the backbone of the fancy.

As a breeder representing our Parent Club and our Breed, I am concerned about our needs. At the meeting I asked, "What protection is planned for the dedicated breeder, our beliefs, and even our breed standards?" The answer given by one member of the Committee was that "several plans are being studied", and that when these plans are announced, we "will be pleased with them".

In discussions with Committee members I suggested that the AKC establish a special designation on HVB registrations to distinguish them from the small breeders, or even to institute a separate registration altogether, and impressed upon the Committee that it is critical to institute such a designation immediately. We must elevate the dedicated breeder of quality dogs. Those of us who believe in the preservation of our beloved breeds, and the art and integrity of their written standards must not have our values swept aside. The AKC policies must support the breeder who stands behind his or her dogs, and distinguish them from those who breed strictly for profit.

The Hunte Corp also has a plan to begin to neuter all puppies that pass through their hands. This would be financially beneficial for them, and will help to reduce the number of "back yard breeders." In the long run I would expect everyone would benefit, except the 8-week-old puppies! Many of the Delegates trying to come to terms with these issues find this the hardest to condone. The image of puppies being mass marketed, produced and processed similar to "supermarket frying chickens" goes against every dedicated breeders beliefs!

AKC also plans to set funds aside to help with individual breed rescues. The Committee recognizes that these HVB-produced puppies, unwanted at any point in their lives, will eventually come into our hands through our many individual breed rescue organizations.

The AKC's final decisions on this matter will have a major impact on the future of our sport, and there are no easy solutions. We need an awareness, we need research the facts and weigh the issues. Hopefully, solutions will be proposed and instituted which will benefit and protect us all, especially the dogs.

At the Monday meetings I concentrated on attending the Field Trial Clubs Committee meeting, and so missed my favorite, the Parent Club Committee meeting. Fortunately, since Karen Mays is the Secretary, the minutes of the meeting will be available and I will be able to keep up with their events. As AKC/BCOA Delegate, I will be attending the 1st Parent Club Conference to be held this October in Ohio. Also in attendance from BCOA will be Barbara O'Neill and Karen Mays. This is an exciting concept, with people from all facets of the sport representing their Parent Club, coming together to discuss pertinent Breed issues and problems. An e-mail list has just been launched for our input and unity.

It was at the Field Trial Club, several meetings ago, that the idea of a separate committee for Lure Coursing events was born and discussed. Since a new Committee is an additional expense for AKC, it was not looked on with favor. However, since the FTC consists mainly of people who are familiar with sporting dog field events, I was able to establish the need for lure coursing and other performance dog events to have their own club representation. Marshall Simonds, Delegate for the Midwest Field Trial Club proposed the amendment, 'Herding, Earthdog, Coursing Events Committee', purpose; "Create a Delegate Committee to address the needs and concerns of clubs and participants in herding, earth dog, and coursing events."

When the motion was brought to the floor in June for a vote, the Delegate body passed it overwhelmingly!

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I have submitted a résumé to AKC in hopes of being elected to this committee. Elections will be held at the September Delegate meeting in NYC. Not only will lure coursing now have a "voice" at AKC, this will be the place to present your ideas for the sport. Wouldn't it be advantageous to our good performance sight hounds to create a "coursing titled" class at every show, aside from Specialties? The dogs could be AKC performance-titled, and be judged on their merits according to their breed Standard. Grooming and presentation not taking precedent over the soundness of the dog - one thought for the future.

At the June meeting the Delegates also voted on a new ruling whereby "the AKC approved breed standard shall be published in the catalog of every independent national Specialty show." This ruling passed.

A discussion followed in the form of a motion to print the standard in the catalogue whenever any breed specialty was held. While many considered this a good idea, it was voted down, as it was said to be “cost prohibitive” for the club holding the show.

Other discussions centered on moving the days of the meeting from Mon/ Tues to weekends. As the Delegate body continues to grow, and different meeting venues are experimented with, attendance becomes increasingly difficult and unfortunately, quite expensive for everyone. This matter has been discussed before, and it was brought up again just before we adjourned. A Delegate took to floor to ask if AKC could look into forming a policy to somehow reimburse or compensate those Delegates who are finding themselves unable to attend meetings due to their clubs inability to help with expenses, or their own financial problems. In actuality it doesn't appear feasible for AKC to apply a compensation program, due to the sheer number of Delegates or how to apply such compensation. Would it be traveling expense, distance traveled, hotels, meals, etc? Early meetings, which were always held in NYC, favored nominations from the East Coast, when a club could not finance its Delegate. The cost of public transportation to NYC, one day there, home that evening, was negligible. Presently, your club Delegate is limited to only those who can only afford transportation, and a stay from Sunday evening through Tuesday afternoon. Delegates have voted to rotate all future June and December meetings around the country. Add the cost of attending BCOA Board meetings, also held cross-country, all of which are your Delegates "out of pocket expenses", the costs quickly become prohibitive. Many clubs, which pay their Delegates way to meetings, have budgeted by limiting their representative to two meetings a year.

On a more positive note, it appears as though most are in favor of approving the proposal, originating with the Parent Club Committee, of RWD, and RWB, at one designated Specialty a year, usually the Nationals, each sex receiving a 3 point major, if the entry in WD and/or WB has a large enough entry to constitute a five point major. At our huge Nationals this proposal will easily apply!

Monday evening Delegates were treated to an interesting and informative DNA Committee Public Meeting. Open discussion was held on topics ranging from the future use of DNA, (soon all breeding stock will be required to have been DNA tested and microchipped.) The useful potential of DNA in breeding dogs, and the future use of new technology such as genetic manipulation, (which the speaker was in favor of) was discussed.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Staudt-Cartabona AKC/BCOA Delegate