

ECSCA BOARD MEMORANDUM

DATE: 15 March 2009
TO: ECSCA Board of Directors
FROM: Barbara A. Penny/AKC Delegate
RE: **March 2010 Delegates Meeting**
Newark, NJ

AKC DELEGATE REPORT **March Meeting 2010**

The March 2010 AKC Delegates Meeting was held on Tuesday, March 9th, 2009 at the Sheraton Newark Airport Hotel, Newark, New Jersey. The Standing Committee Meetings and the Delegates Caucus were held on Monday, March 8, 2009. The Legislative Caucus was held prior to the Delegates Meeting on Tuesday morning.

The Agenda for the Delegates Meeting included the following topics:

1. Delegate Voting for AKC Board Class of 2014
2. Votes on three (3) Proposed Amendments
3. Reading of one (1) Proposed Amendment
4. Chairman Ronald Menaker's Report
5. President Dennis Sprung's Report
6. Chief Financial Officer Jim Steven's Report
7. Community Achievement Awards
8. June Delegates Meeting

1. Delegate Voting for AKC Board Class of 2014

The following Delegates were selected to serve on the AKC Board as Class of 2014 after a single vote of the Delegate body:

Dr. Charles Garvin, Marion Ohio KC
Dr. William Newman, Mastiff COA
Ms. Patricia Scully, Obedience TC of Hawaii

2. Votes on three (3) Proposed Amendments

Only one proposed amendment was passed. The Proposed Amendment on **Chapter 11, Section 6** of *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dog Affecting Eligibility*, which would eliminate the use of telegrams to change or cancel entries passed.

The Proposed Amendment on **Chapter 10, Sections 1-6** of *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Duties and Responsibilities of Show Veterinarians* was sent back to the Rules Committee for further language refinement.

The Proposed Amendment on **Chapter 3, Sections 1,16, 18, 19, 20, and 21** of *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* and **Chapter 2** of *Rules Applying to Registration and Discipline*

Registration – Registrable Breeds by Group was tabled indefinitely. The Realignment Committee continues to believe that the eventual realignment of the Group structure will be necessary; but based on input from Parent Clubs and the fancy, the current proposal may not be ideal. In the best interests of the sport, the Committee suggests that the realignment proposal needs further discussion and refinement. The influx of new breeds, six this year alone, along with the current list of FSS breeds that will likely be advanced in the near future as a result of recent Board action, suggests that a reassessment of the Committee's recommendations may be necessary and desirable.

3. Reading of one (1) Proposed Amendment

Amendment proposed on **Chapter 14, New Paragraph** of *Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Pointing Breeds – Rules for Pointing Breed Field Trials*. This amendment would establish minimum standards for National Championship events, as follows:

In order to qualify as a National Champion stake, a minimum standard of competition must be achieved. The minimum standards are: (1) There must be a minimum of thirteen (13) starters; (2) The minimum qualification to enter the stake shall be one broke dog field trial placement or a Master Hunter title; (3) At least one series of the stake must be run a minimum of forty-five (45) minutes. The AKC may periodically review and update these standards. Parent Clubs may establish qualifications that exceed this minimum standard.

4. Chairman Ron Menaker's Report

AKC Award Programs Recognize Outstanding Contributions of Both People and Dogs. The *AKC Outstanding Sportsmanship Award*, founded in 2006, recognizes the hard work and dedication of our volunteer club members. Each year, the AKC provides an Outstanding Sportsmanship medallion to be awarded based on criteria that a member club selects. Once a recipient has been selected by the member club, their name will be added to the list of winners on the AKC website.

The *Lifetime Achievement Awards*, established in 1998, recognizes those who have spent a majority of their lives dedicated to the sport and to the dogs. Past honorees have included dog world greats such as Dorothy Nickles, Rachel Page Elliot, Dr. M. Josephine Deubler, Michelle Billings, and Jane Forsyth. Only AKC member clubs are able to cast a vote for this award. For the first time, the initial round of ballots has been distributed to member clubs via e-mail. Clubs are asked to submit one nominee in each of three categories – Conformation, Companion Events and Performance – by May 7th, 2010. The three nominees receiving the most votes in each category will be selected as finalists and clubs will then vote later in the year to choose the winner in each.

The *AKC Humane Fund Awards for Canine Excellence*, or *ACE* awards, continues to generate the most amazing, heart-felt stories. For the 11th year, dogs nominated for performing exemplary acts will be selected in each of five categories: Companion, Law Enforcement, Search and Rescue, Service, and Therapy. ACE nominees range from skilled assistance dogs to brave law enforcement K-9s, as well as comforting therapy dogs. Deadline for submission is June 1st, 2010. You are encouraged to nominate a dog

that has touched a life in some way or made the world a better place. For more information about ACE or any of AKC's award programs, visit www.akc.org.

5. President Dennis Sprung's Report

The AKC is pleased to announce that Texas Rep. Edmund Kuempel has been awarded the inaugural *James S. Holt Memorial Award for Promotion of Responsible Dog Ownership in Legislation* ("Holt" award) in honor of his work to defeat harmful dog legislation. The Holt award, administered by the AKC Government Relations Department, is a memorial to the late Dr. James S. Holt, who served for 17 years as the AKC's federal legislative consultant, participated in the sport of purebred dogs for more than 40 years, and served as an AKC Delegate and Board member. Beginning in 2010, the Holt award will honor one legislator in each of the 50 states who demonstrates a commitment to promoting responsible dog ownership, the well-being of dogs, and whose actions advance the mission of the American Kennel Club. As Chairman of the Texas House Committee on Licensing and Regulation, Rep. Kuempel played a crucial role throughout the 2009 Texas legislative session in working with dog owners and breeders to amend and ultimately defeat House Bill 3180, an extremely onerous bill that infringed on the rights of responsible dog breeders.

The AKC is also proud to announce to creation of the Walter Bebout Award. Named for the late Director of the AKC Government Relations Department, this award will recognize those federations and owner/breeder organizations that have been actively involved in educating legislators about responsible dog ownership issues and have worked to preserve the rights of responsible owners and breeders. Winners of the Bebout award will be announced quarterly and will receive a \$1,000 check to help offset the costs associated with their legislative efforts. For more information, visit http://www.akc.org/canine_legislation/awards.cfm. For an award nomination form, visit http://www.akc.org/pdfs/canine_legislation/BeboutAwardNominationForm.pdf.

The AKC also honored three (3) outstanding AKC staff members – Bud Boccone, Gina DiNardo, and ***Mari-Beth O'Neill***.

Bud Boccone, AKC Publications Copy Editor, has had his hand in literally every page of the *GAZETTE*, *Family Dog* and *New Puppy Handbook*. His meticulous editor's eye has reviewed all of our published materials since 1998. Additionally, he regularly writes full-length breed profiles, as well as the columns *Dog Sport 101*, *The ACE Files*, *Times Past* and *AKC Updates*. He also displays his artistic talent with his affectionate drawings of well-known fanciers in the popular "Dog People" page.

Gina DiNardo, AVP/Executive Secretary and media spokesperson, has had a lifelong involvement with purebred dogs, primarily Doberman Pinschers, attending shows since she was two years of age and exhibiting her first dog at five. She started as an administrative assistant from 1995 to 1999, and returned to the AKC as the Advertising Sales Manager with the *GAZETTE* in 2001. A year later, she was named Director of Club Communications. In 2004, she was promoted to Jim Crowley's Assistant Executive Secretary, ensuring the maintenance of AKC policies and historical records, with the

added responsibilities of the Publications, Event Management, Travel and Project Management Departments.

(Our own) Mari-Beth O’Neill has been a lifelong fancier initially in Manchester Terriers and later in English Cockers. Hired in 1990 as the Associate Director of Judging Research and Development, then serving as Director of Judges Applications and Director of Judges Education, Mari-Beth was promoted to the AVP of Corporate Training and Development in 2002, AVP of Special Services in 2005, and AVP of Customer Service in 2006. Mari-Beth currently directs all aspects of AKC's Customer Service, including the Call Center and the Special Services Unit, which is dedicated to our core fanciers. She is also responsible for managing initiatives such as our PAL Program and our Foundation Stock Services.

6. Chief Financial Officer Jim Steven’s Report

AKC Year-End Financial Report (000’s)

Highlights:	Revenues	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Difference</u>
	Registrations	\$27,743	\$31,933	(\$4,190)
	Recording Fees	10,031	10,162	(131)
	Pedigrees	6,990	7,951	(961)
	Sponsorships	6,258	6,815	557
	Total Revenues	68,988	72,991	(\$4,003)
	Expenses			
	Payroll	30,602	33,808	3,206
	Net Operating Exp.	67,187	71,031	3,844

Take note of the seriously troubling continuing trends: The AKC registered 309,000 litters last year. This amount was *12% fewer* than the previous year and well below 12 years ago when 564,000 litters were registered. The 2009 trend with dog registrations was also not encouraging. Approximately 650,000 dogs were registered last year. This represented a *decrease of 9%* from the prior year and a *57% decline* from the peak back in 1992.

The total number of AKC events in 2009 increased by 3% from the previous year; however, the total number of entries for the year was down by 1 ½%. AKC’s events produced a net loss of over \$10 million last year and there is serious concern about whether seriously declining registrations will be able to continue to adequately subsidize the loss from events in the future.

In 2009 publications produced a net loss of \$1.2 million. This was actually an improvement of \$200,000 from the previous year, despite publication revenues declining by \$483,000 or 15%. Advertising revenues were 20% lower than the prior year, while subscriptions dropped by 10%. This was in line with industry trends and attributed to the difficult economic climate. Expenses, however, were lowered by \$700,000 or 15%, a very meaningful cost savings. The number of paid subscribers for the *Gazette* has steadily declined for the past few years and was down to just over 27,000 at the end of last year. *Family Dog* also had fewer paid subscribers, which numbered less than

100,000 at the end of last year. A major factor in this decline was fewer people opting to incur the added expense for the gold combination registration package, which includes a magazine subscription. This was then further compounded by the reduced number of registrations. Board's expenses, required to be reported annually to the Delegates, totaled \$270,235 in 2009.

7. Community Achievement Awards – John Lyons

The Community Achievement Award is given to clubs and AKC federations and their members who have made outstanding contributions to public education or canine legislation activities. Each honoree receives an AKC certificate of recognition, and the AKC donates \$1,000 to each honoree's Club or federation. Details about the honoree's accomplishments are published in the *AKC GAZETTE* and featured on the AKC website. The first quarter honorees are Tom and Barbara Bishop of the New Brunswick Kennel Club; the Bayou Kennel Club Delegate, Wayne Boyd; and the Bismarck Kennel

The Golden Gate Basset Rescue is the latest recipient of a grant from the AKC Humane Fund. Golden Gate Basset Rescue is the tenth organization to receive a grant from the AKC Humane Fund in less than one year.

On February 23rd, the US Senate passed **Senate Resolution 393**, honoring the AKC for its service to dog owners and the United States public. This measure and its companion **House Resolution 160** have now passed both the House and the Senate, giving formal national and Congressional recognition to the AKC for dedication to our mission of promoting responsible dog ownership through public education programs, and by protecting the rights of all dog owners for the continued enjoyment of their companions.

The AKC Publications Dept. was the recipient of six awards at the Dog Writers Association of America awards banquet on Sunday, February 14th, including Best All-Breed Magazine for the *AKC GAZETTE*. Also, our book entitled *Dogs: The First 125 Years of the American Kennel Club* received the Non-Fiction Book Award from the Alliance of Purebred Dog Writers at their luncheon on the same day.

8. June Delegates Meeting

The June Delegates Meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 7th, 2010 at the Hilton Atlanta Downtown Hotel in Atlanta, Georgia.

Delegate Standing Committee Meeting Reports

At the March Delegates Meeting, I attended the **Parent's Club Standing Committee Meeting**, the **Delegate's Dock and Crop Committee Meeting**, the **Canine Health Committee**, and the **Legislative Caucus** during the course of which several critical topics were discussed and are included below.

Parent's Club Standing Committee Meeting:

1. Parent Club Codes of Ethics
2. Parent Club Conference
3. PRIME
4. Mixed Breed Program
5. Group Realignment Committee
6. Parent Club Performance Events Titles
7. The Bateson Report

1. Parent Club Codes of Ethics: 90 parent clubs have reported to date with May 1st being the designated cut-off for the accumulation of data. Commonalities in parent club documents will form a resource document for new incoming clubs. The analysis will incorporate percentage figures as to common clauses. Enforcement practices, if they exist, will be included. John Lyons proposed that a motion be made by the Parent Club Committee that parent clubs incorporate in their By-Laws or Code of Ethics that breeders register their puppies with the AKC. It was noted how critical it is to be able to have analysis and details available to support recommendations for breeding practices.

2. Parent Club Conference: Scheduled to be held August 27-29 in the Raleigh-Durham area. Currently, 111 out of 163 parent clubs have responded and 13 out of 41 FSS breeds will be participating.

3. PRIME – Puppy Registration and Inventory Management Extranet: John Lyons and Dave Roberts described this pet store registration program, which was initiated in 2009, as a point-of-sale tool for retail sales of AKC registrable puppies at pet stores.

4. Canine Partners Program: Doug Ljungren addressed the concern regarding spay/neuter certification in the Canine Partners program. The consensus was that complaints would be handled on a case-by-case basis as a “proof requirement” would hamper the potential success of the program. The 4-H Club has enthusiastically embraced this new program. In the past, over 40% of 4-H have previously been excluded with their mixed breeds. Now, 100% of 4-H is included and the response and feedback from leaders of the 4-H program has been extraordinary.

5. Group Realignment: Tom Davies, Chair of the Group Realignment Committee, intends to read a statement at the Tuesday Delegates Meeting that the Realignment Committee feels the matter needs further study based on input received from parent clubs and members. The September 2009 vote had been deferred to this March 2010 Delegates Meeting. The Board has the authority to reappoint the committee to reinvestigate the subject for future consideration.

6. Parent Club Performance Events Titles: Doug Ljungren announced that parent club titles from parent club performance events would now be recognized by the AKC and would be included on pedigrees. This would be restricted to performance events that test skills related to the historical function of the breed. This program does not include agility, obedience, and rally events. Common sense criteria would be used to determine

the legitimacy of these events. The event must be consistent with AKC values. There are currently nine (9) breeds on the eligible list at this time. The effective date has not yet been determined. The AKC will entertain information from parent clubs as to how far back titles will be acknowledged.

The following criteria was adopted by the AKC Board at its February meeting, which must be met for AKC to consider recording titles earned in Parent Club Performance Events:

Parent Club Performance Event Criteria

The AKC will consider recording titles earned in Parent Club Performance Events under the following conditions:

1. The event must be a test of the historic function for which the breed was developed. Breed supporters must be committed to using the test results as a guiding factor in their breeding decisions with the intent of maintaining and enhancing the working abilities of the breed.
2. The AKC must not offer a similar event, in whole or in part.
3. The dog must be registered with the AKC or enrolled in the AKC PAL program to be eligible for recognition by the AKC.
4. The AKC maintains oversight to insure administrative reasonableness and consistency with AKC values.
 - The testing process that results in an AKC recorded title must be reviewed and approved by the Performance Events Department.
 - The event must take place in the U.S.
 - Derived titles (a title awarded by earning several other titles) will not be recorded by the AKC.
 - There must be reasonable consistency between the testing process / titles awarded for similar breeds performing a similar function.
 - AKC Performance Events maintains the prerogative to periodically review the operations of the Parent Club regarding the event to insure the appropriate processes are being followed.
 - All Parent Club events and titles must be approved by the AKC Board based on the recommendation of the Performance Event Department.
 - The AKC retains the right to stop recording titles earned in Parent Club events at its sole discretion.

Parent Clubs must write the Performance Events Department and request its Performance Event be considered for eligibility. Eligibility must be approved by the AKC Board of Directors.

7. Bateson Report – the Independent Inquiry following “*Pedigree Dogs Exposed*”:

John Lyons presented the chronology of events, Patty Haines provided the veterinary perspective and, with Alan Kalter, focused on outreach to Parent Clubs.

The independent inquiry conducted by Sir Patrick Bateson, which resulted in the Bateson Report published on January 14th, 2010, was the result of the reaction to the television documentary, *Pedigree Dogs Exposed*, aired on August 19th, 2008 by the BBC. The

program was aimed at those breeders of pedigree dogs who had ignored the adverse effects of inbreeding and particularly those who were breeding for extreme conformations. The Kennel Club of the United Kingdom felt that it had been unfairly treated and complained to OfCom, the regulator of the UK Communications industry. The effects of this dispute have been considerable and ongoing - the BBC pulled out of its long-standing arrangement to televise Crufts dog show. Moreover, the public reaction was such that Dogs Trust, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals ended their support. Further, Pedigree Petfoods and Hills Pet Nutrition cancelled their sponsorship of the show. The Associate Parliamentary Group on Animal Welfare (APGAW), a government sub-committee, announced that it would hold hearings on the breeding of pedigree dogs, focusing on health issues. The results were politically motivated and unscientific and created more negative public relations for the Kennel Club. Of real significance to the AKC and parent clubs here is that the Kennel Club made the decision to change breed standards and restrict in-breeding in response to the public relations pressure.

At the same time the Kennel Club combined forces with a leading dog charity, Dogs Trust, and announced this independent Inquiry into the breeding of all dogs. The Inquiry received the advice of dog breeders as well as experts in genetics, animal welfare, and veterinary surgery and the report was anonymously peer reviewed by five experts in the three scientific fields. The full Bateson Report can be obtained via this link:

<http://breedinginquiry.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/final-dog-inquiry-120110.pdf>.

The major issues to be addressed were clearly defined in the Report and included:

- Education and publicity
- Legislation and regulation
- Breeding strategies
- Surveillance, research and development

The AKC and the Kennel Club initiated a dialogue in which the AKC shared the course of action recommended by its New York public relations firm. Unfortunately, the Kennel Club has opted to give in to each demand, which simply generated new ones and did nothing to resolve the PR crisis. The report, which follows a 10-month inquiry into breeding practices, dog showing, and scientific evidence, concludes that measures such as the establishment of a non-statutory advisory council on dog breeding, an up-graded accredited breeder scheme, legislative changes, and a public education campaign are required. In other words, the government is now deciding the future of purebred dogs in England. The education of puppy buyers will be controlled and paid for by the animal welfare organizations. Veterinarians are charged with the creation and management of a data base on health issues of specific breeds. The veterinarian community is to perform kennel inspections (none exist today as compared with the over 5,000 inspections the AKC performs here each year). Many of the specific recommendations have already been called for by the veterinary profession, such as a Code of Ethics on breeding, compulsory microchipping of all dogs, and improved breed standards to promote health and welfare over extreme conformation. The Kennel Club, in addition to amending

standards, has now mandated that all pre-mating health tests must be performed and the dog pulled from the breeding pool if it does not pass.

Parent Club Action Needed

Patty Haines, in considering the question as to how do we prepare for this arriving on our shores, commented that the same questions will be forced on the US and that we cannot hide from the controversy. We will need to answer to the public. The AKC has initiated a health advisory panel for expert opinions on how to proceed. The AKC already has an inspection program. The breed standards are owned by the parent clubs, not the AKC, but that responsibility comes with a price. If the parent club does not enforce, it will potentially now draw public scrutiny. Parent club programs must be directed to elevate breeders, as our knowledge in genetics has exploded and we are able to capture the information through CHF and CHIC. DNA testing should be required at all breed nationals. The best defense against legislative interference is health and temperament testing. Phenotype must be recognized and genetic test should be mandatory. Breeding programs should be elevated and dogs testing positive (affected) should be pulled from breeding programs. Parent clubs must elevate their health requirements and Patty suggested that parent clubs look at other breed clubs to see what they are doing to be proactive and responsible. It was suggested that health clearance certificates now be required for participation in club specialties.

Alan Kalter feels the Bateson Report, which he described as a fuse just waiting to be lit, opens the door to legislation and that it is local legislation that is the greatest threat to our breeders. State legislators will initially target commercial breeders, which the Bateson Report quantifies as those with four (4) litters per year. HSUS now has tremendous leverage with the Bateson Report in hand to approach legislators to push their agendas. Our parent clubs need to be proactive to stall these HSUS initiatives. It is the parent club that is the provider of the solution in finding ways to help ensure that hard decisions are being made in breeding programs through a strong code of ethics guiding breeding practices. Our focus should be to improve the health and well-being and temperament of dogs with the show ring being the validation of those efforts. Breeders need oversight which, unfortunately, the Kennel Club supported by changing its breed standards. The breed standard was written with the intention of historically preserving what the dog was meant to do. How the dog looks and why the dog looks that way structurally and acts that way temperamentally must be logical with the focus on preserving its historical integrity. Future action could conceivably require an application process to obtain a breeders certificate before breeding.

Canine Health Committee:

1. CHIC Update
2. Canine Health Foundation (CHF) Update

1. CHIC Update: Currently, there are 57,000 dogs participating. In 2009, there were 6,500; YTD, 2,000. The DNA bank topped 10,000 samples banked, 140 different breeds with 36 breeds having more than 50 samples. The samples are being sent out for research projects.

CHIC has no funding. It is a DNA database joint venture between OFA and CFA. OFA handles the funding and CFA promotes CHIC. A significant methodology change has occurred in that DNA research is now finding more relevant data in studying unrelated dog DNA rather than closely related, uninfected dog DNA.

2. CHF Update: Net assets are up \$1.6 million, a 38% increase, while operating expenses have declined 11%. Donor Advice Fund Research notes projects requiring funding. Researchers can now apply directly on-line. There are currently 94 new grants with \$10.6 million being requested. The Westminster Gala, completely underwritten, raised \$12,500. There is a new \$200 Club Member category and new members receive a banner to display at their nationals.

There are 18 genetic tests that have been developed as a result of CHF funding. Over 50 different genetic research grants have been funded over the years, which have evolved into these 18 genetic tests now available.

Over \$800,000 in funds have been released from Donor Advised Funds, which are monies donated by parent clubs. Please consider giving a personal donation, as these donations add up. Two noteworthy suggestions: give a donation when finishing a champion and when having a litter. Once again, parent clubs are encouraged to take the tough steps to encourage health testing through their Code of Ethics.

Legislative Caucus

“Our goal is to make the public think of breeding dogs and cats like drunk driving and smoking.” Kim Sturla, Director of Pensacola Humane Society, who spearheaded San Mato spay or pay ordinance in late 1980’s

Pet related problems identified:

- Dangerous dogs
- Neighborhood nuisances
- Surplus shelter dogs
- Feral cats
- Cruelty issues
- Hoarding issues

There is a constant legislative campaign to solve these problems that undermine pet ownership in the process. Currently, there are 950 bills being fought across the country. There are marketing, legislative, and fundraising campaigns that constantly focus the public’s attention on these problems. The media caters to these issues and is happy to feed the frenzy.

What’s at stake with anti-pet legislation:

- Continuation of widespread pet ownership
- Breeding options/pet supply
- Legal liability

- Government Control

“Cause” Marketing Campaigns by HSUS:

- Pet Overpopulation
 - Mandatory Spay/Neuter Laws
 - Breeder Permits
 - High Differential Licensing Fees
- Puppy Mills
- Breeding Bad Temperaments and Genetic Diseases

AKC Registration Numbers 1930 – 2009 with projection to 2018

1930 - \$1.5 million

2009 – 649,000

2018 – 220,000

Dogs produced by US dog breeders, hobby, casual, and commercial breeders **decreasing**. Dogs crossing illegally into the US from Mexico **increasing** (150,000). Dogs imported from foreign breeders **increasing**. PetFinders.com on the Internet is now the largest pet seller. Did you know . . . 39% of US households have pets. France is next highest at 25%. The UK follows at 18%, and then Germany at 13%.

Where do we go from here?

1. Change the Conversation

- Promote the AKC at every opportunity
- Memorize everything good that the AKC does so you can provide positive talking points instantly
 - Canine Health Foundation contributed \$1 million in 2009 to fund research
 - Staff conducts over 5,000 kennel inspections annually
 - 17,000 events held annually
 - CAR enrolled its 4 millionth pet, a German Shepherd named Peaches, and has reunited over 370,000 pets with their owners with its lifetime recovery services operating 24/7, 365 days a year
- Marginalize the anti’s – get rid of the negative

2. Continue to breed good dogs and advertise them as AKC

- #### 3. Register every puppy with the AKC at time of sale
- (currently, only 44% being registered and the results of the “promotion” were so dismal that the AKC chose not to reveal the numbers)

4. Support the groups that support you – NAIA and NAIA Trust

Current Legislative Action

Minnesota: On Wednesday, March 10th, after amending the bill to have it conform to its House companion, **the Minnesota Senate Agricultural and Veterans Committee voted down [Senate File 7](#)**. The bill sought to regulate the activities of dog owners/breeders

who possess six or more adult intact female dogs. This action effectively prohibits further consideration of SF 7 by the Minnesota Senate. The companion bill to SF 7, [House File 253](#), is still under consideration by the House Agriculture and Veterans Affairs Committee. It remains unclear whether any committee member plans to take action on that bill.

Massachusetts: Last week, [House Bill 344](#), which seeks to ban the surgical devocalization of dogs, passed the Massachusetts House of Representatives. The bill is now under the consideration of the Senate Committee on Rules and Ethics. The American Kennel Club is concerned that, if enacted, this legislation will lead to the unnecessary euthanization of many animals. **We encourage all dog breeders and owners in Massachusetts to contact their Senator in the General Court and respectfully express your concerns with the HB 344.**

Much misinformation exists about devocalization of dogs. This procedure, which is performed by a veterinarian using laser or biopsy technology, is safe and relatively non-invasive. It is an acceptable medical procedure that is often done as a "last resort" when all other methods of modifying a dog's behavior have failed. For many responsible dog owners, debarking is the only alternative to euthanizing or surrendering their canine companion to a local shelter when their pet's noisy behavior continually disturbs the community. The decision to debark a dog is one that is best left to the dog owner and his veterinarian.

The American Kennel Club is not the only organization concerned with HB 344. The [American Veterinary Medical Association condones the performance of devocalization procedures as a final alternative](#); and both the [Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association](#) and the [Massachusetts Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners](#) specifically oppose HB 344.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Concerned Massachusetts residents are encouraged to contact their State Senators and respectfully express your concerns with HB 344. [Click here](#) to find your Massachusetts State legislators.

Oklahoma: Two bills currently under consideration by the Oklahoma legislature seek to regulate some responsible dog breeders. Rep. Lee Denney of Cushing, who sponsored House Bill 1332 in 2009, is currently sponsoring [House Bill 2745](#). Known as the "Oklahoma Pet Quality Assurance and Protection Act," the bill seeks to create a *voluntary* program of compliance for those breeders that sell, give away, or transfer at least 35 dogs and/or cats a year. Those who comply with the voluntary program would be allowed to use the "Pet Quality Assurance License." This bill has passed the House and is currently awaiting committee assignment in the Senate. However, Senator Patrick Anderson, in [concert with Representative Denney](#), has introduced [Senate Bill 1712](#). Known as the "Commercial Pet Breeders Act, this bill seeks to require those breeders with 11 intact female dogs to adhere to annual licensing, inspection, record keeping, reporting, and care-and-condition requirements; creates a directory of licensees; and

imposes fines for non-compliance. The bill has passed the Senate and is currently awaiting committee assignment in the House.

House Bill 2745

This bill seeks to create a voluntary program for breeders that sell, give away, or transfer at least 35 dogs a year (however, other breeders are permitted to participate in the voluntary program as well). Those who comply with the voluntary program will be designated as a Quality Pet Assurance Licensee. To comply, a breeder must:

- Allow pre-license inspection of their facility.
- Have a husbandry and breeding protocol, a veterinary health care protocol, and a signed veterinarian of record affidavit found to be in compliance.
- Pay a license fee, to be determined by State Board of Agriculture rule, not to exceed \$500.
- Adhere to license display requirements.

The bill requires the State Board of Agriculture to create rules for breeding criteria and restrictions, housing and sanitation, nutrition and hydration, operating standards, management and staff operating plans, veterinarian of record and veterinary care, record keeping, and transportation of dogs within a vehicle. Licensees will be subject to inspection of facilities and records. Licensees will be prevented from transferring ownership of any dog that is less than six weeks of age. Licensees who violate the act may have their license revoked; be subject to fines; and may, subject to a court order, have their dogs seized.

Senate Bill 1712

This bill will create the Board of Commercial Pet Breeders to enforce and administer the provisions of the Act; and will adopt rules establishing license fees, procedures and requirements for license application and renewal, conditions under which licenses are revoked or denied, and qualifications for registered breeder inspectors. The Board will also be required to establish minimum standards for proper veterinary care, treatment, feeding and watering, shelter and confinement, grooming, exercise, socialization, transportation, disposition of dogs, and other standards it deems necessary to protect the public health and the health and welfare of animals. Additionally, the Board will maintain a public directory of licensed commercial pet breeders.

Should SB 1712 be enacted as currently written, those with 11 or more intact female dogs will be required to be licensed. Licensees will be subject to:

- Pre-licensure inspection of facilities, the undetermined cost of which must be paid by the license applicant.

- At least one inspection annually, during normal business hours but without advanced notice, of each facility kept by the licensee.
- Inspections based on written complaints received by the Board.
- License display requirements at the licensed facility.
- License number disclosure requirements on advertisements, sales contracts, and transfer agreements.
- Annual reporting requirements.
- Record-keeping requirements for each dog maintained in a licensee's facility.

Under the bill, the Board is required to adopt all rules by November 1, 2010, and licensees are required to come into compliance by January 1, 2011. Licensees who violate the act may have their license revoked, and be subject to a misdemeanor punishable by a fine of up to \$500 and/or a year in jail. Those who interfere with an inspector would be subject to a fine of up to \$1,000 and/or two years in jail.

Respectively submitted,

Barbara A. Penny

MORE AKC NEWS

1. **RALLY:** The AKC Rally Advisory Committee is officially open for suggestions. A advisory committee for obedience, rally, agility and tracking is formed every four years and is made up of judges, handlers as well as AKC staff. This year's Advisory Committee is focused on Rally. All suggestions must be submitted through the AKC web site. Each member of the committee is supplied with a copy of your suggestion.

MEMO To The AKC Rally Community:

As some of you are aware, the Companion Events Department actively seeks input from the sport fancy for each of our sports every four years - 2010 is the year for Rally. The information received during this solicitation will be combined with other ideas and suggestions received over time for improvements to the sport and its regulations and presented to the Rally Advisory Committee. The committee will review the information and format the collected data into recommendations to promote and help improve the sport.

The last Rally Advisory Committee met in 2006, just one year after the sport of rally became a titling event for the American Kennel Club. The 2006 committee met to discuss and offer changes to the regulations and the sport in an effort to assist with and overcome some of the sport issues that had already developed. Additional concepts and ideas were discussed, with some being added to test the direction and needs of the sport.

Four-years have elapsed since the Rally Advisory Committee met to review the sport and its regulations. We are now asking you for input on how to further develop and improve upon AKC Rally.

Here are just a few questions to stir your thoughts:

Which, if any, of our current regulations do we need to review, change or further define?

What new aspects of our sport can we bring forward: new classes, changes to classes, etc?

Are there new exercises and stations that we can bring into the sport to further test our dogs in each of the classes?

What can we do to bring more junior competitors into the sport of Rally?

Your input need not be limited to just these questions – any and all suggestions regarding Rally will be welcomed. In an effort to make the collection of suggestions a smoother process, we are implementing a new system this year. This process automates the collection and filing process for each of your suggestions. It also enables the review of your explanation and/or reasoning for the change suggested on a suggestion-by-suggestion basis.

To submit suggestions for the Rally Advisory Committee, please go to the following link: <http://www.tfaforms.com/134727>. Once the link is open, you will need to choose the publication you are referring to, i.e. Rally Regulations, Rally Judges' Guidelines, etc., the chapter and section you are referring to, your email address and finally your suggestion. Once you hit submit, you will receive an online message that your suggestion has been submitted. An email outlining your submission will also be generated to the email address provided.

This process does sound difficult, but we feel it will assist the Committee in receiving your recommendations word for word. Please note that if you would like to submit multiple suggestions, you must first CLOSE your web browser and then reopen the Rally Advisory Suggestions web form link: <http://www.tfaforms.com/134727>. DO NOT use the back arrow button to return to the form – it will not function properly.

We need your help and advice for the future of our sport and thank you in advance for your support and suggestions.

DEADLINE ALERT: Recommendations will be accepted through **Tuesday, April 20, 2010**.

2. American Kennel Club Library

The Board VOTED to transfer the AKC's Library collection to the AKC Humane Fund effective April 1, 2010. As the AKC Humane Fund is a 501(c) 3 organization, donations (both cash, and non-cash) could be made to the library, which would then qualify as a tax deduction for the donor.