



# Perspectives

The Delegates' Publication

## Special Election Edition

### 1 WE ASKED

by Sylvia Thomas

The Nominating Committee posed questions to the Board candidates. The candidates' responses have not been edited and are included exactly as they were submitted to the Nominating Committee.

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# THE CANDIDATES



Dr. Carmen L. Battaglia, PhD



Sally Fineburg



Laurie A. Maulucci



Dr. Michael Knight, PhD

## 2023 Nominating Committee Questionnaire

*Please briefly answer the following questions. Many can be answered in less than a sentence on this worksheet. For longer answers, please use a separate page and reference the question you are answering. You will be given the opportunity to elaborate during the interview process.*

- 1** How long have you been a delegate?
- 2** Why do you want to serve on the AKC Board of Directors?
- 3** If elected, how do you envision making a difference?
- 4** Describe your experiences in the Sport of purebred dogs, including breeding, Conformation, Performance events, etc.
- 5** Describe your participation in dog organizations, including any positions that you've held in clubs.
- 6** Please describe any experience you've gained in non-dog organizations that could enhance your contributions to the work of the AKC Board.
- 7** Describe your background and how you feel it prepares you to contribute to the AKC as a board member.
- 8** When you think about AKC, do you feel that it is generally heading in the right direction, or on the wrong track? Please explain.
- 9** In your opinion what are the top three priorities AKC should embrace? What would you do to assure progress in each of these areas?
- 10** What do you think is AKC's great strength and what is its most serious weakness?
- 11** What do you think is the most pressing issue facing AKC?
- 12** Recruiting youth and young adults into AKC dog Sports and activities has been challenging. What are your ideas for engaging younger generations in AKC activities and Sports?
- 13** How can we improve AKC's image among its core constituents and owners of AKC registered dogs?
- 14** What are your thoughts on how to increase exhibitors at dog events?

**DR. CARMEN L. BATTAGLIA, PhD***Delegate, German Shepherd Dog Club of America*

**1** *How long have you been a delegate?*

I have been a delegate to the AKC from the German Shepherd Dog Club of America since the early 1990's.

**2** *Why do you want to serve on the AKC Board of Directors?*

I am currently an AKC Board member and I would like to continue to serve so I can continue with the following assignments which I believe can make a difference. For example, I am on the Reunite Board, Co-Chair the AKC Dog Detection Task Force with Chris Sweetwood, am a PAC Board member and have the lead on the problems related to the Low Entry Breeds, with more predicted to become extinct in the stud book and extinct in the show ring. I also have studied and made several recommendations and suggestions that are aimed at the decline of Juniors in the sport.

**3** *If elected, how do you envision making a difference?*

I would like to continue on with the assignments mentioned in # 2 above.

**A** Reunite Board - We have a number of on-going projects including Adopt A Cop grants. The Executive Director (Don Slavick) of the United States Police Canine Association (USPCA) and I have developed a good working relationship. The USPA is the largest police organization in the US and our project with Mr. Slavick includes the AKC and our effort to collect DNA from the Adopt A Cop dogs and combine it with their behavioral data collected from the CBARQ test. I am also working on another project that sends a letter to every AKC club asking for their support of the Adopt A Cop effort which I often speak to clubs about. Being a Reunite Board member also provides me the opportunity to speak at clubs and civic groups about the Trailer Project, deployment of dogs to police departments and the good works of AKC.

**B** I am the Co-Chair of the AKC Dog Detection Task Force with Chris Sweetwood. In 2016, the

US Senate held hearings on the security of the infrastructure using working dogs. The witnesses told the Senate that 80% of the dogs used by the US come from Europe and about 50% fail when they get here. Following those hearings, I was asked by a witness at those Hearings to contact the AKC board for help. The request was for AKC to help develop a domestic breeding program for detection dogs. The Board agreed and appointed me the chair. At the September Forum (2023) of the Delegates meeting we will present to the delegates the work of the Task Force and provide examples of what we are doing. See Appendix A for a map that shows where we now have breeders. We need about 600 more breeders to do this job.

**C** I am on the PAC Board which gives me many opportunities to work with clubs about legislation being worked on by NAIA and AKC. It is also a good way for me to work on legislative projects and it gives me more opportunities to address the efforts of the Animal Rights who keep trying to control the narrative. I am committed to find more ways that will prevent the AR from taking dogs away from owners.

**D** Low Entry Breeds (LE), and the problems related to their vulnerability and the extinction of breeds from the stud Book. The LE breeds are now 51% of the stud book and growing. Clubs are suffering from a loss of breeders and volunteers as well as the greying effect of their membership and Juniors. The conformation and obedience sports are feeling effects of these trends and the number of Juniors over the past 10 years has declined by 50% ( see Appendix B). I have conducted a study for the Board which outlines the various paths to extinction, as well as the options, recommendations and strategies AKC could pursue to prevent this. Charlie Garvin and Chris Sweetwood are working with me on this paper and the presentations that will follow.

**4** *Describe your experiences in the sport of purebred dogs, including breeding, conformation, performance events, etc.*

I am a long-time breeder of German Shepherd Dogs,

a judge of the Herding and Working groups, several Sporting breeds and the Chinese Shar Pei. My research about puppies, Early Neurological Stimulation, the Risks of Bloat and the Junior showman sport have been published in several Veterinary Journals. I have authored four books on dogs (The Proper Care of German Shepherds, Dog Genetics; How to Breed Better Dogs; Breeding Better Dogs; Breeding Dogs to Win. I hope to publish another book titled “A Guide to Puppy Raising” scheduled for this year and have another titled “100 years of German Shepherd Dogs in America” which will be published next year (2024). I am a well-known exhibitor and breeder of German Shepherd Dogs and have owned Pembroke Corgi’s, Longhaired Dachshunds, English Springer’s and Portuguese Water Dogs. I am the past chair of the study group on vicious dog legislation in Georgia and have served on several important AKC committees including: The National Genetics Committee, The Canine Health and Education Committee and AKC’s Committee for the Future.

I continue to give talks about breeding, structure, movement and pedigree analysis and have given more than 200 seminars to AKC clubs. I have been a guest on Animal Planet several times and have authored at least 70 articles which have appeared in the AKC Gazette, Dog World, Canine Chronicle and publications throughout: Canada, Hungary, South Africa, Australia, Chile, New Zealand, Portugal and Ireland.

I continue to speak at Vet schools and have given presentations at: the U. of Penn. Working Dog Center; Auburn U. and the U. of Fla. I will again be the speaker this fall at the U. of Florida. My topics have been Breeding, Pedigree Analysis, AKC Dog Detection Task Force and Puppy Raising.

**5** *Describe your Participation in dog organizations, including any position that you’ve held in clubs.*

Twice I have served as President of the German Shepherd Dog Club of America (GSDCA) and twice as the President of the my local GSDC of Atlanta. I have also served on both of those boards for over 20 years. I am an active member of a Working Group Club in Atlanta, the Atlanta Kennel Club and the North Ga. German

Shepherd Dog Club.

**6** *Please describe any experience you’ve gained in non-dog organizations that could enhance your contributions to the work of the AKC Board.*

In my early professional career, I was the Assistant Dean at Emory University in Atlanta where I continued my research with animals. Later, I became the Regional Administrator for the US Department of Education with responsibilities for working with the Presidents and Deans of the post-secondary institutions in the eight southeastern states (350 colleges and Universities). My work centered around educational programs and problems at their institutions needing assistance. I had a staff of over 150 employees and was also responsible for the problems related to student loans, student debt and collections. One of my most challenging assignments involved the three programs aimed at the disadvantaged youth in the South. The Department recognized my efforts by funding my Regional Office with monies needed for my work with the 94 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) located in my Region. During this time, I held two adjunct faculty appointments. One at the University of Tennessee Space Institute and the other at DeKalb College in Georgia. All of these jobs and assignments helped me develop my organizational and people skills and ways to understand and solve challenging problems.

**7** *Describe your background and how you feel it prepares you to contribute to the AKC as a board member?*

Early in my career during an interview for the top job in the US Department of Education I was asked why I should be selected over all the other candidates. In one of my answers, I responded by saying “Because I learn more from my mistakes than I do my successes.” Over many years in my various positions, research projects and administrative assignments I have learned how to work with all kinds of people with different skill sets and interests. Many of these assignments crossed state lines and involved small and large schools and proprietary organizations. The breadth of these problems and my work in solving problems

earned me many US Department of Education awards. Collectively, these experiences have better prepared me for my work on the AKC Board .

**8** *When you think about AKC, do you feel that it is generally heading in the right direction, or on the wrong track? Please explain.*

Generally speaking, AKC has traveled in the right direction but now that our society is changing and the AR has been increasing their efforts to steal the narrative, I believe it is time to make changes and re-focus some of our programs. For example, the dog sport is changing. This evidenced by the number of titles AKC offers in each sport and the shifting around of entries in our sports. Obedience is at best flat and conformation is slowly declining.

Two years ago, I was the Board Liaison to the Companion Events Delegate Committee. We developed a project called “Achiever Dog” and wrote a paper on the subject. It was aimed at increasing the overall entries in our sports. AKC agreed with the project and sent “Achiever Dog Certificates” to owners when their dog earned at least one ribbon in three different sports. This effort also was designed to test owners for their interests. It was just conformation or would they branch out. It was successful in just the first 6 months, AKC issued more than 33,000 certificates. An unanticipated problem occurred when we learned that the AKC certificates were mailed to owners with no cover letter which left owners confused. The project was retired.

**9** *In your opinion what are the top three priorities AKC should embrace? What would you do to assure progress in each of these areas?*

I could easily expand 3 to 6 priorities and here they are. Let’s look at legislation , messaging, public relations and marketing, along with the changing nature of exhibitors, the greying of the club membership and the many pathways leading breeds to extinction in the stud book. All of these are problems and they all need our attention.

In the area of legislation, we need to take the narrative back and stop the AR groups who want to

displace us. We know that young people and their families are hungry for what AKC offers, so we need develop better messaging and slogans that drive people to act. For example, we need to get the message out that only 5% of dogs in shelters are purebred and we need to better explain what “no Kill “ really means. We need a better website and search engine that is responsive to our customers, PR that addresses why owning and registering a purebred dog is important and should be supported, and a Marketing program that drives owners to register their dogs. These are efforts that are needed at the local level in our communities.

There are multiple problems impacting Low Entry Breeds, the loss of breeders, Juniors and dog registrations, the greying of memberships and risks for extinction in several breeds. These need to be addressed now.

**10** *What do you think is AKC’s greatest strength and what is its most serious weaknesses?*

AKC greatest strength is the dedicated staff in the NY and Raleigh offices. They are notably good at what they do and they rely on well-trained supervisors that are prepared and supported with up-to-date technology. At our monthly Board meetings, we have question-and-answer sessions with different departments. They answer our questions and agree to work on projects and issues that are raised. We have direct contact with staff and encourage them to make improvements, especially those that drive the sport and those that come to the Board from delegates and their clubs.

**11** *What do you think is the most pressing issue facing AKC?*

Choosing the most pressing issue facing the AKC is like fighting a war. It goes on in a number of places. The goal does not change it stays the same...win. Wars are fought with the goal to win but it takes several successful missions to win. One successful mission is not enough. It takes coordination, direction, policy and follow-up to be successful. One of our most pressing issues involves the war of legislation which needs to be won at the local and national level. The efforts of the

Animal Rights keep expanding and they are well funded. Another is the growth of breeds nearing extinction. Then there is the decline in the size of the gene pools of breeds, the number of active breeders, membership issues and the decline in club volunteers. Related to those issues are the growth of Cluster shows away from the communities they were intended to serve, which has the unintended consequences of losing a club's ability to attract new breeders, club members and volunteers. The result is a loss of a new and younger exhibitors and breeders.

**12** *Recruiting youth and young adults into AKC dog sports and activities has been challenging. What are your ideas for engaging younger generations in AKC activities and sports?*

This is a favorite topic of mine having had two sons who were juniors. I did something about my concern and conducted a serious longitudinal research study that was peer reviewed and published in a Veterinary journal. The study involves over 1,300 AKC juniors and it follows them throughout their lifetime, from the time they became a junior until the present. My research focused on: the 50% decline in juniors over the past 10 years (Appendix B), the gender differences, the loss of boys early as a junior, the recruitment and retention of juniors and the volunteers who transport them to AKC events. How we recruit and message parents and reward juniors needs attention. When compared with other youth organizations we have a lot to learn. My report speaks to these subjects and I will make it available to any member of the committee who would like to have it. Send your request to Carmenbattaglia513@gmail.com. The attached chart shows the decline in juniors over the past 10 years as seen in Appendix B.

**13** *How can we improve AKC's image among its core constituents and owners of AKC registered Dog?*

The problem of image extends to the public and what people will tell you when you ask them about AKC. Most describe AKC as an organization that registers dogs and has dog shows. Awareness of the other major activities like legislation, CHF research, Reunite, AKC PAC, the Museum of the Dog etc. is always a surprise

with you explain it. We do not have compelling reasons to register dogs and more than 60% of our puppy's buyers do not register them. In the area of legislation, the AR is doing a lot to control the narrative and we need to do better at the local level getting our club members more involved in larger numbers. Currently the AR seems to be able to control the narrative with ads, slogans and campaigns. We need to develop effective slogans to combat their messaging: "Rescue, Don't Breed," "Save a Life, Rescue," "Don't Buy from a Breeder." In a report I prepared for the Board I added a paragraph with actionable ideas and suggestions for AKC. I suggested we look at what other organizations are doing to improve attendance and their image. Here is a section of that report.

"AKC needs better messaging that lets the audience know that our dog shows are AKC events. If you watch, read or see an NFL game, there is no doubt that it is sponsored by the NFL". If you watch, read or attend many AKC events, there is little evidence that it is an AKC event that involves purebred dogs".

In my on-going study for the board, I addressed some of these same problems that involve image building. It takes the reader outside AKC to see what others are doing. Here is a section of the report. "a review of what other organizations are doing to address their sport problems and their fan base issues might offer some new ideas about how to address our image and attendance at AKC events. Two such organizations that are well known come to mind. They include the NFL and Major League Baseball. Both are having attendance problems at their stadiums and both are studying the characteristics they believe are part of their problems. The NFL learned that today's fan became a fan when they were in high school. They also found that attendance by women with and without children at games in the stadiums has steadily declined. Three reasons were uncovered. The first focused on the complicated rules of the game, the second on the behavior of drunken men in the late stages of the game. The third was enjoyment of the sport and understanding how scoring occurs. In golf, when the ball goes in the hole and in basketball when the ball goes thru the net everyone can see and know the score. But in the NFL when the

player crosses into the end zone or catches a pass it may or may not be a touchdown or a catch. Many conditions have to be met. In Major League Baseball it was the lack of excitement about the game. Most found that it takes too long, is boring to watch and needs changes that would make the game more interesting. Baseball agreed and several changes are on the way that involve speeding up the game, changing how referees and announcers call the game and better narration that explains what is happening and why and how players train and prepare to play the game.

**14** *What are your thoughts on how to increase exhibitors at dog events?*

We have perhaps the only sport where no one stays to see who wins and no one has a good grasp about why this happens. Most of us have ideas and opinions, but none are based on a study or research. In a recent study prepared for the Board, a paper noted the many ways clubs and shows are losing members, exhibitors, breeders, volunteers and juniors. The origin of these problems can begin in many places and there are many symptoms that signal a beginning. The study mentioned had several actionable items:

My on-going study for the Board is in Draft form that offers several suggestions aimed at these problems. The LE breeds are now half of the stud book and their problems need to be addressed. Many of the suggestions listed will help clubs increase their membership, the number of breeders and attendance at their shows:

- 1** Contact All-Breed and Group Clubs to see if they would be willing to serve as a “Sister” club to new breeds and LE breeds who need help. Then using the AKC email address system invite breeders of new breeds and LE Breeds to “Sister” All-Breed and Group club meetings and educational events.
- 2** Ask all AKC clubs to sponsor “Meet-Ups” and use the AKC email system to invite dog owners to a local park to meet others and develop friendships. AKC reports that this has been successful in many US cities.
- 3** Ask local clubs with active breeders if they would volunteer to become speakers at seminars or serve as a puppy raiser in a new breed.

- 4** Contact retired judges and breeders to see if they would get involved as a mentor. Ask AKC to coordinate and follow-up on efforts that would provide assistance to new breeds and LE breeds who are vulnerable to extinction. Emphasize the need for help in their efforts to recruit, retain members and share ideas that would support holding Fun Matches and breed seminars.

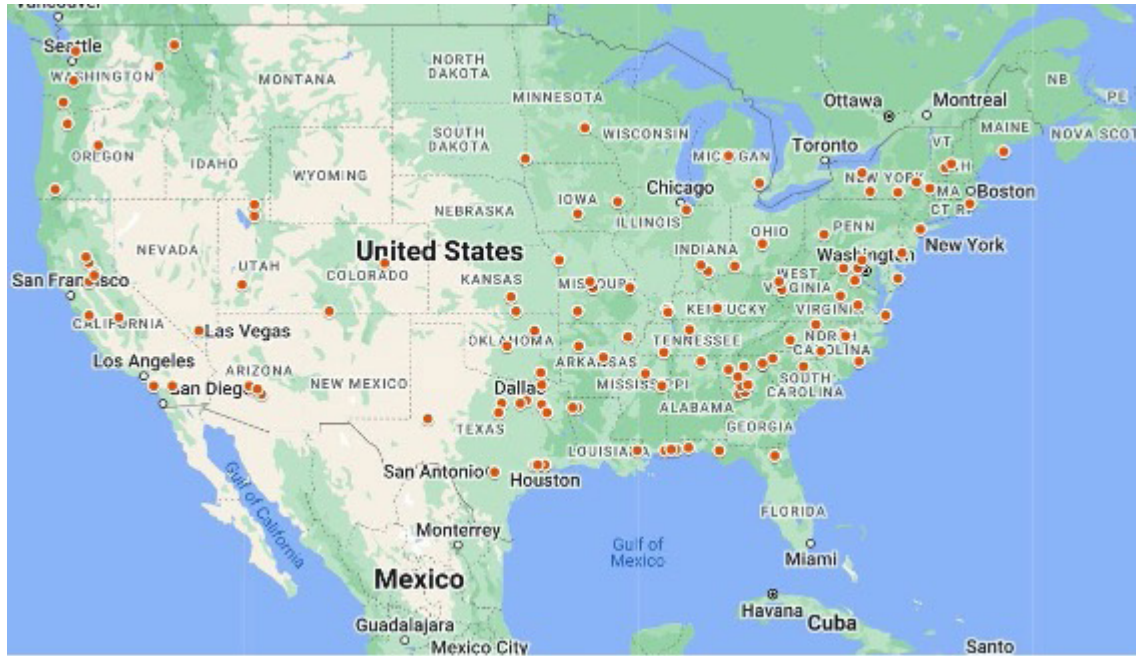
The larger problem that needs attention is a long-term solution that would help eliminate these problems at the offset. Such an effort would require understanding the path-way that leads to the conditions that foster the growth of these problems and the steps that could address their many moving parts. Some ideas might begin with:

- A** Provide new and LE breeds with lists of other clubs who volunteer to be a “Sister” club and are willing to meet and share ideas that support registrations, breeding, club life and dog shows.
- B** Revise the Guidelines for New Breeds and include minimum levels for registered litters and dogs, entries and club membership for at least five years and that failure to do so would move the breed back to a “pending or vulnerable status”.
- C** Develop materials for new breeds and LE Breeds that will help them maintain, grow and develop a healthy and genetically diverse breed. Invite experts from the academic world to participate.
- D** Ask other experienced breeds and AKC to help develop in-person and live breeder and judges’ seminars for all owners and breeders regardless of where they live at little or no cost.
- E** Provide Annual reports to the Board with recommendations that address the progress of new breeds regarding them toward registrations, club membership and movements that lead toward the status of a LE breed.

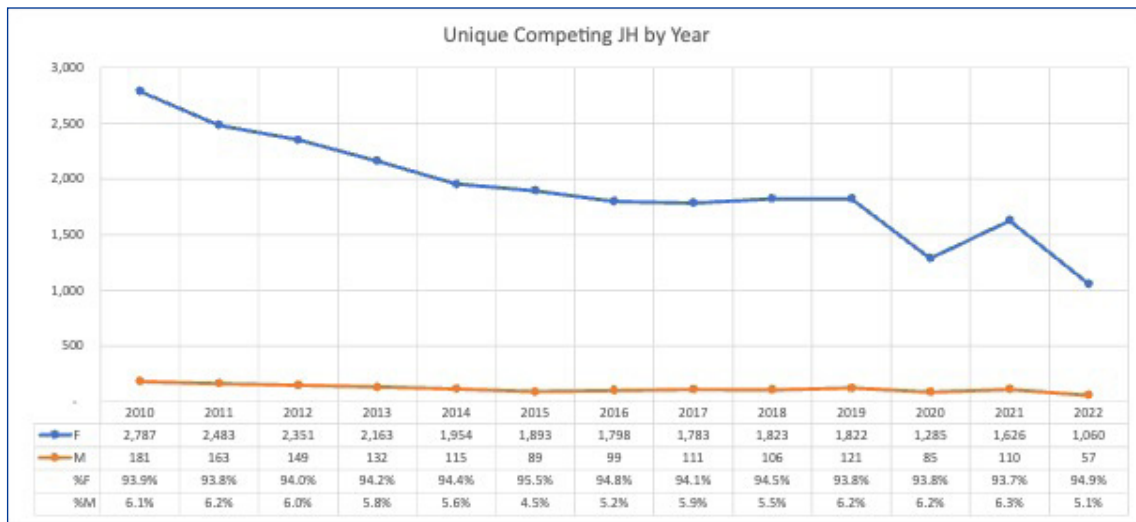
I hope that some of my long and extended answers are useful but I want to assure the committee that I love AKC, want to help us become more successful and plan to leave the planet in a better place for dogs and those who breed and enjoy them.

*Carmen L. Battaglia*

Appendix A – Distribution of Detection Breeders



Appendix B – Ten Year Decline of Juniors in the Sport





## SALLY FINEBURG

Delegate, Hatboro Dog Club, Inc.



**1** *How long have you been a delegate?*

6 years. Perfect attendance for all Delegate and Committee Meetings.

**2** *Why do you want to serve on the AKC Board of Directors?*

I love purebred dogs and it would be a privilege to give back. I believe my knowledge and experiences as a business owner, Officer and Board Member of multiple dog clubs and non-dog charitable organizations coupled with being an active preservation breeder, owner, exhibitor and field trial judge for the past two decades, offer a powerful and diverse skill set which would prove an asset to the AKC Board. My real world experience complimented with my desire to collaborate and natural adaptability and fluidity, prepare me to effectively interact with the ever changing and evolving topics the AKC Board addresses.

**3** *If elected, how do you envision making a difference?*

I envision employing my experiences and strengths, especially my desire and ability to continually learn along with active listening skills, to uphold the AKC Mission and Core Values. I believe we must remain true to our mission which is dedicated to upholding the integrity of the Registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function. I am certain effectively communicating our objective to our core constituents as well as the general public will help support and educate people of our goal to advance the study, breeding, exhibiting, and health of purebred dogs as well as advocate for the purebred dog as a cherished companion.

**4** *Describe your experiences in the sport of purebred dogs, including breeding, conformation, performance events, etc.*

I've been involved with Rhodesian Ridgebacks for more than two decades. I breed with my sisters and compete in conformation, performance and

companion events. I co-own Norwich Terriers who are active in the Conformation ring. In addition to Ridgebacks, I have also had the opportunity to train and achieve titles in various disciplines with multiple breeds.

I am thrilled to own, handle and/or breed dogs who have achieved multiple Top 10 rankings in Conformation, Lure Coursing and Obedience. Some selected accomplishments include: breeding dogs earning Best In Show, Reserve Best In Show, Multiple Best In Show Owner-Handled, Multiple Best in Field, 10 Champions, several Grand Champions at various levels up to Gold, a Triple Champion, multiple Dual Champions as well as titles in Performance and Companion venues including Lure Coursing, Agility, Obedience, Rally and Tracking. I am proud to share, I owned and handled the first and still only Ridgeback to earn the distinction of Champion Tracker. In addition, I have earned titles in Trick Dog, AKC and American Temperament Testing and Canine Good Citizen.

**5** *Describe your Participation in dog organizations, including any position that you've held in clubs.*

I have been volunteering and working for clubs for nearly 25 years holding almost every position available.

### **Hatboro Dog Club (HDC)**

AKC Delegate, Board of Director, Assistant Show Chair, Junior Coordinator, Judges Hospitality, Ring-side hospitality, Both Chair and Member of Board Nominating Committee, Chair Community Outreach, Ring Steward.

### **Huntington Valley Kennel Club (HVKC)**

Board of Director, Assistant Show Chair, Chair and Member of Board Nominating Committee, Ring-side Hospitality, Ring Steward.

### **Morris & Essex (M&E)**

Member, show volunteer.

FINEBURG, *cont'd*

**Hudson River Valley Hound Association (HRVHA)**

Member, Support Ridgeback Entries at Point Shows

**Rhodesian Ridgeback Club Of The United States (RRCUS)**

National Specialty Co-Chair, Former Chair now Committee Member of the Performance Committee, Chair Board Nominating Committee, Member AKC Sportsmanship Award Committee, assisted authoring rewrite of the Regional Specialty guide, Sponsor RRCUS Supported entries at multiple All-Breed shows, volunteer on multiple sub-committees and at National Specialties.

**Greater Valley Forge Rhodesian Club (GVFRRC)**

President, Ex-Officio, Vice President, Board of Director, Acting Recording Secretary, Regional Show Chair, Member, Chair and member of the Nominating Committee, Chair of Educational events including but not limited to; conformation handling, Rhodesian Ridgeback Bootcamp, tracking, obedience, agility, CPR/First aid, general fun days, Chair of Health Clinics, Lure Coursing Field Trial volunteer including the positions of; Judge, Field Trial Chair, Field Trial Secretary, Huntmaster, Inspection, Paddock, Course set-up, CAT tests Judge, Chair, Inspection as well as volunteer at various events.

**Rhodesian Ridgeback Charitable Foundation**

Secretary, Board Member, fund raise, develop marketing material, design advertising. Chair multiple fund raising auctions and raffles. Volunteer at RRCF booth at National Specialties.

**Princeton Dog Training Club**

Member, Volunteer at Agility and Obedience practices, matches and trials. Ring Steward at Obedience trials, Gate Steward at Agility trials. Conduct Obedience run-throughs at practices/matches.

**AKC Lure Coursing judge**

Licensed for AKC since 2009.

**CGC evaluator**

Qualified to evaluate all CGC levels, Trick Dog titles and to teach S.T.A.R. puppy. I assist with CGC training in classes.

**Former member multiple coursing clubs**

Volunteered at Field trails; Judge, Field Trial Chair, Field Trial Secretary, Huntmaster, Inspection, Paddock, Course set-up.

**6** *Please describe any experience you've gained in non-dog organizations that could enhance your contributions to the work of the AKC Board.*

I have been blessed with diverse and great experiences outside the dogs world I believe are transferable and could enhance my contributions to the work of the AKC Board. Most notably, I am continually learning and understand how to adapt to corporate cultures, empower a team, and collaborate.

I acquired these skills while following my dreams in my professional life: running my own company, working at both large and small corporations in positions ranging from entry level to Senior Executive/Vice President, producing broadcast news at television stations, working on the set shooting independent feature films and commercials and navigating the waters at dot.com start-ups. In addition to my career, I served on a variety of non-dog boards fund raising, determining how to allocate funds raised, coordinating volunteers, conducting senior personnel searches and recommending infrastructure improvements.

These experiences afforded me the opportunity to exercise my leadership, fiscal responsibility, creativity and ability to interface with a variety of colleagues. Some of my favorite moments were when I used both my left and right brain. On one hand, I was writing business plans and pitching Venture Capitalists for funding, selling radio shows to stations and developing marketing plans for our music archive and simultaneously I was writing and pro-

*FINEBURG, cont'd*

ducing two national radio shows, performing voice overs for radio commercials, and collaborating with on-air talent.

**7** *Describe your background and how you feel it prepares you to contribute to the AKC as a board member?*

I am third generation of a family owned and operated multifaceted petroleum company featuring a network of gasoline stations and convenience stores as well as wholesale and retail fuel oil terminaling off the Colonial Pipeline. The business has been a premier branded jobber throughout New Jersey and Eastern Pennsylvania since 1934. I entered the company 13 years ago, bringing a breadth of experience from my careers in advertising, filmmaking, television news production, retail and dot.com start-ups.

I serve on the Board of several dog clubs, volunteer at multiple All-Breed point shows and participate in dog club meetings. I have also served on several non-dog charitable organization Boards.

I believe my strong communication skills, calm, thoughtful approach and practical business acumen in combination with my creative background and dog world experience prepares me to serve on and be an asset to the AKC Board.

**8** *When you think about AKC, do you feel that it is generally heading in the right direction, or on the wrong track? Please explain.*

What I love about the AKC is, its continued awareness to evolving societal changes and being flexible to change and adjust. In short, yes, I think the AKC is heading in the right direction. The AKC is constantly listening and adapting to changing times. I think the AKC, especially the Events Staff, is adept at reviewing and analyzing available data, putting resources behind pertinent topics that become a priority and thoughtfully making decisions from an informed perspective.

**9** *In your opinion what are the top three priorities AKC should embrace? What would you do to assure progress in each of these areas?*

I believe the three most critical priorities the AKC should embrace are:

- Attracting, engaging and retaining Juniors
- The aging of our current participants
- The image of the AKC to its Core Constituents. Clubs and the general public.

To assure progress in each area, I would continue to enhance our burgeoning initiative to attract, engage and retain juniors. By the nature of adding new, younger members participating in the AKC we should realize benefits to the critical issue of the aging of our participants. Another welcome side benefit, by attracting new participants to the fancy, we may also garner assistance in increasing low entries. It is imperative we nurture our future generation of breeders, judges, exhibitors, etc. Simply put, Juniors are our future.

To assure progress on AKC's image, I recommend educating AKC continuants and the general public so they understand the importance and value of the preservationist breeder, the purebred dog and all the AKC has to offer. I believe if we strengthen and provide targeted messaging to the AKC's current efforts in public relations and marketing, including social and television coverage, we can be more effective in reaching our audience. With continual positive messaging across all media platforms, I would hope our efforts assist AKC's Government Relations Department to effectively combat the ongoing and voluminous toxic bills, regulations and attacks put forth by the Animal Rights activists.

**10** *What do you think is AKC's greatest strength and what is its most serious weaknesses?*

I believe the AKC's greatest Strength is its ability and willingness to continue learning and adapt to changing times.

I believe the AKC's most serious Weakness is that change often moves at a glacial pace. This is not unique to the AKC, it's the nature of corporations and large organizations.

**11** *What do you think is the most pressing issue facing AKC?*

I think the most pressing issue facing the AKC is the constant struggle with communication, internally and externally. We even see disconnects within the Delegate Body. The AKC does so much good! It offers so many exciting and diverse programs which are beneficial to an expansive audience. There is literally something for everyone and I don't think people know that. The AKC has to do a better job of communicating all that it does, assuming the leadership role among our constituents as well as the general public, and pressing mute on the toxic messages flooding the airways from the Animal Rights activists.

**12** *Recruiting youth and young adults into AKC dog sports and activities has been challenging. What are your ideas for engaging younger generations in AKC activities and sports?*

It is a great honor to share I am an active member of the Board appointed Juniors Committee. We are tasked with developing ways to attract, engage and retain Juniors and are already actively employing ideas to engage the younger generations. My achievements on this committee to date are:

- Proposed the recently adopted 'Junior Coordinator' Club Position.
- Integral in developing and writing the Juniors Resource guide, posted on the Delegate Portal.
- Member Junior Judging Task Force
- Member Junior Breeder Task Force
- Collaborated with AKC Family Dog and other publications to showcase Juniors articles. Solicited and created articles which illustrate the value of participating in Juniors.

I have given great thought and effort on the Juniors

Committee and am a strong proponent clubs implement as many of the suggestions developed as possible. The Juniors Committee is currently implementing the ideas below while simultaneously encouraging clubs/individuals to do the same.

- Completed: Successfully affected change to the Junior Ownership requirement. Juniors no longer have to own the dog they are showing. This allows for novice participants who do not own a dog to test the waters and provides greater exposure and mentorship opportunity for those already participating.
- Completed: As a result of a suggestion from the Junior Committee, the Board approved streamlining the process for Clubs to update their Bylaws to include Junior Memberships, without a full bylaw review.
- Creating sub-committees within the Junior Committee which are seeking ways to attract Junior Breeders and Junior Judges.
- Reaching out to both kids and their parents to demonstrate the value of being part of Juniors by producing and seeking articles written by Juniors as well as those written by Adults about Juniors. AKC's Family Dog editorial staff has been supporting this initiative by featuring these articles as well as other publications.
- Reaching out to 4-H kids to include them in AKC activities. We also watch what works for 4-H and model programs for AKC junior activities.
- Working with and encouraging clubs to offer Junior Showcase events inviting AKC and 4-H participants.
- Coordinating with clubs to hold events like the AKC Registered Handler Program Clinics and social gatherings.
- Encouraging clubs to consider offering Juniors classes at a reduced entry fee or no entry fee.
- Sharing successes clubs are having. For example, clubs experience increased entries when they offer Junior Scholarships for the

Best or Best of the Best Junior. Also, strategically scheduling these classes just before Group creates a buzz and supports the participants in knowing Juniors matter.

- Supporting the resurrection of the Junior Club! There are two new Junior Clubs, clubs run and manned by Juniors, which are under the auspices of All-Breed clubs. Encouraging clubs to create their own Junior Club.
- Encouraging clubs to welcome Juniors to Performance and Companion events in addition to Showmanship.

**13** *How can we improve AKC's image among its core constituents and owners of AKC registered Dog?*

I believe educating AKC continuants and the general public so they understand the importance and value of the preservationist breeder, the purebred dog and all the AKC has to offer is critical. I believe if we strengthen and better target AKC's current efforts in public relations and marketing, including social and television coverage, we can be more effective in reaching our audience.

I am convinced greater pushback against Animal Activists is critical. Our continuants can be impacted by these negative messages and we need to reinforce our message to our people. With continual positive messaging across all media platforms, I would hope our efforts would assist the AKC's Government Relations Department to effectively combat the ongoing and voluminous amount of toxic bills, regulations and attacks put forth by the Animal Rights activists. We need to be sure we are communicating all the AKC has to offer and all the good it does. AKC needs to own the leadership role.

**14** *What are your thoughts on how to increase exhibitors at dog events?*

I have seen and personally achieved success increasing exhibitors/entries for some of my dog clubs when we provided multiple events running simultaneously at one event. Clubs have also had success increasing entries by supporting Juniors.

For instance, in addition to your conformation show, I recommend offering one or more of the following as well as enhancements for Junior activities (in no particular order):

- Fast CATS • Coursing Ability Tests (CATS) • Registered Handler Program Clinics • CGC Testing • Educational events geared to pet people and/or the fancy • Demonstrations • Kids zone
- Tips from Trainers for pet people and/or the fancy • PeeWee – you attract both the children and the parents • Offer Juniors at a reduced fee or no entry fee • Offer the Best Junior and/or the Best of the Best Junior of the Cluster • Award Junior Scholarships • Strategically plan when juniors are scheduled, like right before group, so they have support from around the ring. This helps elevate the Junior's class and their experience • Meet The Breeds • Meet The Experts • Meet the Judges • Arrange Vendors to encourage shopping and mingling for both exhibitors and spectators

Offerings like these can impact your entries two ways: some people may participate in multiple events instead of just one and you may attract new people to your show, providing them an opportunity to learn about and potentially get involved in the AKC.

## LAURIE A. MAULUCCI

Delegate, South Windsor Kennel Club



**1** *How long have you been a delegate?*

I have been the Delegate for South Windsor Kennel Club since September of 2018.

**2** *Why do you want to serve on the AKC Board of Directors?*

I know that the wide variety of experience I have gained has provided me with the knowledge and skills to make significant contributions while working collaboratively with the Board, Staff and the Delegate body. I am passionate about my involvement with AKC and the many AKC affiliated organizations to which I contribute in some way every day. Serving on the board would allow me to contribute at the highest level.

**3** *If elected, how do you envision making a difference?*

I envision my service on the AKC Board of Directors to be a continuation of the accomplishments I have achieved in leadership roles that I have held in various organizations during most of my adult life. The ability to communicate and collaborate effectively is key to success as a member of any Board, including that of AKC. My aptitude for identifying solutions will also be instrumental in my contribution toward the achievements of the Board.

**4** *Describe your experiences in the sport of purebred dogs, including breeding, conformation, performance events, etc.*

Through my experience in conformation events as first an exhibitor and then a breeder of Great Danes, I fell in love with the sport of purebred dogs. I have been fortunate enough to have owned BIS winning Danes that were ranked nationally #1 in both Breed and Group standings, two of whom each won BOB at our National Specialty twice.

My first litter produced BOW at our National Specialty from the 6-9 class. I have bred a GDCA Futurity winner over an entry of 475 puppies. Two of

my Danes have won the GDCA Top 20 Invitational as well as both receiving recognition as one of the GDCA Top Brood Bitches of the Year.

I have been an AKC judge since 2007 and was chosen by my peers to judge BOB at our National Specialty in 2014.

**5** *Describe your Participation in dog organizations, including any position that you've held in clubs.*

I am a member of my parent club, two local specialty clubs, 5 all-breed clubs and one group club. I have served as Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Top 20 Chair and National Specialty Sponsor Chair for the Great Dane Club of America. For the two local specialty clubs I have served as Treasurer, Secretary, Legislative Liaison and Show Chair. I have been Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Director, Chief Steward, Judges Hospitality Chair and Show Chair for the all-breed clubs. I am the Cluster Coordinator for two New England clusters and have been the Specialty Club Coordinator for the Thanksgiving Classic Cluster, which in 2020 had 115 specialty club events. I chair 2 all-breed shows and four Dane specialties every year

I am also the President of the Connecticut Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners, working with the AKC Government Relations Department, our Federation Board and Connecticut residents to protect our right to own the dog of our choice. I recently was named as the Administrator of the Labrador Retriever Club, parent club for that breed.

I am a member of the AKC Trial Board Committee. As a Delegate, I serve on the All-Breed Clubs Committee, have chaired the Event Analysis Subcommittee and served as a member of the Group Realignment Subcommittee and the Nominating Committee.

**6** *Please describe any experience you've gained in non-dog organizations that could enhance your contributions to the work of the AKC Board.*

From 2002 to 2004 I served as the President of the Kingswood-Oxford School Parent Association, representing over 500 families. My duties included presiding over monthly meetings of parent and school leadership while facilitating communication between the parents and those making decisions affecting the student body. While President I led the Parent Association in a first-time commitment to Community of Concern, a national partnership between schools, parents and students which educates families on the scientific foundation for keeping adolescents substance free. In order to retain speakers nationally renowned for their expertise in this area, I successfully solicited donations from multiple individuals associated with the school. Working together we favorably affected the culture surrounding underage substance use and abuse.

During this time, I created the Greater Hartford Community of Concern, a partnership between public and private schools in central Connecticut. This was the first coalition of its kind in the state of Connecticut. Building these alliances meant a commitment to attending meetings with school leaders and local health advisory councils across the state. I was frequently a guest speaker before large groups of parents and students, conveying the importance of uniting our respective communities. In 2005 I was awarded a Community Volunteer Award from CASAC (Capital Area Substance Abuse Council) and was appointed a member of its Board of Directors.

I also served as a member of the Kingswood-Oxford Board of Trustees, attending monthly Trustee meetings and retreats and reporting on these to the Parent Association leadership and membership. I was the voice of the parent body on the Board of Trustees.

My success as a leader in the Kingswood com-

munity and beyond would not have been possible without the ability to communicate effectively and understand the importance of collaboration and coalition building. The current AKC Board continually demonstrates to us its ability to work as a cohesive team in order to accomplish its goals and my experience in the Kingswood organization has prepared me well to join that team.

**7** *Describe your background and how you feel it prepares you to contribute to the AKC as a board member?*

My success in the leadership positions I've described have helped me develop skills that are essential for a board member's contribution to the continued success of the AKC board. My leadership of the Federation and the Parent Association has taught me how to be an effective voice representing a larger group, whether it be families, purebred dog owners or Delegates.

**8** *When you think about AKC, do you feel that it is generally heading in the right direction, or on the wrong track? Please explain.*

I believe that there are initiatives in place that continue to take AKC in the right direction. One key to our future as purebred dog owners is the support that the Board is providing to the AKC Government Relations department that has enabled that department to provide staff located regionally. As President of the Connecticut Federation of Dog Clubs and Responsible Dog Owners I work closely with Stacey Ober who is the AKC GR Regional Manager for New England. Stacey is a registered lobbyist in CT and together with our Federation leadership and CT residents we have successfully beaten back proposed legislation that would have negatively impacted responsible dog owners in our state. Without comprehensive monitoring of proposed legislation, we risk losing our ability to own the dog of our choice. Staff resources that work in person with state Federations and Legislative Liaisons are making a substantial impact.

**9** *In your opinion what are the top three priorities AKC should embrace? What would you do to assure progress in each of these areas?*

I am committed to the growth of our endeavors at the local and national level to battle dangerous legislation which would negatively impact our ability to breed and own purebred dogs. I can speak from personal experience as to the importance of expansion of AKC GR staff to achieve progress in this area and would unequivocally support further momentum.

Educating the general public about AKC, who we are, what we do and the benefits of owning a purebred, purpose bred dog with predictability of traits must be expanded to combat the premise that the only socially responsible or even acceptable way of acquiring a dog is to adopt a mixed breed of unknown origin. Every year I coordinate 6 days of an AKC Meet The Breeds during "The Big E," New England's largest fair which has as many as 175,000 attendees during a single day. We have a wide variety of breeds participating, from Schipperke to Stabyhoun. Families approach us about responsibly adding a dog to their household and those looking to adopt are thrilled to learn about parent clubs and the networks they provide to rehome purebred dogs.

We are all well aware of how our clubs are struggling with decreased numbers of active members and the effect this is having on holding events. Two of the all-breed clubs to which I belong have banded together to hold four Fast CAT tests over two days, the first time either club has offered this type of event. We're looking forward to the collaboration between the clubs and expect this will lead to future joint events. We also anticipate that the camaraderie of the current membership being evident over the two days will enable us to recruit new members from the participants, all obviously active in at least one AKC sport. Encouraging clubs to collaborate with each other and increase the diversity of the type of events they offer will help them recruit members from exhibitors that may right now simply enjoy the gratification achieved through the successful execu-

tion of a 100 yard dash. These members may prove to be significant contributors to the success of our clubs going forward.

**10** *What do you think is AKC's greatest strength and what is its most serious weaknesses?*

AKC's greatest strength comes from the passion of everyone who gives part of themselves to support our existence. Breeders who devote decades to advocating for and improving their breed. Exhibitors who lovingly raise those puppies and support AKC and its events. Judges who evaluate these dogs in conformation, companion and performance events. Delegates who travel every 13 weeks to work together to address the issues facing our interests. AKC administration and staff members who dedicate years to ensuring this tremendous organization runs smoothly.

Apathy to the issues facing us as purebred dog owners creates a weakness within our community. A far greater portion of our peers must become an active part of the solution, combating the attack on purebred breeders which is putting the future of an AKC as it exists today and our ability to own a purebred dog in peril.

**11** *What do you think is the most pressing issue facing AKC?*

Certainly, it could be argued that the attrition of active club members due to advancing age is a hugely pressing issue. It is also true that members for whom age is not a contributing factor disengaged from club activities during the pandemic. We no longer had to leave the house on the 4th Tuesday of the month to drive to a club meeting; the meeting came to us via technology. We became accustomed to not putting forth that effort and too many are content to not resume that level of activity.

Clubs should be encouraged to reconnect with these members. It may just take a phone call. Perhaps it takes planning a club event that is purely social, preferably involving food. I just attended an infor-



mal club potluck luncheon followed by a fun match. Members were encouraged to bring guests and there were six present. Those guests observed club members simply enjoying each other's company and all expressed an interest in joining. There were also two members present that have not been active recently. We can all find ways to reenergize our clubs.

**12** *Recruiting youth and young adults into AKC dog sports and activities has been challenging. What are your ideas for engaging younger generations in AKC activities and sports?*

Social trends have resulted in younger generations choosing activities that are more likely to bring them "instant" gratification. The massive increase in the popularity of Fast CAT is the best example of the incredible level of interest in an AKC activity that provides that opportunity. Developing additional events that like Fast CAT provide exposure to pure-bred dogs is a fabulous opportunity to connect with younger generations that are less likely to engage in AKC sports that require a greater commitment of time and resources.

**13** *How can we improve AKC's image among its core constituents and owners of AKC registered Dog?*

We're in a unique position to already have a connection to the millions of dog owners that register their dogs with us in addition to our core constituents. Sharing the great things we do will help establish us in everyone's minds as the preeminent resource for all things dog related.

**14** *What are your thoughts on how to increase exhibitors at dog events?*

While we are finding answers as to how to pause the decrease of conformation entries, all-breed and specialty clubs have already begun to increase the number of competitors at their events by diversifying what they offer. Scent Work, Fast CAT, Farm Dog, Dock Diving and Barn Hunt draw interested dog owners who might normally not set foot on show grounds if only conformation competition

is available. Through these events a connection to AKC is formed that we need to preserve to strengthen our future.

## DR. MICHAEL KNIGHT. PhD

Delegate, Texas Kennel Club



**1** *How long have you been a delegate?*

I have been the AKC Delegate from the Texas Kennel Club for 10 years. I have served on the AKC Board for the last 3 1/2 years.

**2** *Why do you want to serve on the AKC Board of Directors?*

I have found my time on the AKC Board to be a very enjoyable, interesting, and enlightening experience. As a result of my time serving on the Board, I have learned a lot, and I feel like I have accomplished a lot; however, there are still many projects I want to continue to work on and new ideas to accomplish.

The combination of my education, professional experience, community service, and additionally, my many years breeding and showing dogs, gives me a diverse background that benefits the AKC Board of Directors.

When I take on any task, I give my absolute best to the project. I will not let a problem go unresolved. I believe in the “it takes a village” concept. I have and am always including and recruiting others to be involved in ideas and solutions that can promote, grow and help to save our sport. I am prepared to continue to give my absolute best to the AKC Board.

**3** *If elected, how do you envision making a difference?*

I envision making a difference by continuing to work on growing the investment portfolio, increasing funding for the veterinary scholarships, continue educating young people about the many options to participate in careers in the AKC dog world.

Examples of projects that I am working on are:

- Growing the AKC’s investment portfolio
- Upgrading technology and computer systems
- Training fundraisers in different departments for fundraising projects
- Increasing funding for Veterinarian scholarships to gain more veterinarian ambassadors for AKC

- Increasing participation in the juniors program.

As our Investment Chair for the last three years, our investment portfolio has grown substantially.

In the last three years of being on the Veterinary Scholarship Committee, I have been able to double the amount of funds awarded. I feel that each student we are able to help with their education could possibly be an ambassador for the American Kennel Club.

While serving on the Juniors Committee, I have created a program that addresses how to pick a breed of dog for your family; How to become a professional handler. How to develop clients to show for... How to bill for your handling expenses. How to finance your show vehicle. The program last about an hour. There are 47 junior high schools in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. I have spoken at 8 so far including the public library on children’s day and there were 740 kids in attendance.

For the three years I’ve been on the Breeder’s committee we have made huge steps forward in getting our parent club more involved and more informed about all AKC has to offer in the form of education materials.

As Pension Chair for two years, we were very successful in strengthening our portfolio for our AKC retirees.

The Board created a new Committee. The Finance Committee. It consists of three members Dominic Carota, Red Tatro and me. Our primary job is to oversee AKC’s spending and to make sure our funds are used wisely.

As one of the Parent Club liaison’s, I have been of council to the Committee of the Board’s policies and shared with the Board the concerns and questions of the Parent Club Committee.

I use my 40 years of employment and staffing

KNIGHT, cont'd

knowledge and experience to help, council and guide the Compensation Committee. Placing the proper salary with the correct skill sets allows AKC to offer competitive salaries in the employment market while at the same time, be frugal with our employment salary funds.

I am also on the Board of the Canine Health Foundation as well as being a member of their Audit Committee. One of my main functions on the CHF Board is to help with training their fund raisers.

**4** Describe your experiences in the sport of purebred dogs, including breeding, conformation, performance events, etc.

I started showing dogs in conformation when I was 16. I showed two St. Bernards and 9 Afghans. In the early years, we showed and finished dogs we purchased from other breeders. For the last 34 years we have showed and finished 65 Poodles and 13 Pekingese, that we bred. We have won multiple awards at our Poodle Club of America National, of which I am the current President.

I am a Breeder of Merit. We have bred 14 litters. We breed to preserve our bloodlines in Poodles and Pekingese. We are incredibly humbled and proud that dogs from our bloodlines are sought after in the US and abroad.

I have received the Good Sportsmanship's award for the Texas Kennel Club and have served as the Texas Kennel Club Show Chairman for 25 years, which I still remain in this position.

In addition to the love of our precious dogs, the sport has allowed me to meet incredible people across the US and all around the world.

In addition to conformation events, I have helped TKC plan and carry out obedience and rally trials, agility events, and fast cat events. I bring working knowledge of planning these events.

**5** Describe your Participation in dog organizations, including any position that you've held in clubs.

I have participated in the following dog organizations

- American Kennel Club Board of Directors 2020-Current
- Poodle Club of America 1995 – Current
- Texas Kennel Club 1999-Current
- Lone Star State Classic Cluster 2008-Current
- Lone Star Poodle Club 1993 – Current
- Pekingese Club of North Texas 2008 - Current

American Kennel Club Board of Directors

2020-Current

AKC Committee's that Tom Davies and Dominic Carota have ask me to serve on.

- Investments Committee Chairman
- Employee Pension Committee Member
- Parent Club Committee Liaison to the AKC Board
- Junior's Committee Liaison to the AKC Board
- Breeders Development Committee Liaison to the AKC Board
- AKC Veterinary Scholarship Committee Member
- Finance Committee Member
- 2023-2024 Compensation Committee Member

Poodle Club of America 1995-Current

2022-2024 *PCA President*

2020-2022 *First Vice President* Under PCA President Dennis McCoy  
National Specialty Show Decorations Chairman

2016-2020 *Second Vice President*  
Under President Sue Burge and President Dennis McCoy  
Affiliate Club Chairman  
National Specialty Show Decorations Chairman  
Foreign Visitors Hospitality Chairman

2015-2016 *First Vice President* Under President Dennis McCoy

Foreign Visitors Hospitality Chairman  
2006-2008 *Second Vice President* Under President Doris Cozart

- (The Board up-dated the PCA Constitution and Policy Book)
- Affiliate Club Chairman
- Decoration Chairman
- Foreign Visitors Hospitality Chairman
- Catalog Sales Committee
- 2004-2005 National Specialty Show Decoration Chairman
- Under President Anne Rogers Clark and President Doris Cozart
- Catalog Sales Committee
- 1999-2003 National Specialty Show Decoration Chairman
- Under President Charles Thomasson and President Anne Rogers Clark
- Catalog Sales Committee
- 1995-1998 Catalog Sales Committee

Texas Kennel Club 1999-Current

- 1999-2024 TKC Show Chairman and Second Vice-President

Lone Star State Classic Cluster 2008-Current

- 2008-2024 Cluster Committee Member Charter Member
- 2015-2024 Cluster Committee Treasurer
- 2008-2010 Cluster Chairman

Lone Star Poodle Club 1993-Current

- 1993-2024 Member
- 1998-2002 President
- 1998-2023 Board Member

Pekingese Club of North Texas 2008-Current

- 2008-2023 Member
- 2016-2023 Board Member

**6** *Please describe any experience you've gained in non-dog organizations that could enhance your contributions to the work of the AKC Board.*

I have gained a wide variety of experiences with diverse groups and organizations through my professional and personal experiences in non-dog

related activities and I bring that knowledge to AKC to help address their various business needs.

I like to stay involved in my community through my church life as well as volunteer opportunities with arts, museums, a philanthropic league, and hospital boards, mainly helping with fundraising opportunities since that is one of my strengths. While participating and chairing many boards and committees, I have utilized my education in human resources to help guide people. My education in banking and finance, as well as my experience fundraising and managing large sums of donated funds, provides me with unique skills to bring to the AKC Board. These volunteer positions are, at times, highly political, influential, and highly visible positions, which require an enormous amount of tact, diplomacy, personal restraint, communication, persuasion, and negotiation skills.

In my professional life outside of dogs, I am a co-owner of a "boutique" staffing firm providing personal customer service specializing in the medical, legal, and C-suites fields. Our business provides staffing services locally in Texas, but also nationwide and international placements of personnel. We also provide analytic assessment of personnel and systems of a business to address where work is duplicated, or personnel are underutilized; as well as a variety of custom human resource projects for these businesses.

A recent experience and project with my church was to participate in the fundraising for the purchase of a new pipe organ to replace the 47-year-old organ that was in a state of disrepair. Music is an integral part of the ministry of the church and the new pipe organ provides a moving experience for those who are fortunate to hear the music.

Another project was participating on a local museum board to bring a major exhibition to Dallas. We were required to fundraise to bring the exhibit to Dallas as well as make arrangements for security of the artifacts. The economic impact to the Dallas area was significant since this exhibit attracted thousands of

KNIGHT, *cont'd*

school children as well as people from across the US.

Most importantly, and one of my most sincere projects is philanthropic fundraising to provide financial assistance to families with children cancer diseases and women's breast cancer. The assistance we provide is invaluable to the families when most resources may have been exhausted and is personally rewarding knowing I have carried on my "It takes a village" philosophy to care for these families.

#### Medical Fundraising

1995-2003 Med-City Juvenile Cancer Counselor  
 2008-2014 BS&WCB Fund Raiser, the charitable board of Baylor Scott & White  
 2015 BS&WCB Board Member  
 2016 BS&WCB Board Member  
 Philanthropy Fund Raising for Children's Cancer and women's breast cancer  
 2017 Dallas Philanthropic Society Inductee  
 2017 Dallas Philanthropic League Philanthropist of The Year  
 2018 Dallas Philanthropic League Philanthropist of The Year  
 2019 Dallas Philanthropic League Committee Chairman  
 2020 Dallas Philanthropic League Committee Chairman  
 2021 Dallas Philanthropic League Committee Member  
 2022 Dallas Philanthropic League Committee Member  
 2023 Dallas Philanthropic League Committee Member  
 Lead fund raiser

**7** *Describe your background and how you feel it prepares you to contribute to the AKC as a board member?*

I have used my Human Resources and Staffing experience to advise and council organizations and individuals on multiple areas of many employment issues. Recently, I managed the search for the AKC's Chief Financial Officer position and located and placed Theodore Phillips, who is now the current CFO of AKC.

I handled the search and located several positions within the CHF staff. I have created performance analysis reports for our current C-Suite staff for the AKC and CHF C-Suite Staff. I have created employment contracts for AKC C-Suite staff. Because of my sales and marketing experience for our own company, I have made several sales and marketing suggestions to our AKC Store. I have also met with the fundraisers for the Museum of The Dog and offered several fundraising suggestions to help the Museum. While I was on the AKC PAC Board I offered several fundraising suggestions to them based on my experience. I was surprised and honored to receive an award from the PAC Board earlier this year.

I am providing my employment and education below which has enhanced my background to continue to contribute to the AKC Board.

#### Employment:

2008-Current Jackson DeWitt and Associates Owner  
 Vice President of Human Resources  
 Personnel staffing, Analytics of personnel & staffing  
 1994-2008 Computer Search International Director of Staffing  
 1993 BKND Legal Staffing Recruiter  
 1985-1992 Career Profile Group IT Staffing Recruiter

#### Education:

Degree (BS) Psychology  
 Degree (BA) Banking and Finance  
 Degree (BA) Human Resources  
 Masters Degree Human Resources  
 PhD... Human Resources  
 PhD Theological M C

**8** *When you think about AKC, do you feel that it is generally heading in the right direction, or on the wrong track? Please explain.*

I believe we are heading in the right direction. For instance, we have recently created educational opportunities through the Canine College. The AKC staff have created a wide array of educational videos. We need to increase awareness of these educational

KNIGHT, cont'd

tools. The following programs have been actively updated the last few years:

- Canine College
- Judges Education
- Breeder educational events.
- AKC Star Puppy Program
- The Ultimate Guide to Puppy Ownership.
- AKC Family Dog Program.
- Good Dog Helpline for Consultation

However, I feel we must be more innovative, more welcoming, more transparent and more willing to share our time and knowledge to help educate people (young and old) that are interested in our dog fancy.

**9** *In your opinion what are the top three priorities AKC should embrace? What would you do to assure progress in each of these areas?*

#### 1. Growth

Think about the growth we could have if each of us could just work with two or three people to educate, train, support, and share our knowledge with them.

#### 2. Club Support

We can create ways to teach clubs to be more effective. We have wonderful people in our AKC clubs in positions they agreed to take but with very little education or information about how to handle the demands of the position.

For example, we have received letters from judges who felt badly about being paid their judging fees because they felt underutilized at a show. We have Show Chairmen and judges selection committee who need education in building judging panels for their shows. These issues can be very costly to clubs. In order to help clubs with underutilized judging panels, we could recruit knowledgeable club individuals to create an educational seminar on how clubs build an economical and cost-effective judging panel for an all-breed show or cluster and add this as a resource on the Show and Trial Chairperson Tools web page.

#### 3. Financial Sustainability

Continue to improve our investment strategies and

increase our fundraising potential.

**10** *What do you think is AKC's greatest strength and what is its most serious weaknesses?*

Strengths:

One of the most incredible strengths we have is a dedicated, knowledgeable and very experienced AKC staff and delegate body with their business acumen, canine fancy, and life experiences.

Weaknesses:

We could be more inclusive and welcoming of people outside the fancy. I feel we are slow to embrace and implement change and we should work to be more transparent and provide information to clubs so they understand the best way to work with AKC.

**11** *What do you think is the most pressing issue facing AKC?*

In order to keep our clubs vibrant and healthy, we must provide resources to guide the clubs to utilize their experienced club members to train new members so they have the opportunity to pass on their club knowledge. This applies not only to club participation, but also to exhibitors, breeders, and judges. We are not drawing young people to take their place.

**12** *Recruiting youth and young adults into AKC dog sports and activities has been challenging. What are your ideas for engaging younger generations in AKC activities and sports?*

While serving on the Juniors Committee, I have created a program that addresses how to pick a breed of dog for your family; How to become a professional handler. How to develop clients to show for... How to bill for your handling expenses. How to finance your show vehicle. The program last about an hour. The focus of this program is to seek middle and junior high schools in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. I have spoken at 8 so far including the public library on children's day and there were 740 kids in attendance.

For the last two years, AKC TV has live streamed my local club's event. We have included best junior

*KNIGHT, cont'd*

handler as part of the AKC TV live streaming our show. We have built our juniors participation from 30 to 50 juniors at the last show.

I would like to explore opportunities for juniors to utilize social media for learning opportunities for AKC events and activities. Many kids have access to a tablet now and AKC should provide a safe environment directed towards kids to learn about dog breeds, AKC activities and events, the benefits of participating in our sport as well as careers encouraging kids to work with pure bred dogs.

**13** *How can we improve AKC's image among its core constituents and owners of AKC registered Dog?*

As I said previously, in order to keep our clubs vibrant and healthy, we must provide resources to guide the clubs to utilize their experienced club members to train new members so they have the opportunity to pass on their club knowledge. This applies not only to club participation, but also to exhibitors, breeders, and judges. We are not drawing young people to take their place.

I feel we must be more innovative, more welcoming, more transparent and more willing to share our time and knowledge to help educate people (young and old) that are interested in our dog fancy. Think about the progress we could have if each of us could just work with two or three people to educate, train, support, and share our knowledge with them. What a boost forward this could lend us in accomplishing our goal of growth.

**14** *What are your thoughts on how to increase exhibitors at dog events?*

We are always looking for ideas to help our show "stand out from the crowd". Our cluster advertises our show in the national dog magazines. In addition to the standard information such as dates of the show, we include information for the specialty and group clubs participating in our show cluster, how many majors were built at the last show, and special attractions at the event. Our cluster also pays to

increase the radius of the premium list emails sent by the show superintendent to exhibitors. Also, planning special attractions and in general, making the show fun to attend, is a good way to build community among exhibitors.

In an effort to increase our gate and to reach possible new exhibitors, I try to use the following ideas:

It's come to my attention that there are certain websites that promote family activities for weekend activities, and I don't believe most clubs are aware of how to use these sites. I have discovered that there are over 70 websites spread all over our country where events can be listed as a family outing. You are allowed to describe your event and list the entry or gate fee to attend. A club could list the breed schedule in the local newspaper or the internet version of the local newspaper. We need to share these with our clubs so they can utilize them. Local radio announcements before the event can draw public interest and potential reach a new exhibitor.

Offering gate entry coupons on the club website can encourage interest and participation of by the public and potential reach a new exhibitor. Clubs can arrange for signage on marquees around a town or a cite with "short" details of the event. Clubs can arrange for Local news announcements about their event. Clubs can also place their event in the city or town's official monthly calendar of events. A club can send a free e-mail event notice (flyer or advertisements) to the local veterinarian clinics. A Club can also ask local Petsmart and Petco to place the event on their event calendar. Lastly AKC's PR department is very willing to web blast Club events if sent the verbiage desired so we need to make clubs aware of this service that is available to them. Clubs can also utilize local area facebook blasts announcing their event.



# BOARD & DELEGATE MEETINGS 2024

As of November 13, 2023

All meetings, except December, are in the NYC/NJ area. The December meeting is in Orlando, FL.

JANUARY 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

## January

- 8 Board Meeting
- 9 Board Meeting

## July

- 8 Board Meeting
- 9 Board Meeting

JULY 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

FEBRUARY 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

## February

- 12 Board Meeting
- 13 Board Meeting

## August

- 12 Board Meeting
- 13 Board Meeting

AUGUST 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

MARCH 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

## March

- 11 Delegate Committee Meeting
- 12 Delegate Meeting

## September

- 9 Delegate Committee Meeting
- 10 Delegate Meeting

SEPTEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

APRIL 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

## April

- 8 Board Meeting
- 9 Board Meeting

## October

- 7 Board Meeting
- 8 Board Meeting

OCTOBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

MAY 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

## May

- 9 Board Meeting
- 10 Board Meeting

## November

- 11 Board Meeting
- 12 Board Meeting

NOVEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

JUNE 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

## June

- 10 Delegate Committee Meeting
- 11 Delegate Meeting

## December

- 12 Delegate Committee Meeting
- 13 Delegate Meeting

DECEMBER 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			