

# LINES FROM LINDA

GETTING TO KNOW THE CANDIDATES FOR THE  
AKC BOARD OF DIRECTORS CLASS OF 2030



BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR

On March 1, the delegates will meet in Newark, New Jersey to elect three delegates who will each serve a three year term on our American Kennel Club Board of Directors.

**“Conformation remains deeply tied to the AKC’s financial health—through event fees, registrations, and purebred breeding. Its decline directly affects the future of both purebred dogs and the AKC.”**  
— CARL C. ASHBY

**T**he fancy is now focusing on candidates most qualified to carry our sport forward by serving as members of our American Kennel Club Board of Directors. The following questions have been submitted to me by AKC member clubs whose members seek to guide their delegate how they wish them to vote.

## CARL C. ASHBY

DELEGATE – UNITED STATES KERRY BLUE TERRIER CLUB



### 1. In addition to revenue from registrations, how do you believe registrations impact the mission of AKC?

Registrations are a vital revenue source, but they also shape our ability to connect with the dog-owning public. A registration should be more than a one-time transaction—it can be the start of a long-term relationship that lasts well beyond a dog’s lifetime. Declining registrations weaken our influence, dilute our voice as advocates for dogs, limit new marketing partnerships, and reduce our relevance with pet owners. We cannot allow this trend to continue.

To reverse it, we must rethink the registration model. Today, unless someone participates in sports, the only motivation to register is a sense of obligation—and 60 percent of new puppy owners don’t find that compelling. We need a value proposition that aligns with what modern puppy owners expect. One approach, discussed at the December 2024 Forum, is to bundle meaningful, renewable benefits with each registration—adding real monetary value for owners while creating opportunities for recurring revenue.

### 2. Many believe the Conformation sport is the bedrock of AKC’s mission. It has been in decline for many years. What ideas do you have to stabilize and potentially grow Conformation?

Jaimie and I entered the sport soon after college, benefiting from strong mentors and early success. Over the years, we’ve watched the landscape change dramatically. Today, many newcomers simply can’t commit in a sport that demands round the clock dedication to breeding and exhibiting.

The numbers reflect this shift. As of October 2025, entries are down by 50,000. Dog participation in Conformation has dropped from 3.9 percent of registered dogs a decade ago to just 1.9 percent in 2024. Without rethinking how Conformation operates, the decline will continue.

Conformation remains deeply tied to the AKC’s financial health—through event fees, registrations, and purebred breeding. Its decline directly affects the future of both purebred dogs and the AKC. I’ve written extensively on this issue, and unfortunately, those concerns remain unchanged. Below are ideas to help rebuild the sport and strengthen our clubs and the AKC.

#### 1) Give Exhibitors Time Back.

Time has become the biggest barrier, especially for families. Adjusting show formats can make participation more manageable.

- **Expand two shows in one day formats.** Over 40 percent of shows qualify. This turns two-day weekends into one day, and four-day clusters into two, benefiting clubs and exhibitors.
- **Use the 4/3 Group model at larger shows.** Exhibitors would typically attend only one day, with only Group winners staying for Best in Show.

SHOWSIGHT

- **Schedule single-entry breeds at the end of a judge's day.** This reduces overall judging time and helps owner handlers avoid unnecessary travel or long waits.
- **Allow single-entry specials to go directly to Group.** This saves judging time and reduces panel costs by eliminating the need to judge established champions when only one is entered, allowing these breeds to not count against the 175 daily limit.

**2) Create a true novice entry path.**

Conformation is the only sport where beginners compete immediately against seasoned professionals. Unsurprisingly, many new exhibitors leave quickly.

Younger generations expect early feedback and recognition, and our current structure offers little of either. We need an introductory pathway—whether through UKC-style events or a dual-track system within existing shows—that provides early success, learning, and encouragement. No one starts with a perfect dog, but everyone starts with enthusiasm. Our reward structure should nurture that, not extinguish it.

**3. The 5000+ Clubs give AKC a presence in communities across the United States. As a “club of clubs,” do you feel there exists a good relationship with AKC? If not, what are some ways AKC could both strengthen and leverage clubs to further AKC’s mission?**

Clubs are the backbone of the American Kennel Club, and AKC cannot thrive without a strong, engaged club network. Today, that partnership feels weakened. Below are key concerns and actions that could strengthen the AKC–Club relationship:

- **Clubs power AKC’s mission.** Unpaid volunteers run events, training programs, public education efforts, legislative outreach, and generate substantial revenue. Yet only about 600 clubs are “member clubs,” while more than 4,400 others provide most of AKC’s presence and income. These clubs deserve recognition, appreciation, and a clear commitment from AKC to support them as part of a true “club of clubs.”
- **A genuine partnership is essential.** Clubs must see AKC as a supportive partner, not an obstacle. Many do not feel that way today, even though neither can succeed alone. AKC must proactively engage clubs, understand their challenges, and collaborate on solutions. Likewise, clubs can contribute ideas to strengthen the relationship.
- **Policies must reflect today’s realities.** Rigid, precedent-driven decisions often prevent clubs from addressing modern challenges. While flexibility must be applied thoughtfully, AKC should avoid defaulting to “no” when reasonable, common sense exceptions could help clubs—especially Conformation clubs currently under significant strain.

**4. Preservation breeding is essential to ensure breeds survive as well as meeting the demand for purebred family dogs. What could AKC do to promote responsible breeding?**

AKC could take the following steps:

- **Elevate responsible breeding in our communications.** Our social media and website say little about what responsible breeding truly means. Happy, healthy dogs come from responsible breeders, and we should proudly highlight that rather than leave a void that animal rights groups can fill.
- **Adopt a more proactive legislative strategy.** While our Government Relations team does excellent work, we are often responding to anti-dog legislation rather than shaping the conversation. We should deepen partnerships with NAIA and other aligned organizations, including industry groups that share our commitment to dogs and face similar challenges.
- **Strengthen our marketing to reflect the real source of healthy puppies.** Ensure our messaging doesn’t shy away from breeders as the foundation of “happy, healthy puppies.” Make “Everything we do, we do for dogs” a genuine guiding principle, while clearly explaining to our core constituents why—when we meet only 16 percent of annual puppy demand—we must broaden our reach to make meaningful impact.

**5. If you are elected to the AKC Board of Directors, in addition to fulfilling the everyday responsibilities of a director, would you have any specific focus during your term of office?**

If elected, I would prioritize three critical areas alongside the standard duties of a director:

- **Building a Strong Partnership with our Clubs:** Clubs are the backbone of the AKC, and the AKC is strongest when its clubs are supported, respected, and heard. Our success is shared, and so is our future. As director, I will work to rebuild this vital relationship and ensure we grow together.
- **Revitalizing Conformation:** Conformation is the foundation of the American Kennel Club, yet participation has steadily declined due to societal shifts. We must re-consider the sport as it exists today and strengthen it through accessible entry-level options and gateway activities that draw newcomers in. This is essential—Conformation exhibitors produce 18 percent of AKC registered puppies and generate half of AKC’s event fee revenue.
- **Rebuilding Registrations:** Registrations are central to AKC’s influence with dog owners and to its financial stability. Our share of annual puppies has fallen from 50 percent to 16 percent, and this decline has contributed to the loss of our affinity credit card, reduced advertising revenue, and ongoing financial pressure. With the right strategy, there is meaningful low hanging fruit. I intend to focus on reinventing registration and transforming it into a sustainable, recurring revenue stream.

**KAREN BURGESS**

DELEGATE – GREATER CLARK COUNTY KENNEL CLUB



**1. In addition to revenue from registrations, how do you believe registrations impact the mission of AKC?**

The importance of breeding and promoting purebred dogs is paramount. The number of individual puppies registered from “Registered Litters” is approximately 40 percent. One-tier registration would ensure all puppies in a litter would be registered when the litter application was submitted. New puppies would be fully registered and ready to participate in any AKC-approved event when going to their new home.

**2. Many believe the Conformation sport is the bedrock of AKC’s mission. It has been in decline for many years. What ideas do you have to stabilize and potentially grow Conformation?**

Times have changed. Change is often hard. We must look at new, creative ways to keep our events relevant. AKC Club Development has new ideas and processes to keep exhibitors engaged and help clubs increase interest in the Sport of Purebred Dogs. Using an Onsite Secretary for a “Package Show” or having two Conformation shows in one day are examples of what Club Development can help clubs accomplish. Offering one of AKC’s Performance/Companion events (Farm Dog Certification, Temperament Testing, Fetch!, Fast CAT) brings new people to events. We, as show-giving clubs, need to take advantage of every opportunity to share our knowledge and why we love what we do.

**3. The 5000+ Clubs give AKC a presence in communities across the United States. As a “club of clubs,” do you feel there exists a good relationship with AKC? If not, what are some ways AKC could both strengthen and leverage clubs to further AKC’s mission?**

All AKC’s member and licensed clubs share the responsibility to promote purebred dogs in a proactive, positive manner. Clubs should know our local Animal Control and Humane Society. Clubs should be aware of any legislation (city, county, or state) that may have an effect on what they do and/or how they represent themselves to their communities. AKC has resources and people in Government Relations we can depend on for guidance. How clubs choose to take advantage of these resources determines the impact on their clubs and breeds. We are our own best advocates.

**4. Preservation breeding is essential to ensure breeds survive as well as meeting the demand for purebred family dogs. What could AKC do to promote responsible breeding?**

Parent Clubs are the core of our existence. The responsibility of the promotion and preservation of any breed is dependent on the strength of the Parent Club. Many breeds are currently being targeted for unnecessary reasons. We need to be cognizant of outside influences and protect ALL of our breeds.

The Breeder Development Subcommittee was formed and consists of well-educated breeders from Delegate Standing Committees (Parent Club, Canine Health, All-Breed), AKC Staff, and the Board of Directors to address breeding happy, healthy dogs. Legacy breeders in several breeds are being asked to contribute on video the knowledge they have gained from many years of successful breeding. Each Parent Club has been asked to provide a Breeder Education Coordinator for their club.

This outstanding subcommittee of breeders has many exciting projects on its agenda. We will all benefit from their knowledge and commitment to responsible breeding practices.

**5. If you are elected to the AKC Board of Directors, in addition to fulfilling the everyday responsibilities of a director, would you have any specific focus during your term of office?**

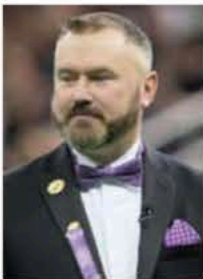
The overall promotion of what we do and why we do it:

- Public Education and Outreach.
- Ongoing Support of Legislation and Government Relations.
- Minimize the bureaucratic “stuff” for our event-giving clubs.
- Sharing our mission as breeders with Veterinary Schools.

To accomplish this we need a strong, inclusive strategy to make solid contributions to the dog-loving community. My experience and advocacy for Clubs and the Sport of Purebred Dogs will help us in meeting these challenges.

**JASON HOKE**

**DELEGATE – CHAIN O’ LAKES KENNEL CLUB**



**1. In addition to revenue from registrations, how do you believe registrations impact the mission of AKC?**

The American Kennel Club’s mission is to *uphold the integrity of its Registry, promote the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function, advance canine health and well-being, and protect the rights of all dog owners.* AKC registrations are

essential to fulfilling that mission, far beyond the revenue they generate.

Registrations uphold the integrity of the AKC Registry by creating accurate, verifiable pedigrees that preserve Breed Standards and ensure confidence in purebred dogs. They also make participation in AKC events and sports possible, directly supporting the promotion of purebred dogs and sustaining the clubs, judges, and volunteers who form the backbone of the sport.

By linking dogs to documented ancestry and Breed Standards, registrations encourage responsible breeding for type and function and help breeders make informed, ethical decisions. Registration data also plays an important role in advancing canine health and wellbeing by supporting research, identifying breed-specific health trends, and guiding funding through the AKC Canine Health Foundation.

A strong, trusted registry also protects the rights of dog owners by providing proof of ownership and strengthening AKC’s credibility in legislative and public policy advocacy. Ultimately, AKC registrations are mission critical. They are the foundation that allows the American Kennel Club to preserve breeds, promote responsible ownership, advance canine health, and serve the dog community with integrity.

**2. Many believe the Conformation sport is the bedrock of AKC’s mission. It has been in decline for many years. What ideas do you have to stabilize and potentially grow Conformation?**

Conformation is the bedrock of the AKC’s mission because it preserves breed type, function, and the future of purebred dogs. At the same time, Companion and Performance events are not secondary to that mission, they are essential to growing participation, strengthening breeding programs, and increasing entries at all-breed shows.

Companion and Performance events consistently bring new exhibitors and owners to the show grounds, many of whom later participate in Conformation. When these events are offered alongside Conformation, overall entries increase, clubs become more financially stable, and exhibitors are better able to justify the time and expense of attending shows. This integrated approach reflects how people participate in dog sports today and strengthens the entire event.

Transparency before entries close is one practical way to encourage participation. Providing a breed-by-breed entry breakdown one week prior to closing would help exhibitors make informed decisions, allow for entry increases in support of low-entry breeds, and assist in building majors across all breeds, increasing both competition and revenue.

Modern, phone- and tablet-friendly entry platforms are also critical. Ease of access directly impacts participation, particularly for new and younger exhibitors.

Finally, AKC should develop and license standardized software for dog show superintendents that interfaces directly with AKC systems. Real-time, in-ring results captured through simple armband scanning would reduce costs, improve accuracy, and lower administrative overhead for both AKC and superintendents thus reducing the costs to the exhibitors, which is paramount.

By valuing all disciplines equally and modernizing infrastructure, AKC can grow participation, strengthen breeding, and secure the future of all-breed events.

**3. The 5000+ Clubs give AKC a presence in communities across the United States. As a “club of clubs,” do you feel there exists a good relationship with AKC? If not, what are some ways AKC could both strengthen and leverage clubs to further AKC’s mission?**

The American Kennel Club has a strong foundation of relationships with its 5,000 clubs, which gives AKC a vital presence in communities across the United States. I believe that, overall, the relationship between AKC and its clubs is supportive and ultimately working toward the same goal, and under the leadership of the current president, with a dedicated and experienced Board including myself and our committed delegates, we are well positioned to implement modern changes while honoring the traditions that have made the sport so meaningful.

At the same time, I recognize there are times when clubs and the delegate body can feel a disconnect from the Board. Strengthening communication and collaboration between the Board, delegates, and clubs is essential. I am committed to increasing transparency, creating more consistent feedback channels, and actively engaging clubs in decision-making. This ensures that their needs, ideas, and concerns are fully heard and incorporated into AKC initiatives.

By leveraging clubs as partners, we can expand participation, enhance education, grow events, and reinforce responsible breeding, all while respecting the history and traditions of our sport. With a modern, accessible approach combined with a deep respect for AKC’s legacy, clubs will remain central to advancing the mission, and our collective efforts will continue to strengthen the AKC’s presence in communities nationwide. Without our delegates, clubs, and, ultimately, our breeders, the AKC primary function is mute, so we must continue our effort to work hand in hand to carry our beloved sport forward.

**4. Preservation breeding is essential to ensure breeds survive as well as meeting the demand for purebred family dogs. What could AKC do to promote responsible breeding?**

Preservation breeding is critical to ensuring breeds survive and thrive, while also meeting the demand for purebred family dogs. AKC can promote responsible breeding by working closely with parent clubs and local clubs to develop more breeder education programs at the local level. These programs can provide hands-on guidance, mentorship, and resources to help breeders maintain health, type, and function in their lines while upholding the highest standards of care.

Encouraging participation from rare breeds is another key opportunity. AKC can support these breeds by opening more events and showcase opportunities, helping to grow their registries, raise awareness, and connect breeders with potential owners. Highlighting these breeds strengthens diversity across the purebred dog community and ensures that all breeds have the opportunity to thrive.

Ease of registration is essential in supporting responsible breeders. Simplifying the registration process, while integrating more educational content, makes it easier for breeders to engage with AKC programs. Short, focused educational clips provided by AKC, offered through a micro-transaction store or platform, can give breeders and new owners practical guidance on health testing, breeding ethics, and breed-specific best practices.

By combining local education, rare breed support, and modern, breeder-focused registration tools, AKC can strengthen responsible breeding, preserve breed integrity, and grow the next generation of healthy, well-bred dogs.

**5. If you are elected to the AKC Board of Directors, in addition to fulfilling the everyday responsibilities of a director, would you have any specific focus during your term of office?**

My primary goals for my term on the AKC Board of Directors are to modernize access to AKC programs, grow participation in all dog sports, support responsible breeding, and strengthen our relationships with clubs and exhibitors without disenfranchising the people who make our organization strong.

As a business owner with extensive experience in management, marketing, branding, and budgetary analysis, I bring a practical, results-driven approach to the Board. I understand that serving on the Board carries a critical responsibility for fiscal oversight. Every expenditure and cost to participants must be carefully evaluated, ensuring that AKC remains financially strong while providing maximum value to our members, clubs, and exhibitors.

I am focused on developing user-friendly processes that encourage a new generation of breeders and sport participants. Streamlined entry and registration systems, phone- and tablet-friendly platforms, and modern tools for superintendents will reduce overhead, improve efficiency, and make participation easier and more affordable. Combined with short, accessible educational programs on breeding, health, and dog sports, these initiatives will expand awareness and engagement across all disciplines. Additionally, the AKC website needs a complete overhaul, with differing departments all separated out to allow instant access to accommodate Breeders, Clubs, Judges, and Education all in their own landing site so that all information is a click or two away.

I have been in the sport my entire life and I don't see failure in the AKC but great opportunity with the ability to leverage new technologies that can greatly improve all AKC has to offer.

I am also committed to advocacy and public outreach. My experience in communication and branding will allow me to protect AKC from anti-dog legislation, promote responsible dog ownership, and reinforce the value of purebred dogs.

**“I am also committed to advocacy and public outreach. My experience in communication and branding will allow me to protect AKC from anti-dog legislation, promote responsible dog ownership, and reinforce the value of purebred dogs.”**

**-JASON HOKE**

Finally, I will work closely with our 5,000-plus clubs to strengthen collaboration, ensure open communication, and include clubs in decision-making. By leveraging my business experience, I aim to modernize AKC operations, support participants, preserve breeds, and ensure a sustainable, thriving future for the organization.

**DOMINIC PALLESCHI CAROTA**

**DELEGATE – PHARAOH HOUND CLUB OF AMERICA**



**1. In addition to revenue from registrations, how do you believe registrations impact the mission of AKC?**

The lack of individual registrations has an enormous negative impact across all platforms of our sport. Over a million puppies on Litter Registrations annually, with less than half of those puppies registered (year over year), is a huge cumulative drain on our sport. Decreased individual registrations mean decreased purebred dogs that will participate in any AKC event. Fewer dogs in Conformation means not just less revenue for our Clubs, but also less exhibits for our Judging Community to comparatively adjudicate.

**2. Many believe the Conformation sport is the bedrock of AKC's mission. It has been in decline for many years. What ideas do you have to stabilize and potentially grow Conformation?**

Breeders are the bedrock of our sport. We must incentivize Breeders to ensure that all puppies are individually registered with the AKC. We must build back value to our Sport through intensified marketing initiatives, more efficient electronic interface, education, and ensuring that the constant barrage of anti-breeder legislation is fought vigorously through the AKC Government Relations Department and our regional lobbyists. Without an increase in individual dog registrations there is no way the sport of Conformation will stabilize, let alone grow.

**3. The 5000+ Clubs give AKC a presence in communities across the United States. As a “club of clubs,” do you feel there exists a good relationship with AKC? If not, what are some ways AKC could both strengthen and leverage clubs to further AKC’s mission?**

I believe greater transparency is key to strengthening relationships between the AKC and Clubs. Clubs need to understand executive decisions and initiatives, and what the short- and long-term goals are of AKC. AKC Club Relations offers a myriad of services, including its Working It Out Guide, AKC Club Governance and Issues Resources Guide, and the AKC Internal Club Dispute Resolution Checklist. AKC Club Development furthers that relationship with guidance on event planning, advice on additional sports and attractions, best practices for holding a match, best practices for event scheduling, and best practices for Parent and All-Breed Clubs. These resources must continue and be periodically reviewed and strengthened to ensure they are meeting the current needs of our clubs.

**4. Preservation breeding is essential to ensure breeds survive as well as meeting the demand for purebred family dogs. What could AKC do to promote responsible breeding?**

AKC must continue to communicate its very detailed guides to responsible breeding. The introduction of Webinars to assist breeders is a valuable asset to our dog community. Those guides include topics such as Preparing to Breed a Litter of Puppies, Breeding to Improve, Understanding the Commitment, Choosing A Suitable Mate, Knowing the Genetics, Performing Health Checks, Whelping Preparations and Raising Puppies and ultimately Placing Puppies, and ensuring and encouraging that all puppies are registered. The AKC must maintain its commitment to the AKC Detection Dog Program and AKC Purebred Preservation Breeders, ensuring a constant supply of healthy, well-bred puppies to fill the needs of local, state, and federal law enforcement.

**5. If you are elected to the AKC Board of Directors, in addition to fulfilling the everyday responsibilities of a director, would you have any specific focus during your term of office?**

If elected to the AKC Board of Directors, my focus would be on building back value into the AKC and incentivizing Breeders to individually register each puppy in their respective litters, better electronic interface on one’s smartphone as well as an interactive APP to navigate the AKC Website and Sphere with much more ease than we now experience, increased transparency between the Board of Directors and Member Clubs, and redoubled efforts to combat anti-breeder legislation at the local, state, and federal levels.

**“Breeders are the bedrock of our sport. We must incentivize Breeders to ensure that all puppies are individually registered with the AKC.”**

**-DOMINIC PALLESCHI CAROTA**

**LISA PETERSON**

**DELEGATE – NORWEGIAN ELKHOUND ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**



**1. In addition to revenue from registrations, how do you believe registrations impact the mission of AKC?**

AKC’s mission includes upholding the integrity of its registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs, and breeding for type and function. AKC also advocates for the purebred dog as a family companion, advances canine health and well-being, works to protect the rights of dog owners, and promotes responsible dog ownership.

Registration helps promote the sport by making all puppies eligible to participate. The more puppies registered (100 percent of each litter, not just the show puppies), the more opportunities there are for dog owners to join AKC events. With each new registration of a purebred dog as a family companion, AKC can inform and show the value of registration with offers of pet insurance and microchipping, and training, health, and socialization resources to start each dog owner on the journey of responsible dog ownership, a cornerstone of AKC’s mission.

More sponsorship, advertising, and partnership opportunities, based on registration numbers, bring additional revenue to advance canine health and fight for the rights of dog owners and breeders against anti-dog and anti-breeding legislation. It also helps to put on events like AKC Meet the Breeds and the AKC National Championship, which celebrate breeding for type and function.

**2. Many believe the Conformation sport is the bedrock of AKC’s mission. It has been in decline for many years. What ideas do you have to stabilize and potentially grow Conformation?**

To grow Conformation, AKC and its clubs need to lower the bar for participation. We all need to be friendlier to everyone who comes to a dog show. We need a new type of “welcoming” class or event, maybe even something virtual (which AKC started successfully during the pandemic), to get people engaged and meet them and their dogs where they are. What that looks like needs some out-of-the-box thinking.

How about something fun and accessible like Adult Sportsmanship classes for beginners? It could be promoted as, try your hand at “Best is Show,” like the movie for you and your pet. Dogs with DQs can enter, just as in Juniors, and it would give people a chance to dip their toe in the sport with their purebred pets, even limited registration dogs could participate.

One idea to stabilize entries is to keep low-entry breeds coming to dog shows and not staying home when they are the only entry, because no class points are available. We could create a Certificate of Achievement for dogs, with a judge evaluating a single entry as suitable breeding stock. The Delegates and their Dog Show Rules committee would have to research and decide if these CAs could be used for a portion of points toward an AKC Championship title.

**3. The 5000+ Clubs give AKC a presence in communities across the United States. As a “club of clubs,” do you feel there exists a good relationship with AKC? If not, what are some ways AKC could both strengthen and leverage clubs to further AKC’s mission?**

Yes, there is a good relationship between AKC and its clubs when it comes to passing along messaging and programs in their local communities. I think clubs that are active, with a robust membership, already do a great job of promoting AKC’s mission on social media, in the legacy media about their events, and on their websites regarding the joys of purebred dog ownership.

**“Canine health and legislation have always been important topics to me. AKC invested significant resources in developing a canine DNA health-testing product. This should be sustained and expanded, especially in an industry that has recently seen some consolidation among for-profit canine DNA companies.”**

— LISA PETERSON

AKC has programs in place to reach out further into the community beyond dog shows, such as the AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Day program each September. When I managed this program, there were more than 750 events nationwide. We asked clubs to also reach out to local lawmakers. AKC created social media badges for them to put on their accounts to show support. It was a great partnership between clubs and AKC.

We are only limited by the creativity and effort clubs want to put into spreading the word. AKC could do more to communicate to clubs about all the resources it can offer. I think clubs don't know what's available. For example, did you know clubs can ask the communications department for a local media list for PR outreach?

**4. Preservation breeding is essential to ensure breeds survive, as well as to meet the demand for purebred family dogs. What could AKC do to promote responsible breeding?**

AKC already does a lot to promote responsible dog breeding and has been doing so for decades. As AKC's Director of Communications, I started the AKC Dog Breeders Education Network Facebook page in 2014 as a safe place for novices and experts to discuss and learn about responsible breeding.

Today, that private group has more than 18,000 members and is moderated by AKC staff, fanciers, and breeding experts who share their extensive knowledge. AKC also has breeder webinars. AKC shares stories of top breeders across multiple education and entertainment platforms. AKC's website is chock-full of information and resources at: <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/dog-breeding/>.

One idea I would champion is a three- or five-generation AKC DNA Health Test Pedigree with complete results. AKC already includes OFA tests and DNA Profile results. It's hard to talk about science to the public, especially something as complex as canine genetics. Still, a visually pleasing pedigree with lots of DNA double-helix icons to show responsible breeding can go a long way toward communicating to the public that responsible AKC breeders do DNA testing.

**5. If you are elected to the AKC Board of Directors, in addition to fulfilling the everyday responsibilities of a director, would you have any specific focus during your term of office?**

There are three areas I would focus on: 1) AKC's reputation management, specifically around canine health and legislation. 2) Working with parent clubs to increase their membership, the number of active breeders, and litters. 3) Working with All-Breed, Companion, and Performance clubs to draw in new exhibitors who need registration, listing, or enrollment to participate.

Canine health and legislation have always been important topics to me. AKC invested significant resources in developing a canine DNA health-testing product. This should be sustained and expanded, especially in an industry that has recently seen some consolidation among for-profit canine DNA companies. In legislation, we need to step up our public-facing campaigns and be more proactive than reactive in communicating our positions.

For parent clubs, let's start with low-hanging fruit: AKC breeders. There may be existing breeders willing to have one litter of a rare breed to help increase numbers. Or develop DIY cooperatives of breeders who share responsibilities, such as one who does litter planning, another who whelps and/or raises, and another who does sales and marketing. For All-Breed, Companion, and Performance clubs, we can work together to identify an entry point in each sport that is accessible to everyone with an AKC-registered, listed, or enrolled dog. 🐾

**Candidates who did not accept the invitation to share their ideas were:**

**Patricia Cruz, Sue Goldberg, Laurie Maulucci, and Thomas Powers.**