

Lines From Linda

BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR

CANDID CANDIDATES - PART TWO DELEGATES SEEK SEATS ON THE AKC BOARD OF DIRECTORS



As we begin the New Year it is an exciting time to contemplate the future of our American Kennel Club. Five AKC Delegates are vying for three positions on our AKC Board of Directors. The election will take place at the Delegates' Meeting on March 10. Those elected will be guiding the direction of our sport. Take time to learn about their vision

and let your kennel club AKC Delegate know how you would like for them to vote.

In last month's issue the candidates responded to one question. I wrote that Karolynne McAteer did not respond. That was my fault as she never received my multiple requests. There was a discrepancy in her email address and the messages never kicked back. My sincere apologies to my friend Karolynne McAteer.

CLASS OF 2021

Dr. Thomas M. Davies
Springfield Kennel Club
Unopposed

CLASS OF 2024

Three Candidates Will Be Elected From This Group

Carl C. Ashby
United States Kerry Blue Club of America
Jeffery Ball
Ramapo Kennel Club
Dr. Carmen L. Battaglia
German Shepherd Dog Club of America
Dr. Michael Knight
Texas Kennel Club
Karolynne M. McAteer
Irish Setter Club of America

CARL C. ASHBY



1. The AKC has long advocated for the value of the purpose-bred dog. However, the competitive nature of the AKC's traditional sports encourages owners to specialize to succeed. What can be done to encourage breeders and owners to embrace all of the characteristics of the purpose-bred dog?

The wonderful thing about purpose bred dogs is their versatility. If an owner wishes they can choose where they participate in AKC events. The Achiever Dog Program, which the current Board discontinued in April of 2019, was intended to encourage people to try other AKC events. The idea was to build interest/participation in those events, create revenue opportunities for event giving Clubs, and further demonstrate the versatility of purpose bred dogs. We need to reconsider the

decision to discontinue the Achiever Dog Program as it is one of the best demonstrations of the value of the purpose bred dog.

Another way we can demonstrate the versatility is by increased marketing of our events. This can take at least two forms:

- For dogs that are active in a single AKC event encourage them to try new events when it is apparent they are no longer participating or earned a title. We can easily track these dogs through registration numbers. Our goal is to keep them active in events.
- For newly registered dogs immediately start to encourage them to engage in our events and local Clubs. For training clubs willing to participate include a dollars off certificate to encourage them to train their puppy possibly leading to event participation.

Purpose-bred dogs make the best family companions...period. It is on all of us to make sure we promote this to the dog owning public and it starts with AKC.

2. Do you feel that AKC's traditional sports are consistent with the interests of the younger generation of dog owners? If not, what can be done to attract the younger generation to engage with AKC?

It's not clear to me that our events are not relevant to millennials and Generation Z but the way they are currently configured creates issues for them to become engaged. My personal concern is the "legacy" sports as they form the foundation of AKC's Mission.

Consider some of the attributes of today's under 40 population:

- Time starved families with often two breadwinners make them very selective on how they spend leisure time.
- Family demands have increased due to extensive activities for children on weekends.
- A generation that expects "unearned" recognition and, if success doesn't come, they move to something else.

- Events clustering outside of the home territories of Clubs creating the need for extensive travel adding substantial costs to exhibit. This impacts growing the conformation sport as there are no local events to showcase conformation and purebred dogs.
- Smaller shows have made the need to travel for coveted majors for many breeds a requirement adding even more expense.... especially the growing number of low entry breeds.
- The local political environment has worked against the purpose bred dog breeder in terms of dog limits, breeding restrictions, and zoning.
- The above creates a disconnect with potential new exhibitors.

There are actions that can be taken and must be...but this will be a heavy lift and will take time. In a nutshell we must:

- We must find ways to reduce the travel time to show dogs providing more day trips for most exhibitors.
- We must offer a runaway to learn conformation where rewards can come early with reasonable effort...this can be done with new titles that are meant to develop new exhibitors.
- Local shows are a critical component both to provide venues to show but also to expose the public to purpose bred dogs.
- We must be willing to "test and learn" to find the right mix of changes which will result in growth of the conformation sport.

The journey starts with a single step and we must start taking those steps.

3. The AKC performs/supports many activities that benefit dogs and their owners. This support is limited by the financial resources that AKC has available. How can AKC increase its revenue in order to further benefit the world of dogs?

For the past several years the AKC has generated around \$8M in positive cashflow annually and this doesn't include the unrealized gains on investments. The balance sheet is strong. We have the move to 101 Park Avenue behind us. By most any measure we have enjoyed financial success.

In spite of this financial success we are still leaving money on the table both in failure to grow our registration complement conversion (the number of 'blue slips' which are ultimately used to register a dog with AKC) and continuing decline in our legacy sports of conformation, performance and obedience.

Our Mission first and foremost says AKC is "dedicated to upholding the integrity of its Registry, promoting the sport of purebred dogs and breeding for type and function." We must turn our attention to investing in our mission.

Simply by focusing on "blue slips" alone we can increase AKC revenues substantially to continue our good works programs such as AKC Canine Health Foundation and the AKC Humane Fund.

In terms of non-traditional investments, we should always look for opportunities that complement our mission but, for now, we need to be laser focused on growing our traditional sources of income.

Our reserves are strong and our current cashflow should be put to work to further our Mission.

4. The AKC is a not-for profit organization while all of the other competing canine sport organizations or registries in the U.S. are for profit. Yet, it is a common belief that the AKC "is all about the money". What are your thoughts about the apparent inconsistency?

AKC is not "all about the money" but I understand that perception when our Clubs are struggling. Our Clubs don't see AKC seeking solutions to their problems. AKC is a volunteer organization—and that sometimes gets forgotten. AKC Clubs put on events, represent AKC in their communities, breed the dogs, etc. and often find it hard to keep their Club viable.

AKC must be successful financially but its how AKC spends the surplus that matters. Right now, I don't think we are investing in a

way that will sustain our Clubs or our Mission. Until our Clubs see real investment in the things that matter to them and the benefits of those investments, I don't expect that attitude to change.

5. Do you feel that ventures like the LINK collar and the Doggie Day Care are consistent with AKC's mission?

I don't believe they are inconsistent with the Mission provided we are not forgetting why we do them—to create other revenue streams to support our Mission without doing it on back of our Clubs.

6. There are 75 breeds in the AKC Foundation Stock Service program, 64 of them are in three groups. What are your thoughts on bringing new breeds into full recognition and their impact on our current Group structure? What is your opinion of how this recognition may be simplified or improved?

The first question is how we preserve the breeds we have. Currently we have over 50% of our breeds as "low entry" meaning there are less than 3,500 entries a year at shows. Of the 50% over half of them have less than 1,000 entries a year. Many judges get those breeds without ever seeing one.

It is also true that, with occasional exception, once we recognize a breed and it moves through the FSS process litters and entries typically drop for that breed. We must focus on the breeds we have and do everything possible to sustain those breeds. Diverting resources to these very small breeds in numbers does not make sense.

My recommendation is raising the bar for recognition and make the process take longer to make sure it isn't being driven by "family and friends" but is truly a nationwide effort.

We need to make sure there is real staying power for the aspiring breed. I do not suggest we not have the FSS process, but we do need to rethink how we admit this very small in number breeds as we strive to have a "big tent" for all dog lovers.

In terms of groups the chances of seeing one of these breeds in their designated groups is statically small except perhaps at Royal Canin or Westminster. I don't think we need to worry at this point about group bloat due to these breeds. Let's see what happens in the show ring and then decide if we need to adjust or add groups.

7. What are your thoughts regarding term limits for AKC Delegate Committees and members of the AKC Board Of Directors?

I don't support term limits. The ballot box is where term limits are determined by the voter. The voter needs to do their homework and make informed choices. They, whether it be Delegate Committees or Board of Directors, need the ability to choose from the best candidates and term limits can deprive the Delegates of that choice.

8. How do you reconcile the fact that often the AKC Board of Directors must make decisions that may not please the Delegate body yet may be necessary to fulfill their fiduciary responsibility to AKC?

Not every decision made by the Board is going to be embraced by the Delegates and/or Fancy. The responsibility of the Board is defined under New York State law and carrying out those fiduciary duties will sometimes conflict with "popular" opinion. The Board has much more information to inform decisions than is available to us as Delegates. There is an obligation for as much transparency as possible. As a past Board Member, I was always willing to share the rationale for a decision if possible. As a past AKC Director I do find that Delegates often do not approach Directors with questions regarding decisions but, as humans do, form opinions without all the facts. It would be helpful to create a forum where interactions with Directors would be easy. One such idea is to hold, at every Delegate meeting, an exchange with the Chair and several Directors where questions can be asked. On appropriate issues, during my previous Board service, the Board did seek Delegate Committee input. There were few cases where the committee recommendation was not incorporated.

9. What is your strategic vision for the future of the AKC? Where should we strive to be in the next ten years?

My vision for AKC is, when people think of dogs, they turn to the American Kennel Club...no other organization. When this happens many of our other challenges will be met.

To accomplish this vision the American Kennel Club must focus on its Mission as never before. The Mission must guide our every action and our strategic initiatives must complement its principles. Some of the actions to accomplish this vision include:

- become the voice of all dogs in America with focus on building interest and demand for purebred dogs making them the preferred choice as family companions.
- we must cast a broad net in order to reach potential purebred dog owners and assure the preservation of purebred dogs and dog sports.
- we must build a strong brand presence, continue to raise our visibility to a broad cross section of current and potential dog owners, finding ways, such as the AKC Detector Dog initiative, to position AKC as the "go to" organization for all things dogs.
- we must use all our public facing outlets such as AKC TV and social media to tell our message in an intentional way—so there is no doubt we are the dogs voice, no one else.
- We must nourish our network of 5,000+ clubs, the volunteer network that contributes so much to our Mission. This network is essential to our future and needs AKC's help now.

JEFFREY BALL



1. The AKC has long advocated for the value of the purpose-bred dog. However, the competitive nature of the AKC's traditional sports encourages owners to specialize to succeed. What can be done to encourage breeders and owners to embrace all of the characteristics of the purpose-bred dog?

In one word: education. When I got involved in the sport, the most important lesson I learned from my mentor was that form follows function. In other words, it is important to understand the purposes for which dogs were bred. Many have drifted from this perspective. I personally see it in my breed, Great Danes. While many Danes are beautiful looking, they would have difficulty running an obstacle course, no less bringing down a wild boar.

In order to encourage breeders and owners to embrace all characteristics of purpose-bred dogs, we must educate the public on breeds' histories and original purposes. We can also look to a higher-level Championship that would involve a combination of conformation and performance. This shift would encourage breeders and owners to better understand and attend to their breeds' history.

2. Do you feel that AKC's traditional sports are consistent with the interests of the younger generation of dog owners? If not, what can be done to attract the younger generation to engage with AKC?

While younger generations are known for seeking instant gratification, they also desire knowledge. When they lose in the ring and do not understand why, it is easy to walk away from the sport entirely. In order to engage younger generations—and people of all ages—to engage in AKC, we need to further public outreach and education. Additionally, we must address and reverse public perception of negativity in the sport in order to welcome a diverse younger generation.

3. The AKC performs/supports many activities that benefit dogs and their owners. This support is limited by the financial resources that AKC has available. How can AKC increase its revenue in order to further benefit the world of dogs?

There is no simple answer on how to increase revenue for AKC, but we should consider multiple options. However, we cannot take steps that may hurt the clubs or fancy in any way. Over the years, AKC has been involved with multiple LLCs and I believe it should continue these partnerships as long as they align with our mission statement.

We must also continue to be creative and proactive. From a business perspective, our audience and customers should continue to grow based on the number of homes with dogs and the money spent on them; however, we have not kept up with these numbers. In order to increase revenue, we need to become more connected with the public's needs and find better ways to serve them. For example, we may consider hosting Meet the Breeds in more major cities or becoming more involved in educational programs for police, rescue, and animal control. These activities would not only meet needs, but also improve public relations, which would likely increase revenue.

4. The AKC is a not-for profit organization while all of the other competing canine sport organizations or registries in the U.S. are for profit. Yet, it is a common belief that the AKC "is all about the money". What are your thoughts about the apparent inconsistency?

Public perception of the AKC is a factor here. Social media has changed dramatically over the years and the purebred fancy has not kept up. By falling behind, other organizations such as Animal Rights and HSUS have stepped in to educate the public on purebred dogs and controlled the narrative about AKC. Unsurprisingly, these groups have depicted us negatively. It's time AKC carried the message to the fancy and the public to demonstrate who we really are.

5. Do you feel that ventures like the LINK collar and the Doggie Day Care are consistent with AKC's mission?

While one can argue that these ventures fall into our mission statement of making lives better for our dogs and their families, I have concerns. We must consider how much money these ventures accrue versus their costs. If AKC is just breaking even on these ventures, I would question if it is worth it to alienate groups that would have supported us in the past. We need to incorporate more outside groups, not have them believe AKC is taking over their part of the industry.

6. There are 75 breeds in the AKC Foundation Stock Service program, 64 of them are in three groups. What are your thoughts on bringing new breeds into full recognition and their impact on our current Group structure? What is your opinion of how this recognition may be simplified or improved?

I am not against improving or simplifying the FSS program of full recognition, but we must first consider its full impact. There are already major issues and impacts in the sport due to low entry breeds. If we are potentially increasing the number of low entry breeds—which any new breed may be—what happens? How do we give all breeds the proper opportunity to be judged and compete? If we are adding breeds, what happens to the groups? Many members currently complain that group numbers are already unmanageable; do we need to add groups? Delegates have previously discussed and

"ULTIMATELY, DELEGATES AND BOARD MEMBERS SHARE A COMMON GOAL: TO SEE AKC SUCCEED AND PROSPER. WORKING TOGETHER IS THE WAY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS VISION."

— JEFFREY BALL

voted down increasing groups; respecting that vote, is there a way we can collectively agree on another solution?

I am not trying to avoid this question, but it is not something that any one person should decide. This decision needs to involve all the groups and focus on what will make the sport and the AKC better.

7. What are your thoughts regarding term limits for AKC Delegate Committees?

This matter can be debated forever. Committees benefit from members with history and experience, but new committee members bring new ideas and different experiences. A mix of both is the ideal situation. If that mix cannot be accomplished via yearly elections, it might be worth looking at limits; all options should be on the table to advance AKC. Society changes, we need to be open to changes as well.

8. Is it in the best interest of the AKC to place term limits for members of the AKC Board Of Directors?

As with term limits for the delegate committees, there is no simple answer. A mix of new and experienced board members is the ideal situation for the success of AKC and that may not happen unless there are limits.

9. How do you reconcile the fact that often the AKC Board of Directors must make decisions that may not please the Delegate body yet may be necessary to fulfill their fiduciary responsibility to AKC?

It's important that a board member has the faith and trust of the delegates. Trusting relationship depend on good communication and a level of transparency. All delegates' voices need to be heard and their questions should be answered as fully as possible. Not all questions can be answered, but ignoring or not responding to inquiries is unacceptable. Ultimately, delegates and board members share a common goal: to see AKC succeed and prosper. Working together is the way to accomplish this vision.

10. What is your strategic vision for the future of the AKC? Where should we strive to be in the next ten years?

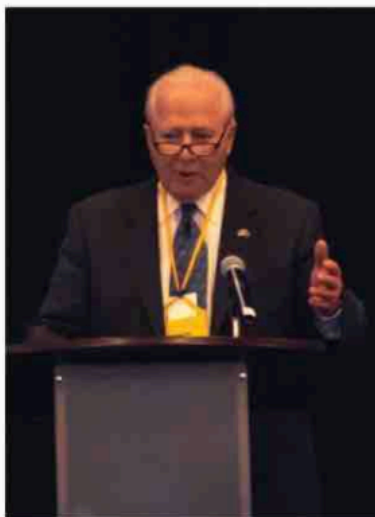
AKC needs to regain its position as the public's primary resource for information about everything pertaining to dogs. We need to reeducate the fancy, public, and legislators on who we really are. We need to stabilize our clubs by any means necessary, which may include changing guidelines or policies. We need to assist our breeders in every way. Without clubs, breeders, and the public, AKC will continue to decline or exist only as a registry.

We need several strategic plans in place. By including and utilizing the knowledge, experience, and the strength of all involved in the canine world, we can accomplish our goals. No one person can do it alone.

DR. CARMEN BATTAGLIA

1. The AKC has long advocated for the value of the purpose-bred dog. However, the competitive nature of the AKC's traditional sports encourages owners to specialize to succeed. What can be done to encourage breeders and owners to embrace all of the characteristics of the purpose-bred dog?

Those who compete in any one of AKC's 35 different kinds of competition know that pure bred dogs are predictable in size, color,



breed characteristics and behavior. Those who choose to breed and exhibit them are the AKC customers. A recent study shows that if you want to motivate people to participate in any one of the 35 sports you need to:

- Engage them in a sport that makes them feel the sport is not subject to factors out of their control

- Give them the feeling and feedback that gives them a sense of belonging.

2. Do you feel that AKC's traditional sports are consistent with the interests of the younger generation of dog owners? If not, what can be done to attract the younger generation to engage with AKC?

AKC has expanded its sports offerings to 35 different kinds of competitions. Many are aimed at the younger generation. Whether they choose to try one and continue depends on many factors some of which I have identified in my answer to question #1. In addition, younger exhibitors will be attracted to the traditional versus newer sports for different reasons. There are a number of controlling factors. For example, we know:

- That a sport with beginning levels provide a more inviting initial experience to newcomers
- Stair stepping of classes and titles promotes a sense of improvement, accomplishment and recognition

These are just two features known to attract the younger generation. There are many others. Sports that include these features have attracted the younger generation.

3. The AKC performs/supports many activities that benefit dogs and their owners. This support is limited by the financial resources that AKC has available. How can AKC increase its revenue in order to further benefit the world of dogs?

Over the past ten years, AKC has pursued a number of projects that were designed to increase participation and entries. Some have done well and should be continued. A good example of one of these new ideas came about in early in 2018 when AKC launched a new program called the Achiever Dog. I was part of the group that promoted Achiever Dog. It was designed to introduce and encourage dogs and owners to stay in the sport. The focus was on achievement for owners and their dogs not just winning. Dogs that earned a placement or qualifying score (ribbon) in three different sports earned an AKC Achiever Dog certificate. All dogs were eligible including, those listed with the AKC Purebred Alternative Listing (PAL) or the AKC Canine Partners program, or Recorded as a

Foundation Stock Service (FSS) breed. The program produced over 66,000 entries for our clubs and was a great financial success. The revenue produced from Achiever dog helped many clubs and their need for more entries. It was significant for many.

4. The AKC is a not-for profit organization while all of the other competing canine sport organizations or registries in the U.S. are for profit. Yet, it is a common belief that the AKC "is all about the money". What are your thoughts about the apparent inconsistency?

For profit competitors do not offer much to their audiences. For example, they do not financially support canine health research, a microchip program that saved over 300,000 dogs, or provide a program for groomers and trainers. They do not support owners and lost pets during natural disasters, fund veterinary scholarships or host a robust program for juniors.

We need to get better at telling our story and develop a series of messages that reach the public that are compelling.

5. Do you feel that ventures like the LINK collar and the Doggie Day Care are consistent with AKC's mission?

Dog related investments are consistent with the mission and goals of the AKC because they are efforts that support the needs of the dog owning public.

6. There are 75 breeds in the AKC Foundation Stock Service program, 64 of them are in three groups. What are your thoughts on bringing new breeds into full recognition and their impact on our current Group structure? What is your opinion of how this recognition may be simplified or improved?

I did a study for the AKC Board that included the 28 new breeds added to the stud book in the past 10 years. It was troubling to learn that all of the 28 new breeds with only 2 exceptions have all remained a Low Entry breed. Low Entry breeds today now represent 50% of the stud book and therefore are contributing to the decline of dog show entries. The data also suggests that once a new breed is admitted to the stud book there is no incentive for the new breed to grow, become more diverse and remain healthy. AKC needs to update its policy about new breeds and the Foundation Stock Service. It needs to include expectations for the new breed and their new parent club. The policy needs to address litters, dog registrations, participation in the sport and club membership. This recommendation should also be extended to the 75 breeds in the Foundation Stock Service. The impact of new breeds on the groups needs a lot of study and deserves close attention by the board.

7. What are your thoughts regarding term limits for AKC Delegate Committees?

I think the current system of electing delegates to each committee works well for the delegates and appears to be acceptable to most delegates.

8. Is it in the best interest of the AKC to place term limits for members of the AKC Board of Directors?

Term limits for board members has been in place for several years. When the concept first came before the delegate body, it was thought to be needed to force turn over on the board. Since then the delegates have continued to vote out and retain those they believe should serve. We do not need term limits.

9. How do you reconcile the fact that often the AKC Board of Directors must make decisions that may not please the Delegate body yet may be necessary to fulfill their fiduciary responsibility to AKC?

The board has the fiduciary responsibility to oversee and steer the direction of the AKC. This requires understanding all of the factors that impact the business of the organization. Before the board takes action, it discusses, studies and reviews the data under-

lying the decision. Delegates usually do not have access to this level of information and therefore are not in a position to second guess the work of the staff and the board. Therefore, from time to time there are misunderstandings with in the delegate body about some of the board discussions.

10. What is your strategic vision for the future of the AKC? Where should we strive to be in the next ten years?

The strategic vision for the AKC should periodically be reviewed along with the accomplishments. A report should be given the delegates that includes what is working and what needs attention. Features that should be addressed are:

- Each sport and its family friendly status
- An endowment that financially helps to promote the wellbeing of purebred dogs
- Projects that are aimed at government relations and the welfare of dog ownership
- Financial support for canine research.

DR. MICHAEL KNIGHT



1. The AKC has long advocated for the value of the purpose-bred dog. However, the competitive nature of the AKC's traditional sports encourages owners to specialize to succeed. What can be done to encourage breeders and owners to embrace all of the characteristics of the purpose-bred dog?

One suggestion is to offer different levels of an AKC registered dog such as the basic registration and advanced registration. Advanced registration would have requirements that closely follow the current concerns of that breed. This is not a one size fits all type of registration, as each breed has specific known genetic and other issues. The AKC should partner with each Parent Club to identify breed-specific issues and use this information to create the various levels of AKC registrations. In order to encourage breeders and owners to embrace all of the characteristics of the purpose-bred dog, we need to keep in mind the additional costs that the breeder is incurring to have the additional levels of testing done. Contrary to the typical thought process of the higher the registration status the more it should cost, I believe that in this case, AKC should charge less for the advanced registration while charging more for the basic registration. In essence, AKC would be promoting and rewarding the breeder for going the extra mile. Most of all, the AKC should be more Purebred Dog friendly and strive to help not only the breeders, but the clubs who are striving to succeed in the face of declining entries and loss of venues. They must get back to the purpose for which they were formed and not venture in the wrong direction, which I feel they are doing. I will work, when I am elected to the Board, to bring back to the Board that idea of helping and promoting the purebred dog and the people who are striving to make sure

"WE NEED TO MAKE IT OUR GOAL TO GET THE YOUNGER GENERATION INVOLVED OR WE WILL BECOME A MINOR LEADER IN THE PROMOTION OF OUR SPORT."

— DR. MICHAEL KNIGHT

we succeed. That can only be done with the help and the encouragement of the American Kennel Club and its Board and Staff.

2. Do you feel that AKC's traditional sports are consistent with the interests of the younger generation of dog owners? If not, what can be done to attract the younger generation to engage with AKC?

AKC offers an amazing amount of options when it comes to dog activities that most people do not even realize exist. Conformation is the most widely known as people have seen Westminster and the National Dog Show plus others on TV. The AKC also offers, for the people and their dogs, activities such as Obedience, Rally, Agility, Tracking, Field Trials, Hunt Test, Lure Coursing, CAT and Fast CAT, Earth Dog, Scent Work as well as Family Dog: CGC, AKC Star Puppy, Responsible Dog Ownership, Well-Mannered Dogs, AKC Community Canine Dog, Advanced CGC, Trick Dog, AKC Therapy dog, AKC Fit Dog, AKC Temperament Test and the list goes on and on. There is literally something for everyone but the problem is that people don't know about it. How do we get the public to know about these activities? First we must get the word out about our sport! How do we do this? We must invest the money and resources to promote these activities. We have the money to accomplish this. Making this happen is done through constant PR work on many fronts simultaneously including print media, television, radio and social media, nationally. We could have local club members working with the local media venues to promote the activities of their clubs. In the national media, AKC can hire a spokesperson to go on the national TV programs and we can hire a Public Relations firm to handle the print and social media venues. I promise to promote this this if I am elected. We must also promote and work with the local children and young adult organizations in our communities to promote the Junior Showmanship and the Pee Wee programs. The 4-H is a perfect example of an organization who already works in this direction. We need to make it our goal to get the younger generation involved or we will become a minor leader in the promotion of our Sport.

3. The AKC performs/supports many activities that benefit dogs and their owners. This support is limited by the financial resources that AKC has available. How can AKC increase its revenue in order to further benefit the world of dogs?

The pet owner industry is a multi-billion dollar industry and growing. We are even seeing insurance plans for pets now becoming available. The answer to this question and many other issues that AKC is facing is Marketing and Public Relations. The general public and dog show people alike may only know about their area of concentration. AKC needs to specifically target television, social media and print "Ad buy" campaigns outside of the conformation ring. Showing pictures of dogs doing what they were bred for such as hunting, retrieving, herding, protecting, therapy, companion lap dogs, etc. Target market those specific activities in their magazines such as Hunting, Farm and Ranch, Field & Stream, healthcare, etc. These are untapped markets whose owners are very proud of their dog's abilities and like to show them off, talk about and promote them.

The conformation world is shrinking so we need to think outside the box and reach out to groups already doing things that AKC is supporting. Awareness is the key. If we don't promote it, people

can't know about it. The only time that the general public really ever sees information about the AKC is during televised dog shows. One of the most watched dog shows airs immediately following the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, the National Dog Show/Philadelphia Kennel Club on NBC, the AKC/Royal Canine Dog Show which is a compressed dog show on cable TV, Westminster Kennel Club and others. These are great avenues to advertise AKC and all that we offer to new markets while we already have their attention.

4. The AKC is a not-for profit organization while all of the other competing canine sport organizations or registries in the U.S. are for profit. Yet, it is a common belief that the AKC "is all about the money". What are your thoughts about the apparent inconsistency?

Public awareness is the answer. People only know what they see and are told. There are misperceptions about many things, not just AKC. The only way to change public opinion is through education and visibility, which takes me back to Marketing and Public Relations. Our society is changing. Look at some of the things the younger generation is focusing on, climate change, cleaning up of our oceans, healthcare for all, the environment, etc. They are much more society focused and more anti-big corporation so being a non-profit organization is right in line. Educating through Social Media, Television, print ads, radio ads, billboards etc., is key to the evolution of AKC and purebred dogs.

5. Do you feel that ventures like the LINK collar and the Doggie Day Care are consistent with AKC's mission?

I feel that much more research is needed about these types of ventures going forward. We need to study more and most importantly include the delegate body in large promotions such as these. Including the entire delegate body promotes inclusion and is a good litmus test for all of our ideas. If the delegate body as a whole can get behind something, then the chances of it succeeding are raised exponentially.

6. There are 75 breeds in the AKC Foundation Stock Service program, 64 of them are in three groups. What are your thoughts on bringing new breeds into full recognition and their impact on our current Group structure? What is your opinion of how this recognition may be simplified or improved?

I feel that it is currently being done properly with AKC supporting new breeds as they come up through the FSS system. Between January 1, 2018 and January 1, 2020 there have been six new breeds added in conformation while there have been two breeds added in both the Earth Dog Events and the Pointer Breed Hunt Tests since January 1, 2016.

As is evident in the numbers listed above, the increase has been slow and the impact manageable to-date. We must keep in mind that while there are 75 breeds in the FSS program and others being added regularly, the new breed must go through many steps before being fully recognized. There are administrative requirements, judges' mentoring/education, sustained breeding and attaining the 150 individual dog level, as well as many other requirements, all before they are eligible to be moved into the miscellaneous or regular status. We cannot focus on the 75 breeds with 5-10 dogs that may never meet all of the criteria, viability or popularity to warrant inclusion as many will not make it.

7. What are your thoughts regarding term limits for AKC Delegate Committees?

Personally, I believe that the election process serves as our term limits. If the Delegate is passionate about the work they are doing and is a productive member then they should be allowed to remain on that committee. For those not on a committee or wanting to change the focus of their efforts, then they are encouraged to run during an election to join that committee.

8. Is it in the best interest of the AKC to place term limits for members of the AKC Board Of Directors?

Our current process requires the sitting Board of Directors member to run again every four years. I believe that this process serves as our term limits already.

9. How do you reconcile the fact that often the AKC Board of Directors must make decisions that may not please the Delegate body yet may be necessary to fulfill their fiduciary responsibility to AKC?

This can be necessary in time sensitive issues; however, the best course of action would be open and active communication with the delegate body, providing transparency and involvement on an on-going basis rather than by directive. I don't believe the delegate body takes issue with the AKC Board for fulfilling their Fiduciary responsibility. It's my opinion that the delegate body becomes disillusioned when being left out of the discussion.

10. What is your strategic vision for the future of the AKC? Where should we strive to be in the next ten years?

1. I think the AKC should have an aggressive marketing and public relations plan. It is going to take time to make the American Kennel Club the place to go to for the general public on all dog related items and issues. We must get the word out in any form or fashion we can, not give up and not waiver from our Mission Statement—The promotion of the purebred dog. The American Kennel Club and the AKC Board should not stray away from this. We should be the “go-to” place for all pet education, health issues, breeding and training programs. We must be the place for the general public to come to regarding questions on raising and establishing a pet owner program. We already have the program and events that would be great for the pet owners. My goal, when and if I am elected, would be to strive to bring the American Kennel Club into the forefront of the pet owners mind for all things dog related. We need to peek the interest of the young people of this country and show them their path to the American Kennel Club. Through strategic planning and aggressive marketing, we must stop the shrinking of our dog fancy.
2. Transparency must be there with all we strive to do. We must have committed involvement and interaction for all delegates towards this goal and the AKC Board of Directors should be the leader for the purebred dogs and educate the public on the benefits of the Purebred Dog.
3. The American Kennel Club should actively partner with all of the AKC Parent Clubs and Dog Clubs plus other organizations to help fight the animal rights groups that do not strive for our goals.

KAROLYNNE MCATEER

Delegate, Irish Setter Club of America

Completing my first term on the AKC Board

1. The AKC has long advocated for the value of the purpose-bred dog. However the competitive nature of the AKC's traditional sports encourages owners to specialize to succeed. What can be done to encourage breeders and owners to embrace all of the characteristics of their purpose-bred dog?



For me, as a breeder of a purpose-bred sporting dog, I can vouch for the fact that you can do it all. My dogs compete in conformation first, just to try and hang onto their coat, but do head into “juvenile” field events and Junior Hunter at the same time as they are generally not dripping in much coat. When my Irish get into serious conformation where coat becomes a visual factor I pull back on the field events, and focus on their breed championship. Then they go immediately into field training. It is a bit of a scheduling balance, but it works, and the dogs are better for it. It is important to remember all dogs have a purpose, from the herder, guardian, bird dog or beautiful toy who is bred as a companion and has so many traits to fit into that small package.

But engaging and delighting a new puppy owner sits squarely in the hands of the breeder. When a breeder is passing off the new pup they should have included a packet of every AKC event that this breed excels in, or that might be fun for the family, and that includes Juniors. I am mesmerized when someone says to me “what do you mean trick dog?” So we have some work to do internally to help advance the ways to compete and enjoy your pup as it heads to its new home.

2. Do you think AKC Traditional sports are consistent with the interests of the younger generation of dog owners? If not, what can be done to attract the younger generation to engage with AKC?

I think people who want a pure-bred dog do not necessarily plan to show it in the conformation ring. But the new events that AKC has introduced over the past five years are absolutely perfect for covering the bases of someone who wants to just enjoy their dog and have some family fun. It is, however, good to remember that we are competing with lifestyles that are very busy, and with kids “after school” activities. But, it is my belief that AKC is in the right direction here, and the growth figures prove it. And I grew up going to Matches! I'd bring back Matches ASAP!

3. The AKC performs/supports many activities that benefits dogs and their owners. The support is limited by the financial resources that AKC has available. How can AKC increase its revenue in order to further benefit the world of dogs.

I will head straight to health. The AKC is a consistent supporter of the health of dogs, and with the ATT test, the temperament of our pure-breds. Let's face it, health and temperament are the two most important factors that set us apart from all other canine entities. So, I am all for funding and preparing to fund health and temperament.

Increasing revenue is already in the works with the rise in registrations, and with the newer, less formal, more fun activities that

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— KAROLYNNE MCATEER

the AKC holds. At some point, we need to consider the stock market, and our investments, but to date the portfolio is a steady earner.

4. The AKC is a not-for profit organization while all of the other competing canine sport organizations or registries in the U.S. are for profit. Yet, it is a common belief that the AKC "is all about the money". What are your thoughts about the apparent inconsistency?

Well, this feeling annoys me. You cannot couple the fancy's desire for more and more, while not providing the funds to do so. Our entry fees remain very reasonable, and while the AKC fees have risen, they are modest and they are well within range of affordable. Those funds are turned right around and used for advancement of our sports and the technology needed to run them. Honestly, I think this feeling comes from people who do not realize the commitment of finances it takes to provide the services and activities we enjoy.

5. Do you feel that ventures like the LINK collar and the Doggie Day Care are consistent with AKC's mission?

To answer this, I'd look back to question #3.

It is a creative way to stay within our "mission" The success of "outside the box" opportunities to raise funds is going to have to come from non-traditional opportunities that still serve our canines. I am hoping that more opportunities to increase our fundraising efforts come our way, and many will fall into the non-traditional area. But we need deeper research before committing to anything new.

6. There are 75 breeds in the AKC Foundation Stock Service program, 64 of them are in three groups. What are your thoughts on bringing new breeds into full recognition and their impact on our current Group structure? What is your opinion of how this recognition may be simplified or improved?

Clearly group realignment will be necessary. We have discussed this before, and it was not voted in. I'd say it is clearly time to bring this back to the front, particularly with the larger numbers being in three groups. The FSS process itself is very well run; it's the "blending" into the existing structure that will take some work.

7. What are you thoughts regarding term limits for AKC Delegate Committees?

Actually, I am pretty happy with the work of these delegate committees, and I would leave the process "as is." Frequently, the work of the committees takes place over years, and it is beneficial to have those who are "in the know" in place. The Delegate Committees have regular annual nominations to fill seats, so there is always an opportunity to add new blood, or retire members. I think the current situation works well.

8. Is it in the best interest of the AKC to place term limits for members of the AKC Board Of Directors?

I believe in term limits for the Board, it helps focus individual members on both immediate and long-term needs and helps prevent

us from being insular. I am just finishing my first term of four years, and look forward to my second four, so I can finalize some of what I started! And really the one-year break before you can run again, goes by in a flash. And there are so many opportunities to get out into the community and refresh your knowledge of what's really going on during that year.

9. How do you reconcile the fact that often the AKC Board of Directors must make decisions that may not please the Delegate body yet may be necessary to fulfill their fiduciary responsibility to AKC?

Presumably the delegate body had faith in their nominations when they voted current board members to a seat. Standing outside of the board room door you often have no idea the decisions we make based on our own personal research and the very good statistics provided by staff. It would be rare that we would receive a "need for immediate decision" without time for serious contemplation. We are given good opportunity and certainly have spirited discussions around that board table, when issues are brought forward. While sometimes unpopular, all decisions are made with the goal of protecting the viability of our now 135 year-old entity, THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB. So the delegate body can disagree of course, and they can most definitely approach any Board member with a well thought out better idea. I, for one, love new ideas, and delegates who have taken the time to not just disagree, but come forth with a positive suggestion or solution. I look forward to that.

10. What is your strategic vision for the future of the AKC? Where should we strive to be in the next ten years?

Well, I am a communicator! Both in my real-world job at Assisi Animal Health, and on the AKC committees that I serve. I believe the successful future vision includes a focused plan on the great works that the AKC does. Think CHF, Reunite, Humane Fund. There are a million stories to tell here, to make our brand more visible again, and return it to its former status of a pure-bred in every household. We gratefully have our own vehicle in AKC-TV, and a small but diligent PR department. I definitely already see good growth in other areas of media. But my plan for growth would be to "take it back to the streets." This is where the individuals and families live.

We owe a great deal of thanks to each of these individuals who aspire to continue to offer their years of experience as participants in AKC events to lead our sport into a new decade. As we make our New Years resolutions let us ask ourselves, what are we personally doing to make a positive difference in the future of our American Kennel Club? **HAPPY NEW YEAR! ■**