

## **Summary of March 2021 Delegate Meeting and Delegate Committee Meetings:**

Please Note: due to Covid, these meetings were held on Zoom, and I attended.

Thank you,  
Diane Reid  
3.10.21

### **Meeting:**

The following four candidates have been nominated to the Board of Directors:

Rita J. Biddle, Ingham County Kennel Club  
Dominic P. Carota, Pharaoh Hound Club of America  
Dr. Thomas M. Davies, Springfield Kennel Club, Inc.  
Thomas Powers, Kennel Club of Beverly Hills

Dr. Thomas M. Davies was elected as Chairman of the Board and Dominic P. Carota was elected as Vice Chairman of the Board.

Voting: the below five clubs were all approved to become members of the AKC –

The American Boerbel Club  
American Cesky Terrier Fanciers Association  
Carroll Kennel Club  
Miniature American Shepherd Club of USA  
Morris Hills Dog Training Club

Dr. Thomas Davies, Chairman, gave a positive report about the state of the AKC. Website use is up 50%, registration and litters are up, more people than ever before want dogs and ‘when the sun rises, we will be ready.’ He gave a tribute to Dennis Sprung, who has been at his desk every day since Covid started – 365 days in a row.

Dennis Sprung, President and CEO, gave a video report showing all that was accomplished in 2020. AKC was there to assist, staff has been extremely helpful, activities were provided for members and training resources offered. He welcomed newcomers, said that the AKC continued to donate to charities and deployed reunite trailers. The Museum of the Dog is back open, and visitors are welcome.

Ted Phillips, CFO, gave his report; he used 2019 as a comparison; events and entries are down 45%, about \$5 million lower. Nevertheless, 2020 was a financial success – lower expenses and online registrations contributed to this growth. Pedigree requests helped too, bringing in \$12 million. Expenses were 18% lower and 13.6% lower than budgeted; overall revenues increased 17%; there was a 12% growth of litter registration; a 20% growth of dog registration amounting to \$38.7 million; merchandise sales and admission fees (Meet the Breeds) increased 20%, \$11.9

million. Controllable expenses decreased 9%, travel reduced 60%, public relations reduced 50%, staff 6%. Donations were consistent with budget and BOD expenses were \$278,000, 50% lower than budgeted. The Investment Fund beat its benchmark by 2.87%. It has a broadly diversified asset allocation with a focus on equity investments. Financial positions, balance sheet - \$151 million.

Some housekeeping and minor changes were made to Rules Applying to Dog Shows, Chapter 6, Section 2 which passed. Two items were read for voting on in June: Article 7, section 2 and Chapter 16, section 6.

AKC.TV gave a presentation: they launched three years ago at Meet the Breeds in NY (Feb. 2018) with the thought that they would do two shows. That first year, they did 13. In 2019, there were over 30 shows. There is a hunger for live event coverage. Ask the Expert Series is hugely successful. There is now a five episode series called Heroes. In 2021, there have already been 7.4 million users, 150 thousand app downloads with 35 live events scheduled. The Orlando National Championship had over a million plays, which is 180 hours of live coverage, 11,000 app downloads and it was on 9 live channels, so there was lots of choice. They now have 15 shows that will be broadcast on ESPN. This will all advance the sport of purebred dogs, promote the AKC and reach new audiences.

AKC Education Presentation: some of the courses have been updated, there is now high res imagery and interaction. There has been a 164% increase in enrollments since these began. A great place to start is the Introduction to Canine Anatomy course. Other current courses are Genetics, Breeding Selection, Breeding Systems, Breeding Basics, Whelping and Medical Intervention, Pedigree, Genetic Defects and Kennel Blindness. Six future courses: Foundations, (the Basics of Breeding), Reproduction Cycles and Mating, Pregnancy, Whelping, Puppy Imprinting and Raising and Selling and Placing Puppies. The AKC PupPals program is continuing. It provides people who need uplifting with a message from a canine friend. It began in 2019 by helping children, and in 2020, it expanded to adults. The recipients now receive a video (originally, they received a letter). A new program has begun called Lessons and Activities for Exceptional Learners. It is for those who require special education and related services to reach their full potential. Many diagnoses qualify. Judges Education Webinar Series was started in March 2020. Presenters are chosen by each Parent Club. 95 breeds have been presented to 25,711 live attendees. The AKC Education Webinar Series currently has 138 webinars and 8771 attendees.

### **Committee Meetings:**

**Dog Show Rules:** conversation centered around puppy bred by class; they are looking at the current medallion program and costs involved in any changes.

**Bylaws:** discussion on Juniors and having mixed breeds in conformation. Most of the conversation centered on needing to teach good sportsmanship the way 4H does; parents are often to blame for all the negative behavior that goes on at shows. Looking in to adopting some

of what 4H does, which makes them so successful. Also, the subcommittee is working on a pathway to get the 4H kids into AKC.

AKC Canine Genetic Committee accomplished its mission in just one year. It has been six months since the white paper was presented and positive emails still come in praising it.

The DNA subcommittee has had a challenging time without in person meetings – science is difficult virtually. There is a general fear that many people have towards DNA verification. In order to get people to use DNA, they first need to be educated. Webinars are being organized for this. Additionally, DNA testing is often not convenient to do and expensive. Blood is preferred to cheek swabs, so vet skills are needed. The lab used is important – must work with a trustworthy one. Perhaps the AKC can do the testing so that they and the fancy can benefit from the knowledge.

**Canine Health:** CHF updates – their mission is to advance health of all dogs and their owners by funding scientific research and to support information to prevent, treat and cure canine disease. Their vision is to address the health needs of all dogs across their lifetime by focusing on all aspects of their physical, mental and social well-being. They have three goals: fund health research, select and monitor projects to advance the health of dogs, and to communicate to owners, veterinarians and researchers discoveries that help prevent, treat and cure diseases. Since 1995, they have given more than \$59.5M to grants and projects and had 828 peer-reviewed publications. They currently support 150 active grants with funding totaling \$10.6 million. The major areas of current research – oncology, cardiology and Neurology/Epilepsy. Areas under review and negotiation are endocrinology, gastrointestinal disease, and musculoskeletal disease. In 2020, there were 53 grants awarded – 16% were breed specific and 84% supported multiple breeds. In 2021, 22 new grants have been selected with funding totaling \$1.2 million. Obviously, many programs were impacted by Covid, though enrollment and participation in studies are normalizing.

There will be five Webinars in 2021, four are scheduled:

GDV (bloat) – 3/24/21

Vector-borne disease diagnostics – 4/20/21

How to establish THC diagnosis in the emergency room – 9/14/21

The Importance of medial crural fascia when recovering from TPLO – 12/7/21

The 2021 National Parent Club Canine Health Conference will happen – August 13-15, St. Louis, MO. Right now, it is scheduled in person, but might need to be virtual or a hybrid. It is very difficult to coordinate logistics as no one is sure it will/can happen. There are many challenges, including how to get the vet students there because of current travel restrictions. Can a meaningful program be done remotely and be beneficial to students without interacting directly with scientific presenters, breeders, peers? In person allows them to build relationships. The plus side to virtual is that more students could attend and there would be huge savings. The AKC budgets about \$25-30K for this program. Once the students are there, Purina pays for meals and lodging. The in person program is hugely successful; just not sure about virtual.

Vet outreach has had challenges during Covid, but the virtual vet school meetings are going really well. In fact, they are easier to set up and organize, and easier for the vet students too. In 2020, there were six in person lunch meetings and 14 virtual; in 2021, so far there have been 6 virtual with more scheduled. Attendance has been high. Dr. Jerry Klein has attended all of them and Mary-Beth O'Neill participates as well.

Due to Covid, there have been fewer OFA and Cerf exams – not as many health clinics. Ophthalmologists and cardiologists have limited their practices, so they do not have as much time to go to shows. Specialties and nationals are having a difficult time getting specialists to come to their shows. Clubs wanting to have health clinics should find doctors as early as possible.

179 out of 204 breed health reports are posted.

The study on Juniors has been completed. 1300 Juniors participated and answered 50 questions. All had to have been out of juniors for 10 years. Studies will be done based on these answers. A few of the findings: 85% female; 78% started in Novice, 86% finish Open, 63% drop out before they age out; 56% had a 4 year degree; 79% currently own three or more dogs.

Semen bank: preservation of breeds is central focus of parent clubs. Traits need to be maintained. Genetic heritage needs to be safeguarded. Parent clubs can establish their own reproductive banks with a tool kit that was established four years ago. They set their own guidelines. Only one parent club has used it. Perhaps it needs to be simplified, perhaps the AKC should do it, perhaps a hybrid of these choices. They are looking for input from parent clubs and breeders as to why it is not being used, would you want to use it and if so, what should be done, and any other questions, concerns, criticisms you might have. These talks are in the early stages so now is the time to voice thoughts. A link will soon be sent to view the AKC proposal.

Should parent clubs have a breeder mentor program? Ongoing discussion.

**Companion Events:** the first quarter of 2021 is being compared to 2019 (versus 2020) – Agility at 77%, rally 60%, obedience 52%, fast cat 164%, herding 114%, lure coursing 85%. The temporary measures that have been put in place have been extended through the end of 2021. Events held virtually continues to attract people and more virtual classes have been added. There was a discussion as to whether these impact in person classes as they start to come back. Seems the opposite is true – they attract new people who get hooked, and then they go on in person. The AKC is looking into ways to better capture and convert these people. The temporary measure of having a closing date seven days prior to an event in agility, obedience and rally has now become permanent. Obedience and rally can now have a wait list for entries received prior to closing should people withdraw. Three days prior to the show, the list can no longer be used. Obedience Fix and Go pilot program about to be launched, similar to the one in place for Agility. The Agility National is taking place in three weeks in OK – there are 1001 entries. The Rally and Obedience Nationals are moving ahead for July 9-11 in Ohio. Events are

coming back, but people need to be flexible, as there continues to be lots of judge changes due to quarantine, travel issues, etc.

Discussion on juniors – allowing mixed breeds was not an easy decision, there were lots of concerns but hope that the opt out option will help for any club who feels strongly about not having mixed breeds at their show. There is concern about the graying and dwindling AKC population. Need to encourage juniors and their families to become members, breeders, exhibitors of tomorrow. The committee feels that 4H won't travel far, as they tend to participate in local shows. AKC hopes that those who do attend will transition from a mixed breed to a pure bred at some point - this is the goal. Hopefully, after Novice, they will have a mentor. Working on ways to match up juniors and breeders who are willing to give or co-own a dog with a junior. Good sportsmanship component is huge; peer to peer pressure can be tough. They strongly encourage clubs to add a Junior Coordinator position - someone who will advocate all things junior. Liaisons do make a difference. Parent clubs have to do more. The AKC hosted their first junior webinar and 14 AKC staff participated – they had all been in juniors; a second one will be held on March 22, 7 pm eastern. Looking for future topics.

**Herding, Earthdog & Coursing Events:** there are two recommendations that will go before the board: to allow herding test level judges to participate in events on the day that they are judging, as long as they do not enter any event that they are judging; and to allow stock dogs to participate in any class for which they are not setting stock.

The AKC is looking in to regulating fast cat lure operators as they are uneven (and in some cases, not safe). There needs to be some way to vet the service providers. At some point, the AKC might require them to be licensed, approved, etc.

**Parent Clubs:** there are 1800 pieces of legislation at the state level that could impact everyone; they are keeping an eye on these. PAC has a new fundraising idea – to have national specialties put aside one paid parking space and donate this to them.

Pet Disaster Trailers – 435 clubs donated, \$1,676,602.72 received; \$650k funded by AKC; 91 trailers have gone to 29 states, more being created.

The Fanciers in Need document has been completed, and clubs will be receiving it soon.

AKC is working hard on breeder development, but parent clubs have to participate and encourage people to breed. The general public hears only about spay and neuter. There are too many limited registrations. There is a webinar on April 24<sup>th</sup>, preparing a bitch for breeding.

The AKC library and archives has reopened.

The recent AKC survey on parent clubs found that most do very little, if anything, to actively get new members and deal with declining membership. A subcommittee was formed to come up with ideas to help clubs.

Marketplace is not monitored by AKC – parent clubs need to assign someone to do this, as AKC could not possibly know who should be on there. It is a hugely successful tool for breeders. Users are up 61%, and it is where the majority of people looking for a puppy start. However, even when breeders no longer have puppies, if they stay on the site, they need to respond to inquiries and people reaching out. If you don't have time to do this, you should remove yourself.

Continue to be careful when signing contracts and be prepared for any last minute changes that might still happen due to Covid. Negotiate better deals and have a cancellation plan.

Sweeps at Nationals – clubs have the flexibility to modify age range, including going up to 24 months should they want to.

Regarding the formation of local breed clubs: the parent committee has two recommendations that they are sending to the Board of Directors: 1. Any inquiries by individuals desiring to form a local or regional specialty breed club should be referred to the Parent Specialty Breed Club by AKC Staff. When suggested or requested, AKC Staff shall assist a Parent Club Specialty Breed Club to formulate a plan and suggest standing rules in order to create a local or regional breed club. 2. BOD places on hold such Approvals of local specialty clubs until agreement of BOD + Staff + Parent Club.

Reproduction Bank: discussion regarding whether the AKC should become a super bank for individual parent clubs. A white paper draft will be sent out to parent clubs for review and comments.

Flyers: these are a good way to encourage new members and breeders. They should be welcoming.

**Delegate Advocacy and Advancement:** Covid continues to have a detrimental effect on all breed shows. Registration continues to be strong, up 20%, as are litters, up 18%. The delegate handbook is almost complete. Discussed what could be done for juniors once they get out of high school – currently, nothing is offered. Looks like June meetings will be virtual and hoping for in person in September. Will they continue virtual and hold in person? Discussion to come.

**All-Breed Clubs:** more shows are able to be held, but recovery is gradual – 37% lower so far, though April looks to be only 12% lower than 2019. Indoor events suffering – they are down 60%.

Sample bylaw checklist for parent and all breed clubs is nearly completed – this will help clubs speed up their bylaw needs.

Discussion on driving distance versus straight line methods to determine how far clubs can hold events from one another. Working on allowing exceptions if driving distance is approximately 25% greater than the straight line method – clubs could then appeal.

There was a discussion on reaching out to diverse communities, as the AKC demographics is not in line with the general demographics. A short questionnaire will be done and reported back in September on financial best practices.

**Coordinating:** education and technology has made the year very impactful. The online courses had over 35,000 participants and all virtual events were very well received. There will be 96 more TV hours of canine sports content with the ESPN deal.