Educational Opportunities Abounded

The 2007 National Week provided attendees with numerous and informational opportunities for furthering their Briard education. The week kicked off with an excellent seminar by Myra Savant geared toward breeders or those interested in eventually breeding dogs. This seminar was broken into three segments any or all of which could have been stand alone programs. The courses were for breeding dogs, whelping dogs and rearing neonatal puppies.

On Wednesday the Color Genetics Seminar was repeated from 2001 with updated new knowledge from the fast changing genetic research taking place in the canine world. This was a new Power Point Program showing different color presentations available in the breed and how to get or avoid according to breeder preferences. This was a well attended seminar that ended with a color pedigree of an actual Briard and advice to new breeders that to understand colors in their own dogs they choose to mate, to collect as many color photos of relatives of their own dog and the one they plan to breed to, to get a fuller understanding and fewer surprises in litters.

On Wednesday evening, the Briard Medical Trust sponsored a presentation by Dr Matthew Breen, a pre-eminent researcher on the genetics of cancer. Dr. Breen has been one of the research specialists working with the BCA on cancer issues concerning our breed specifically and the larger canine world in general, in an on going effort to identify, treat and cure specific cancers in our dogs. It was an excellent opportunity to meet and listen to a person who is interested in helping and working with us in such important continued research.

The entire Thursday was completely scheduled with a variety of large & small Briard University seminars on topics concerning Briards from ear gluing to the Briard Standard presentation thru grooming, handling and two levels of movement/structure, winding up with a P-T seminar for current and potential Present-Tutors for Education, both Member and Judges. With such a large undertaking as these multiple seminars created, current P-T members were very much a part of the execution of the seminars which ran from 9 to 6, with no lunch break for BEC committee members, nor potty breaks for them or their dogs. The dedication by this group to furthering the education and understanding of attendees was intense. The BEC Committee chair had to simultaneously manage both the Eye Clinic and monitor individual seminars.

The advanced level of Movement course was offered for the first time this year, labeled Movement 201 aimed at those who had taken 101 or were more experienced Briard owners. Both 101 & 201 were well attended and had audience participation, with dogs drafted by BEC and in at least one case brought by a member who wanted to learn more about that dog. This created an excellent learning lab in the outdoor actual moving of dogs for critiques and explanations.

The BEC ended the Educational week with the annual Judges Seminar, with classroom presentation of the Award winning Power Point, (which is the same presentation given to the membership), then using the Sweepstakes classes as the visual learning lab section of the Seminar. After the classes of the dogs the judges wish to see or examine from the classes are then brought to the judges, with owner approval. Some judges stayed over for the weekend classes and BOB competitions and the BEC/P-Ts provided ringside mentoring through both days.
This year an attempt was made to use as many of the same dogs in the Member Breed presentation as used in the Judges one. This provided both dogs and owners a “rehearsal”, (and the natural eared dog got to practice his ear lifts), as well as giving members the same look at Breed education as the attending judges receive in the Breed Presentation. While we were unable to use exactly all of the same dogs, due to the fact that some were not yet on the premises for the Member Presentation, several of the dogs used were on hand to take part in both seminars.

Keep a look out for the plans for the 2008 Specialty Education Events planned by checking the BCA Website. Efforts are underway to include a new format and a new subject and to keep the website quickly updated as specialty plans are added, and adapted. We hope to see you in Ft. Mitchell, KY at a Briard educational seminar in September.

Breed Education Committee