



# The Augusta Kennel Club

an AKC Member Club

## NEWSLETTER

January 2008



AMERICAN  
KENNEL CLUB™

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### Board & Officers

President..... Carol Cox  
 Vice President..... Audrey Bye  
 Treasurer ..... Gloria Janda  
 Rec. Secretary ..... Debbie Metts  
 Corr. Secretary ..... Sara Martin  
 Board of Directors .. Angie Hubbard  
 Board of Directors ... Diane Johnson  
 Board of Directors ..... Nancy Kille  
 Board of Directors ..... Sarah Prince

*"I can't think of anything that brings me closer to tears than when my old dog -- completely exhausted after a hard day in the field -- limps away from her nice spot in front of the fire and comes over to where I'm sitting and puts her head in my lap, a paw over my knee, and closes her eyes and goes back to sleep. I don't know what I've done to deserve that kind of friend."  
 ~ Gene Hill*



### Show Updates

The Peach Blossom Cluster at Perry is coming up April 10-13, 2008. Trophy pledges are completed and have been submitted for the premium list to Onofrio. If you pledged a trophy and have not yet paid, please be sure and get your check to Gloria.

If you would like to chair a committee for the Fall show, please be sure and step up at the January meeting. We need someone for catalog advertising, vendors, catalog sales, grounds, and chairs for the Friday night match.

### Membership Dues Reminder

2008, membership dues are due! If you have not already paid, don't delay and let your membership lapse! Mail your check to Gloria today, or bring to the January meeting.

### Meeting Highlights

The last meeting of the Augusta Kennel Club was the annual Christmas Party, held on Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at member Toni Reese's home.

A huge thanks to Toni and Danny Reese for opening up their lovely home for the party! A wonderful time was had by all who attended, and the food was delicious! We sure have some exceptional cooks in our club!

Annual board elections were conducted at the meeting. The board for 2008 is as follows:

President ..... Carol Cox  
 Vice President ..... Audrey Bye  
 Treasurer ..... Gloria Janda  
 Recording Secretary ..... Debbie Metts  
 Corresponding Secretary ..... Sara Martin  
 Board of Directors..... Angie Hubbard  
 Board of Directors..... Diane Johnson  
 Board of Directors..... Nancy Kille  
 Board of Directors..... Sarah Prince

Armetale award plates for dogs finishing titles in 2007 were awarded to Debbie Metts, Audrey Bye, and Angie Hubbard. Additionally, Audrey Bye was awarded Most Valuable Member award for 2007 by the club. Congratulations to these members, and thank you for your help throughout the year!

### Next Meeting

The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 2, 2008, at the Wachovia Bank Building in Daniel Village. Board Meeting will start at 7:00 pm, followed by the Regular Meeting @ 8:00 pm.

Educational portion of the meeting will be the partial showing of a show handling DVD by Jeff Brucker.

Be sure and sign up for your trophy pledges for the Fall show.

As always, the public is welcome at our Regular Meeting and at Education portion of the evening.



## Augusta Kennel Club Website Recognized

*The Augusta Kennel Club website was recognized in the Fall 2007 AKC's Website Spotlight!*

Four times a year, AKC's "Website Spotlight" is dedicated to highlighting exceptional AKC club websites. Here's what they have to say about our site:

*Augusta Kennel Club's attractive, easy-to-navigate website is unique in that it serves its club members and potential pet-owners equally well. Potential newcomers and club members can easily find the time and location of the next meeting in the "Upcoming Events" section, which also lists social events, matches, seminars and shows in the area. A map is even included in the "Membership" section for those needing directions.*

*One of the most valuable resources that they offer on the website, however, is in the "Breed Information" section. Included at the top of the page is a link to "Are you ready for a dog?," which leads to a page with information about the cost and responsibility of a new puppy as well as series of questions to consider before bringing a dog into the family. Links to information about puppies, picking a breeder and rescue follow.*

*There is also a helpful Frequently Asked Questions section that addresses where to find a particular breed, designer breeds and the best place to buy a pup. Writing a FAQ section for your own website may cut down on the volume of phone calls your club receives. A variety of breed and rescue contacts for the Augusta area are also listed. For those breeds without contacts listed, a general number is available to call.*

*For members, a section is available to submit their dog photos and brags from many different competition venues. They can also update themselves on club news with the regularly-added newsletters. Augusta KC also offers some great links of interest, from dog treats and supplies to training, boarding, and food suppliers.*

Thanks AKC for recognizing our site!



## Make Informed Breeding Choices with CHIC

*By Theresa Shea, AKC Breeder Editor*

The Canine Health Information Center, also known as CHIC, is a centralized canine health database jointly sponsored by the AKC Canine Health Foundation (AKCCHF) and the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). CHIC provides a source of health information for owners, breeders and scientists, that assists in breeding healthy dogs. The CHIC database, administered by OFA, collects health information on individual animals from multiple sources. In order for data to be included in CHIC, test results must be based on scientifically valid diagnostic criteria.

For breeders, CHIC provides a reliable information source regarding dogs you may want to use in your breeding programs. Through CHIC, breeders can begin to analyze the pedigrees of a proposed breeding for health strengths and weaknesses as well the traditional analysis of conformation, type, and performance strengths and weaknesses.

For buyers, the CHIC program provides accurate information about the results of a breeder's health testing. For diseases that are limited to phenotypic evaluations, there are no guarantees. However, the probability that an animal

### THE VET BILL

A man brought a very limp dog into the veterinary clinic. As he lay the dog on the table, the doctor pulled out his stethoscope, placing the receptor on the dog's chest. After a moment or two, the vet shook his head sadly and said, "I'm sorry, but your dog has passed away."

"What?" screamed the man. "How can you tell? You haven't done any testing on him or anything. I want another opinion!"

With that, the vet turned and left the room. In a few moments, he returned with a Labrador Retriever. The Retriever went right to work, checking the poor dead dog out thoroughly. After a considerable amount of sniffing, the Retriever sadly shook his head and said, "Woof".

The veterinarian then took the Labrador out and returned in a few moments with a cat, who also checked out the poor dog on the table. As had his predecessors, the cat sadly shook his head and said, "Meow."

He then jumped off the table and ran out of the room.

The veterinarian handed the man a bill for \$600.

The dog's owner went ballistic. "\$600! Just to tell me my dog is dead? This is outrageous!"

The vet shook his head sadly and explained. "If you had taken my word for it, would have been \$50, but with the Lab work and the Cat scan..."





### DOGGY LETTERS TO GOD

Dear God, Why do humans smell the flowers, but seldom, if ever, smell one another? Where are their priorities?

*Dear God, When we get to heaven can we sit on your couch? Or is it the same old story?*

Dear God, Why are there cars named after the jaguar, the cougar, the mustang, the colt, the stingray and the rabbit, but not ONE named for a dog? How often do you see a cougar riding around? We dogs love a nice ride! Would it be so hard to rename the Chrysler Eagle the Chrysler Beagle?

*Dear God, If a dog barks his head off in the forest and no human hears him, is he still a bad dog?*

Dear God, If we come back as humans, is that good, or bad?

*Dear God, More meatballs, less spaghetti, please.*

Dear God, When we get to the Pearly Gates, do we have to shake hands to get in?

*Dear God, Are there dogs on other planets or are we alone? I have been howling at the moon and stars for a long time, but all I ever hear back is the Schnauzer across the street.*

Dear God, Are there mailmen in Heaven? If there are, will I have to apologize?

*Dear God, May I have my testicles back?*

will develop an inherited disease is reduced when its ancestry has been tested normal. Further, as more DNA tests become available and the results are entered into CHIC, the CHIC database will be able to establish whether progeny will be clear, carriers, or affected.

For parent (or national breed) clubs considering establishment of health databases on their own, CHIC provides the answer with no up-front investment required by the club. The CHIC infrastructure is supplied and maintained in a

secure environment by trained staff. The services are not subject to the time, technology, and resource constraints that parent clubs might face on their own. This frees parent clubs to focus on their core strengths of identifying health concerns, educating their membership, and encouraging participation in the CHIC program.

For researchers, CHIC provides confidential and accurate aggregate information on multiple generations of dogs. CHIC information will also be useful for epidemiological studies enhancing our knowledge of health issues affecting all breeds of dogs. For everyone interested in canine health issues, CHIC is a tool to monitor disease prevalence and measure progress.

Core to the CHIC philosophy is the realization that each breed has different health concerns. Not all diseases have known modes of inheritance. Nor do all diseases have screening tests. Some screening tests are based on phenotypic evaluation, others on genetic testing. With all these variables, a key element of CHIC is to customize or tailor the CHIC requirements to the needs of each breed. These unique requirements are established through input from the parent club prior to the breed's entry into the CHIC program.

CHIC operates an informed-consent database. All information regarding test results remains confidential unless the owner specifically authorizes release of the information into the public domain. The goal is to test your breeding stock, not necessarily to pass the test. Owners are encouraged to release all test results realizing it is in the ultimate health interests of the breed and the information greatly increases the depth and breadth of any resulting pedigree analysis. For those not quite ready to accept open sharing of information, there is still value in submitting results. All test information entered into the database is available in aggregate for research and statistical reporting purposes, but does not disclose identification of individual dogs. This results in improved information on the prevalence of the disease as well as information regarding progress in reducing the incidence of the disease.

Visit [caninehealthinfo.org](http://caninehealthinfo.org) to find out more about how you can participate in CHIC and how it can help you breed better dogs.

**IMPORTANT FYI** - Many people misunderstand CHIC. CHIC is to ENCOURAGE testing and DISCLOSURE. you can get a CHIC number even if the dog does not pass everything. The reason for this is to encourage people to test and TELL. CHIC in no way indicates breeding suitability, or a healthy dog. It just indicates that a person is willing to test the dog and disclose ALL the results.

## Kibbles & Bits

**Did you know that you can have preliminary results displayed on the OFA website?**

You can! The only stipulation is that you must agree to release all results when you send in the films. You can also have films returned to either you or your veterinarian for a small, additional fee, but it has to be marked on the application form.

For more information, visit the OFA website at [www.offa.org](http://www.offa.org).

# Event Calendar

## CLUB EVENTS

Augusta Kennel Club Dog Show, Obedience & Rally Trial, Perry, GA – Friday, April 11, 2008.

## AREA EVENTS

The Charleston Dog Training Club is hosting an Obedience Ring Handling Seminar with AKC/UKC judge Kathy Griner on Sunday, January 6, 2008 in Summerville, SC. Cost for the seminar is \$40, plus \$10 if you wish to do a run through. For more information, contact Debbie Snyir at (843) 729-5499, dsnyir@knology.net.

The Greater Columbia Obedience Club is hosting AKC Obedience and Rally Seminars on February 9 & 10, 2008. Obedience will be on Saturday, and Rally on Sunday. Registration deadline is Jan 15, 2008. For more information, contact Sharon Crossman at (803) 364-2882, sdcrossman@lycos.com, or Phyllis Beasley, at (803) 926-8806, MeAndMyPez@aol.com.

Want to know what our club is up to? Check out the event calendar on our website at [www.augustakennelclub.org](http://www.augustakennelclub.org). The event calendar is regularly updated with information on our future events, and also includes a handy list of upcoming shows in Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina.

## Braggs

Eva Rapp & Quincy, earned their first Novice A leg with 1<sup>st</sup> place!

Debbie Metts & Batman finishing their CDX with 1<sup>st</sup> place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> leg, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> leg!

Georgie Blackburn & Chili for finishing their RN with 3<sup>rd</sup> place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> leg, and 4<sup>th</sup> place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> leg. They also placed 2<sup>nd</sup> on their first leg of their CD!

Terri Jenkins and Teddy Bear for finishing their RE with 1<sup>st</sup> place on their 3<sup>rd</sup> leg!

Debbie Metts & Batman, Terri Jenkins & Peyton, Audrey Bye & Luna, Angie Hubbard & Niko, Petra Orzechowski & Noelle, Diane Downs & Angel all passed their ATTS test!

*Congratulations to our members and their dogs on their accomplishments!*



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## American Kennel Club News

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NOVEMBER AKC BOARD MEETING

#### Miscellaneous Class Additions

Bluetick Coonhounds and Norwegian Lundehunds were approved for participation in the Miscellaneous Class, effective July 1, 2008.

#### Norbottenspets

The Foundation Stock Service (FSS) Committee recently approved a petition for the Norbottenspets to be accepted into the FSS program.

#### Juniors

There were comprehensive amendments to the Junior Showmanship Regulations. The complete revisions are included with the minutes of the November 2007 meeting and are effective January 1, 2008.

#### Chairman's Report

Mr. Menaker reported on the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship Show. The 2007 entry is 2,642, including 159 Junior Showmanship entries.

#### Events and Entries Update

Mr. Sprung reported that for the first nine months of 2007, the total number of events increased by 9 % and the total number of entries by 3.5 %. There was an aggregate increase of 80,676 entries. The largest increases occurred in Agility and Conformation entries.

#### AKC Online Entries Processing Fee

The Board reviewed staff's proposal to implement an entry processing fee for online Agility entries. The proposed transaction fee is \$2.00 per dog, per event, for the first entry and \$1.00 for each additional entry of the same dog at the same event.



### **Political Action Committee**

Staff advised the Board that the Federal Election Commission (FEC) unanimously approved the draft advisory opinion prepared by FEC staff, permitting AKC to create a Political Action Committee (PAC). Solicitable classes include all members of AKC member and licensed clubs. The FEC action allows the AKC Board of Directors to proceed with the implementation of the AKC PAC. There was discussion on the appointment of a nine-member AKC PAC Board of Directors. Following a motion by Mr. Gladstone, seconded by Mr. Goodman, it was VOTED (unanimously) to appoint the following individuals to the AKC PAC Board of Directors: Dr. William Newman, Hon. David Merriam, Patti Strand, Louis Auslander, Dr. Anthony DiNardo, Gail LaBerge, Alan Kalter, James Stevens, and Walter Bebout. It was stipulated that there would always be three current AKC Board members on the AKC PAC Board.

### **Growth in Conformation Events**

The Board reviewed a staff memo that presented statistics on the number of AKC events held from 1997 to 2006. There was a discussion on the perception by some in the fancy, that the increased number of events is excessive and has resulted in a loss of entries for many shows, a wider dispersion of quality competition over more events, and more AKC championships, lessening the value of the title. Staff presented possible amendments to current policy for the Board's consideration to address these issues. This will be discussed further in January, with consideration given to amending a number of Board policies governing club and show approvals.

### **Size of AKC's Governing Body**

The Board reviewed a staff report on the growth of the sport as a whole, and specifically how that relates to the growth of the Delegate body. There was a discussion on the present size of the Delegate body vis-à-vis its effectiveness as a deliberative body and how this will be impacted by projected future growth. Possible Bylaw amendments were discussed. This will be discussed further in January.

### **Delegate Mailings**

The Executive Secretary reported on the number of Delegate mailings made each year. Mr. Crowley indicated that, without objection, he planned to eliminate several optional Delegate mailings, leaving the four Call Letter mailings and the mandated election-related mailings. There will still be regular e-mail communication with Delegates, and other communication will be included with the remaining mailings. This will not preclude a special mailing, if the Board or the President believes it is necessary. There was no objection to the plan.

### **Japanese Akitas**

Staff presented an update on the issue of the Akita breed outside of the United States. The Akita is registered as two different breeds (American type and Japanese type) in all major countries except the United States and Canada. While this could have a long-term impact on international competition, as well as the export of Akitas from the United States, there has been no request from the Akita Club of America for a division in this country. Staff was directed to contact the Akita Club of America to get its input on why it believes that there should be one breed in the United States, while the rest of the world has two.

### **Extended Dog Name Pilot**

The Board reviewed a staff proposal to extend the number of letters allowed in a dog's registered name. This is in response to the many inquiries and requests they receive from fanciers regarding the number of spaces allotted for a dog's name. Staff proposes an Extended Name pilot initiative, for a nominal fee, which would allow the registered name of a dog to contain more than the 36 letters currently allowed on the registration application. The extended name option will only be available for paper applications submitted during the pilot period. As there was no objection, Staff will proceed with a pilot program, reporting back to the Board six months after its starts.

### **Dog Name Change**

The Board reviewed a staff report indicating that a very large number of calls and e-mails into AKC's call center are from customers, who wish to change the name of an AKC registered dog. Following a motion by Dr. Davies, seconded by Mr. Goodman, it was VOTED (unanimously) to approve the following changes (underlined) to Rules Applying to Registration and Discipline Chapter 3, Section 7:

Section 7. The name of a dog registered with The American Kennel Club will be allowed to be changed provided the dog was whelped in the United States; and in cases where the breeder(s) first individually registered the dog, their written consent would be required. A dog name containing a Registered Kennel Name cannot be changed without the written consent of the owner(s) of that Registered Kennel Name.

However, no change in the name will be recorded by The American Kennel Club after the dog has produced or sired an AKC registered litter or received an award at an AKC licensed or member event.

Any name change must comply with all AKC requirements.

This will be read at the December 2007 Delegate meeting for a vote at the March 2008 Delegate meeting, with a proposed effective date of May 1, 2008.

### **ILP Parent Club/Enhancement Project**

The Board reviewed a staff proposal to enhance the value of the Indefinite Listing Privilege (ILP) Program beyond the privilege of competing in Companion and Performance events. Potential enhancements include benefits similar to what newly registered dogs now receive: Pet Insurance, Dog.com coupons and AKC e-newsletter, also the option of purchasing package upgrades with an ILP such as Lost & Found enrollment, Family Dog Magazine, and the Dog Care and Training Video. Additional enhancements staff would like to implement include a redesign of the ILP certificate, inclusion of Parent Club Flyers in the certificate mailing, when applicable, and to rename the program, giving it a more creative and friendly acronym. Without objection from the Board, staff will move forward with these enhancements.

### **Limited Registration**

Based on a Board request, the staff presented data on the use of the Limited Registration option. There was a discussion that limited registration is a tool available to breeders, assisting them in maintaining the quality and integrity of their breeding program. Limited registration prevents a dog from competing in AKC conformation events and prevents any offspring produced by a dog with Limited Registration from any type of AKC registration, but that does not prevent a dog from producing a litter. The percentage of dogs registered as Limited increased each year from 1995-2003, but has remained level for the past 4 years. Following discussion, it was the sense of the Board that there be no change to the rules governing Limited Registration.

### **International Registry**

Following a motion by Mr. Merriam, seconded by Ms. Scully, it was VOTED (unanimously) to approve the staff's recommended business plan to sell back-end registration and event processing services internationally, and to move contract negotiations forward with potential clients.

### **Car Bundle Pilot**

Staff reported to the Board that a new registration pilot program was started in October 2007. The new pilot will measure the return rate for individual dog registrations when the registration form focuses on enrollment in the CAR Lost & Found database rather than on AKC registration. Results and analysis will be presented at the February 2008 Board of Directors meeting.

### **Judging Contracts**

There was a discussion on the number of complaints received by AKC, concerning the failure of both clubs and judges to fulfill their obligations to each other. Many of these complaints were the result of inadequately written documents between the parties. The AKC staff proposed amendments to Chapter 4, Section 1, and to Chapter 7, Section 13, of the Rules Applying to Dog Shows, that would differentiate between a letter of "intent to hire", and a judging contract, and that would prohibit a club from removing provisional breeds from a judge without the judge's permission even if that was the breed with the smallest entry. This will be discussed further in January.

### **Minimum Age for Judges.**

There was a discussion on whether there should be a minimum age for judges of AKC events. There was a sense of the Board, that there should be an 18-years of age criteria as a judging policy for all Performance events, except where an older age is stipulated in the rules or regulations.

### **Workshop**

There was a workshop to discuss mixed-bred dogs and whether they should be permitted to compete in some events.

## **AKC Renames ILP Program**

The AKC has announced the enhancement and renaming of its Indefinite Listing Privilege (ILP) program. The new name -- Purebred Alternative Listing (PAL) program -- will officially take effect February 1, 2008.

The new name more accurately describes the purpose of the program: allowing dogs that are ineligible for registration but are distinguishable as a member of an AKC registrable breed, to participate in AKC Companion Events, AKC Performance Events and AKC Juniors competition.

The ILP/PAL program is designed to address the various reasons a purebred dog might not be eligible for registration: the dog may be from an unregistered litter or have unregistered parents; papers may have been withheld or lost by its owner; or the dog may have been surrendered, lost or abandoned, then adopted by a new owner.

PAL enrollees will receive a copy of Family Dog Magazine, a subscription to AKC's e-newsletter "Your AKC," a flyer from the breed's Parent Club and an attractive certificate denoting their dog's place in the PAL program. Also included will be information on AKC Pet Healthcare and AKC Companion Animal Recovery enrollment.

Dogs which currently have ILP numbers will retain their original numbers and continue to enter events under that number. PAL numbers will be issued beginning February 1, 2008.

# Anatomy of Anti-Dog Legislation

by Dr Carmen Battaglia

## INTRODUCTION

During the past one hundred years the demographics of America shifted the paradigm from a country that was principally rural to another that had become urban. By the turn of the century, seventy-five percent of all Americans were living in cities. This massive shift in population and demographics resulted in an increase in real estate costs, zoning restrictions and pet laws which today have emerged as a growing concern in every state. The impacts of these changes have forced breeders to adapt their facilities to fit the problems of urban sprawl or to relocate. In short, the ownership of dogs has come face to face with a new set of social, economic and legal issues.

In 2005 the AKC tracked 106 breed-specific measures that were adverse to purebred dogs. In 2006 that number surpassed the previous year. A cursory look at history shows that the pervasive trend in anti-dog legislation is no longer a problem peculiar to just the large cities. It has become endemic throughout the country. Unfortunately, most anti-dog measures seem to begin with a tragic incident where a person, very often a child, was bitten. The incident then becomes the catalyst for some kind of legislation. In most cases, the scenario begins with the incident, followed by the press which usually avoids or ignores the details surrounding the tragedy, the owner's responsibility, or the history of the dog or dogs involved. A typical case begins when officials respond with proposals that restrict ownership of one or more breeds. A broad look at this kind of legislation shows that whether the proposal was successful or not, the impact on the dog-owning community is becoming a cumulative problem that has risen in almost every community.

Officials typically claim that anti-dog legislation and breed-specific laws are needed to control the dog population, address the "dangerous pet" issue and provide the public with a measure of safety. What seems to go unnoticed is that the owners of the "bad" dogs often hide them or choose another breed which leaves the responsible owners the innocent victims of excessive fees, licensing requirements and restrictive zoning. Now, after more than two decades of this kind of thinking, the legal approach has gained momentum.

## THE PROBLEM

The steady and extreme nature of anti-dog legislation over the past few years has raised awareness to new levels among owners and breeders who are struggling to retain their basic rights and privileges. Unfortunately, the interest in removing dogs and breeds from communities has gained momentum at an alarming rate. This is a problem that deserves to be called by its proper name, breed-specific legislation (BSL).

The term BSL is often intermingled with the term anti-dog legislation. Both translate into the banning or restriction of ownership of a breed or those dogs that have a resemblance to a silhouette or profile. A typical case begins with restrictions or a proposal to ban an entire breed and all dogs that look like those that were involved in an incident. In some cases these measures begin when there has been no incident. Following close behind are efforts to limit or restrict ownership — another detrimental phenomenon called the trickle-down effect. It includes restrictions on zoning, changes to airline policies, the prohibition of certain breeds at dog shows, increases in homeowner insurance rates, mandatory spay/ neuter, muzzling on or off the owner's property, high licensing fees to breed or sell pups or to own adults of any breed etc. Most of these events go unnoticed by the dog world even though they are increasing each year. Underneath the exterior of these actions is an anatomy that deserves to be examined and understood.

## ANATOMY OF ANTI-DOG LEGISLATION

A proposal to restrict or eliminate ownership and breeding very often begins on the desk of some official whose motives are not always transparent. At other times they begin with a dog bite to a person. In the latter case, the bite incident does not receive a fair and impartial evaluation and rarely do the actions taken produce a lasting solution. In most cases, the dog's behavior is considered central to the problem and the owners are seen as having only a secondary role. Experts such as Peggy Moran agree that "dog breeds don't bite, individual dogs bite". A fundamental problem underlying anti-dog legislation is that the larger audience of responsible owners and breeders who are the innocent victims become burdened with the excessive restrictions of ownership. Because of the disconnect in thinking between the legislation and its intended purpose, anti-dog proposals only serve as a catalyst that eventually polarizes the community.

The chronology surrounding this kind of legislation typically begins with an incident- -very often a bite. The process that follows identifies one or more breeds as an important threat to the community. The participants and victims include dog owners, interested citizens, the media, elected officials and the animal rights groups. One of the ingredients used to promote this kind of legislation is the use of undefined labels which effectively stigmatize or characterize the owners and the breed(s) in a negative way. Undefined labels such as "puppy mill", "dangerous dogs", "vicious dogs", and "dogs out of control" are used to promote the need for severe legal action. Throughout the process no one questions the use of the undefined labels, perhaps because they are aimed at a lesser species that cannot speak for themselves. Others believe the answer may lie in our lack of understanding how the media, elected officials and the animal rights groups see the problem, and how they are drawn to use and apply

undefined labels to achieve their goals. A useful way to review this phenomenon is to notice what factors are needed to produce the incendiary reaction that gives credence to anti-dog legislation and BSL.

In order to better appreciate the issues and the social factors involved in this kind of legislation, a review of other problems that have a parallel or similar pattern may exist elsewhere. For example, when well-known athletes or their institutions become involved in a scandal, the press is quick to use undefined labels that depict them as "rich", "out of control" or "well-connected bullies" etc. Murray Sperber, author of *Beer and Circus: How Big-time College Sports is Crippling Undergraduate Education*, says that "many rich athletes have gone wild with their money and connections because they are able, through their contacts and wealth, to get themselves out of the problems they cause". Recent examples in the NFL include running back Jamal Lewis in his 2000 cocaine case. Lewis, who faced a 10-year sentence, served four months, was suspended for two games and was back in time to play 15 games for the Baltimore Ravens in 2005. Miami Dolphins wide receiver Tony Martin was found guilty of laundering drug money and went on to play three more seasons. No player rebounded stronger than Mike Bell, Kansas City linebacker, who was convicted in 1986 on two counts of arranging cocaine sales, served a short sentence, and returned to play the 1991 season.

How the media takes advantage of these situations is well-illustrated in the more recent incidents involving athletes at a Colorado (2004) and at Duke University (2006) which left both schools with accusations about rape and sex parties involving their recruits and players. Both events made national news. At the outset, the media, with only a few facts, were able to give credibility to both incidents. A series of follow-up stories identified the victims, plaintiffs and defendants, and within days the media was able to provide a media trial for the public with a parade of "experts" (lawyers, DNA technicians, psychological counselors) who were asked the "what if" questions. Before the institutions or the NCAA were able to conduct their own investigations, guilt was inferred and penalties classified. In each case, the school and league officials were expected to make announcements to explain their situation. At the same time, local and state officials were called upon to make public statements.

In most instances, what usually follows is a series of dissonant reporting and commentary that reflects far more than the difference between what the public would learn before they would hear, see or read the news. By getting a head start on their competitors, the press is able to drive the story. Within hours, politicians will usually begin to make announcements which are designed to expose, clarify or fix the problem. In most instances there is more than enough blame to go around, but none draw as much interest as those involving a high profile person or event such as the football, baseball or basketball scandals. By 2004, only a few editors were bothering to require two or more sources to corroborate a story. Instead, they blame intense competition for ratings and circulation in a "24-hour" news cycle as the reason for inaccurate reporting. After months of live coverage, the Duke rape story lost its ratings. Several months later, in January and again in April, 2007, buried several pages back in a small article, mention was made that the charges were dropped against the Duke athletes for lack of creditable findings. The media which gave this story front page status showed little interest in it once the facts became known. Only a few talk shows found the story useful enough to interview TV attorneys and journalists who were willing to speculate on the impact the incident had made on the lives of the innocent victims.

These self-made conditions produce a scenario that the social critics say are right for a media circus. In many ways, dog bites and public scandals both provide a platform for stories that can focus on national flashpoints whose characteristics typically include one of the following: race, class, gender, violence, money or privilege. According to Robert Thompson, a communications professor at Syracuse University, "the forces all come into place to produce a journalistic perfect storm", which will use some or all of the elements for a national flashpoint story. The elements of a story are then used to stir "the fundamental and foundational themes in American Culture". Once the media and politicians expose their interests and get credit for reporting or suggesting a solution, they tend to go on to their next issue or their next story leaving behind a community that is left to sort through the rubble of their solutions. In most BSL cases, there are special interest groups which become embedded in the issues of the incident. They serve as a lever against all dogs and the dog-owning community. Their involvement often comes in the form of financial support that is used to push their agenda forward. Social scientists who observe these incidents begin their analysis by identifying the key players which are the elected officials, the media, the animal rights groups, and the dog-owning public. Each serves an important role in what can be called a social and legalistic puzzle. The elected officials claim they are acting in the interests of the public good; the media sees it as a story that will increase ratings; and the animal rights groups become involved because it fosters another opportunity to limit or eliminate more breeds and dogs. But in the end it is the majority of owners who are affected and become the innocent victims of these actions.

History shows that banning breeds has not accomplished the intended purpose of protecting or eliminating the threat of dogs that bite. If anything, these proposals only serve to polarize and disrupt communities. In spite of the opinions offered by the AVMA and others who do not advocate BSL, officials continue to use the legal system as their preferred solution to the ownership of dogs as a perceived social problem. There is little evidence to show that legislation has changed the behavior of those who are said to own the "bad" dogs. In an open and free society, it is easy to hide from and neglect the requirements of this kind of legislation. When new laws are passed, many owners seem to rapidly adjust by hiding their dogs or simply choosing another breed. Owners of the "bad" dogs in many instances can well afford the small fines levied by local courts and magistrates. History suggests that new laws

do not motivate those who function outside the norm to change their behavior. To believe otherwise is to assume that the laws against drugs and their use have produced the desired changes in the behavior of those who sell and traffic in them.

### **CHOICE AND REACH**

One of the most important elements of anti-dog legislation and BSL that go unnoticed is the social reach they have into the life of a community. These laws not only ban, limit and restrict ownership, they function with the authority of a class action lawsuit and, by extension, are able to reach deep into a community and affect a much larger group of owners whose dogs were not involved. In principle, anti-dog legislation promotes the notion of guilt by association and functions as another form of back door legislation. It is the equivalent of telling the parents of teens they can no longer live in their neighborhood because the son of a neighbor was involved in a fatality while using the family car. Proposals that ban and limit dogs are best known for their ability to produce tension between many groups with vested interests. They are able to bring relationships to a boiling point based on the use of undefined labels combined with the proven and unproven allegations. The social and economic strategy underling many of these cases confirms that the behavior of a few can be used to change the fundamental rights of many.

In 2006, the city of Louisville proposed major changes to their breed-specific legislation which would further limit and restrict breeders and dog owners. Their new restrictions were specific to "pit bulls," which the city defined as several breeds including American Staffordshire Terriers, Staffordshire Bull Terriers, American Pit Bull Terriers, Cane Corsos, Presa Canarios, Dogue de Bordeauxs, Dogo Argentino or any other dog having the appearance and characteristics of these breeds. In human terms, dogs and breeds were profiled based on a general structure or silhouette and not their behavior. Each breed determination and the designation of "dangerous dog" would be made by the Director of Metro Animal Services. The appeal process was limited to the Secretary of Public Works with no opportunity for the dog owner to be heard in court. The proposed ordinance would require owners to obtain a \$100 unaltered pit bull license, even for dogs that were in the city for less than 30 days. All owners would be required to provide proof of insurance in Kentucky and demonstrate that their dog had been microchipped and registered with the Metro Animal Services Department. Exhibitors who were in the city for a dog show from out of state would also be required to obtain a \$100 license. In spite of the fact that there is no science or evidence to show that the physical structure or body type of a human or animal portends its behavior, Louisville pursued its goal to ban thousands of dogs from its boundaries. No other community has proposed such a far-reaching legal set of requirements on its citizens.

Unfortunately, what usually follows many anti-dog legislation proposals is a phenomenon that is called the ripple effect. These are the post events that spawn from extreme proposals that usually come in the form of mandatory spay/neuter laws and license differentials. For example, \$5 for a spay/neutered pet, \$150 for a breedable animal, litter permits that require disclosure of sales, limits on the number of litters per year and restrictions on the number of breedings allowed per year. What goes unnoticed about the fallout from the ripple effect is the cumulative nature they have on the hobby breeders of purebred dogs.

Although these cases in many ways closely parallel the scenario of the scandalized athletes and their institutions, the key difference involves the species and the elements of the story. In a BSL case, all dog owners and, indirectly, the American Kennel Club, become involved. With over 20,000 events for purebred dogs which attract more than 3 million entries annually, the AKC feels the immediate effects of these cases through the loss of registrations, which in 1992 were at their all time high of 1.5 million. By 2006, they had declined to less than 970,000.

The AKC, with nearly 5,000 licensed and member clubs along with its affiliated organizations, advocate for the purebred dog as a family companion. The AKC works to protect the rights of all dog owners and promotes responsible dog ownership. It offers more than 20,000 competitions for AKC-registered purebred dog owners each year. The venues include conformation, agility, obedience, rally, tracking, herding, lure coursing, coonhound events, hunt tests, field and earth dog trials. Despite its size and influence, even the AKC feels the effects of these cases. With its operating headquarters in Raleigh, North Carolina, nestled among many diverse ethnic groups, the AKC knows there are many reasons why Americans own a dog.

Those who choose the AKC purebred do so because of their good breeding and reliability. Some cost upwards of \$5,000 - \$10,000 and require complicated and binding contracts as part of the sale. Owning and campaigning a purebred can also be expensive. The best will spend in excess of \$50,000, which exceeds the medium household income of Durham, North Carolina (\$43,337). These facts alone tend to separate the AKC purebred dog owners from all others. But regardless of their pedigree or their value, BSL and anti-dog legislation fails to distinguish between those who are AKC registered, the mongrels and those that live on the streets. In each instance public officials bundle all dogs that have a similar "look" into one package regardless of their breed, gender or class of owner. Seldom do these cases focus on the care, conditions, treatment, history or behavior of the dogs or the people that own them. Rarely do the politicians or the media make distinctions or offer constructive or preventative solutions that can solve the problem. In the simplest of terms, BSL can be summarized as a class action against the innocent and the guilty without having to meet the high legal standards set for this kind of legal action.

Sociologists who study the social, economic and legislative aspects of these cases tend to focus on the social forces and policies that drive them. They examine how undefined labels are used to describe and characterize the

targeted victims and the innocent bystanders. They look for the factors that result in the incendiary mix of accusations that involve the victims, defendants and breeds. They study the conditions leading up to the incident, the behavior of the victims and the impact of the legislation on the community. Their studies focus on the social and economic life of the community and how these actions are used to change the fundamental rights of citizens to own property as well as their right to choose a breed of their preference. Their conclusions usually address the unintended consequences of these events by those who are well meaning.

## **STANDARDS**

The irony of this kind of legislation is that the media and the politicians do not apply the same logic, strategy or standard to other similar problems in our society. For example, one must wonder why the speeders and drunk drivers who kill and harm far more people each year are not dealt with in the same harsh fashion. The record shows that while many parallels occur in how human and canine problems are handled, it does not explain the extreme differences. The real problem behind the speeders and the drunk drivers is not the car or the alcohol . neither breaks the law. It is the behavior of the person, whether they are driving a car or drinking too much. Common to both are the use of undefined labels which are used to target the victim. Calling a person a "drunk" or "speeder" introduces a stereotype that can be applied and expanded to a person or a group of individuals. Insurance companies use the stereotypes to raise rates and elected officials use them to generalize to the larger community. The use of labels provides a vehicle that makes it politically correct to characterize the "bad" people as drunks and speeders. But when the incident involves a lesser species, they seem to be anxious to apply another brand of justice using undefined labels such as "dangerous", "vicious", or "out of control dogs" which allows them the opportunity to ignore the behavior of the owner.

Robert Thompson says that the events leading up to social disruptions in a community oftentimes are used to produce national stories which bring forward a whole new Animal House quality that makes for good TV stories and feature articles for the newsprint industry. The controversy produced by anti-dog proposals seems to come from the idea of contrast. Telling dog owners they must give up their property because someone else who lives in their community owned a "bad" dog that may have injured or killed a person is fundamental to understanding the anatomy of this kind of legislation. When the media, politicians and animal rights groups combine the incendiary elements needed to introduce anti-dog legislation or a BSL case, they are able to produce a national flashpoint for a perfect social storm. Because many incidents will begin with a horrific event such as a child who is mauled, bitten or killed, it provides opportunity for the media to exercise journalistic license with their version of the story using undefined labels and quotes from local politicians, victims and their families. All this is used to fuel the strategy for rigid limitations, prosecution and/or banishment. The strategy of these proceedings is to reach deep into the dog community without ever knowing how many "good" dogs and responsible owners will be adversely affected. Rarely does anyone look beneath the incident or the facts leading up to why a limitation is necessary. The solution to punish every owner mirrors mob psychology. The irony of this logic bears review. For example, no one proposes sweeping legislation each time a human injures or kills another human. In a study conducted by the AAA, they found that after-school hours rivaled weekend nights as the peak time for fatal crashes involving teenage drivers. The Travel Club reported crash data for 16-17 year-old drivers from 2002 - 2005 and concluded that just as many people died between 3pm and 5pm on weekdays as on Friday and Saturday nights, and that drivers 16-20 accounted for a disproportionately high number of these accidents. In 2004, there were 1.8 million crashes with 8,535 fatalities caused by young drivers. When the data was presented to the media they found little use for it and no politician proposed that teenagers be removed from their communities. Instead, the insurance companies pay the damages, settle the lawsuits and raise the rates. Sociologists, criminologists and psychologists all agree that there are specific and identifiable individuals who are clearly more dangerous to a society than others. While many are well known to the authorities, no legislation is proposed that removes them from the densely populated areas. Even repeat offenders are allowed to live anywhere they choose. Only in a limited number of cities have restrictions been adopted that keep child molesters from living near school zones and certain bus lines. The facts surrounding the horrific incidents they produce are rarely compared to the dangers of living with or near those who own animals. For example, which is more dangerous, a few "bad" dogs that can be contained and controlled or thousands of drunk drivers and repeat sex offenders who can live anywhere they choose and are free to act again?

The reason that BSL and anti-dog legislation is allowed to stand and, more importantly, function as a class action suit, has a basis in the etiology of social conflict. To this end, one can find that it resonates with a certain level of public support for a simple solution. Almost everyone can recall a dog problem they have experienced and most can either tell a familiar dog story of their own or one that involved a friend. "Oh yeah, I know of a neighbor or friend who also never controlled his/her dog." Being able to tell a story about a friend or a neighbor's dog gives this kind of legislation a measure of support. Experts see it as a social problem with many parallels. J. Douglas Toma, Associate Professor at University of Georgia Institute of Higher Education and author of *Football University, Spectator Sports in the Life of the American University* thinks that when social conflict occurs, there is a segment of the population which enjoys seeing others get "knocked down a peg or two".

A closer look at those who own the dogs involved in bite incidents suggests that the owners of the "bad" dogs can well afford the small and insignificant fines meted out by the local courts. In this regard, there are few differences between the speeders, drunk drivers and rich athletes who are back on the street in a matter of hours. Police

records show that small fines typically do not serve as a deterrent to unacceptable behavior, nor has the registration of handguns stopped senseless murders. On the other hand, rarely do officials propose laws, rules or codes that establish a fair and impartial process by which the owner's behavior is evaluated based on measurable actions. In short, the breed, rather than the deed, is overlooked. Dr. Julie Gilchrest, medical epidemiologist and pediatrician with the Communicable Disease Center, stated that while the CDC maintains the nations largest database on fatal wounds caused by dog bites, it is firmly against breed-specific legislation. Data from the CDC shows that dog bites are misunderstood. Of the 2.8 million children bitten, boys are bitten twice as often as girls and most are between the ages of 5 and 9 years of age. More interesting is the fact that the dogs that bite most often are not the "dogs on the street". Sixty-one percent of the bites to children come from dogs belonging to the family or a friend.

## **CONCLUSION**

Anti-dog legislation is gaining momentum at an alarming rate. Unfortunately, in most communities, dog owners do not become involved until they are faced with the consequences of the legislation. This means that others drive the agenda that affects their pets. Historically, the response to dog problems has been to fight each proposal one by one, city by city. This approach no longer works as more proposals are prepared each year. A new strategy with a more penetrating and focused effort is needed. One that embraces coalitions of informed citizens whose purpose is to guide and steer the course of legislation and the political future of officials who are bent on eliminating dogs from their community.

At a minimum, every state and local community needs a well-defined code of conduct and a set of definitions that address the key labels used in anti-dog legislation. Coalitions must begin to collect data of their own that addresses a wide range of subjects. They must develop statistics to show that "pet overpopulation" is a myth and that, in many instances, the problem is the lack of responsible dog ownership. There continues to be communities who rely on data collected by the CDC, police and hospitals to craft their legislation and stigmatize breeds. Those who use CDC data do so based on the assumption that certain breeds are inherently more dangerous than others. While there is no science to support this approach, this idea has been allowed to stand mainly because the dog community and all of its recognized organizations have done nothing to disprove it. Data must be developed to show that breeds should not be characterized based on the behavior of a few and that there are no genes that produce aggression

A broad look at BSL and anti-dog legislation suggests that this area has grown so large that containment is no longer a viable strategy. The paradigm must change. Organizations and individuals must step up and help meet the challenge. They must commit to gathering facts and developing relationships that result in a working relationship between the elected official and the dog community. The relationship must be cultivated so that the elected official relies on the dog community for information and facts about dogs. The dog community must learn to do more than lobby against legislation. They must learn who their representatives are at the city, county, state and federal levels. Coalitions must engage the broader voting community through education in order to respond with a greater impact that is aimed at the political life of certain officials if necessary. The dog-owning public must protect their rights to own and control their own destiny and begin to hold accountable those officials who continue to support legislation adverse to dog ownership. In a democracy, the will of the people is not irrelevant.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Carmen L. Battaglia holds a Ph.D. and Masters Degree from Florida State University. As an AKC judge, researcher and writer, he has been a leader in promoting better ways to breed dogs. An author of many articles and several books, he is also a popular guest on TV and radio talk shows including several appearances on Animal Planet. Those interested in learning more about his articles and seminars should visit the website <http://www.breedingbetterdogs.com>

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*See You At The January Meeting!*