

Coaker lamented in 2004, "The thing missing for me is the 'wow' factor; so few have this now ... Over the years the lovely outline of the Cavaliers has changed, maybe to do with keeping the small ones in a litter. Size reduction has a lot to answer for ... the bigger dogs with those beautiful heads and outlines seem to be few and far between."

So the next time a Goliath or a Tom Thumb appears before us, we would be well reminded that it is the overall dog and his conformation and temperament—within the standard's recommended range—that merits our attention. And that sometimes, keeping one who is 11½ inches or 13½ inches is hardly a mortal sin. We acknowledge that the Cavalier is a toy spaniel, but he should be neither minute nor Springerlike. Moderation is all. And while size matters, we should be delighted if that "wow" dog of our future appears as a larger or smaller package.

—Stephanie Abraham, Scotland, Conn.; landmarks.properties@snet.net ♦

## Chihuahuas



### The Value of Veterans

The class is called, and there is a sudden hush around the ring. A spectator new to dog shows will wonder, "What is different about this class? Why the sudden change in the crowd?"

The dogs enter the ring, and the judge gives the instruction for them to be moved around it together. The applause is loud and uniform, more so than for any class before this one. The dogs respond as seasoned show dogs, with a brightening of attitude and carriage. The first dog is examined and then asked to move. The spectators again applaud—a show of nonpartisan appreciation that is repeated for each dog in the class.

This class is different because these are dogs who have "been there, done



that, and are back to prove they still can"! This is the Veterans class.

The Veterans class is a fixture at specialty shows, and with the advent of the Grand Champion program it should be offered at more and more regular shows. The class is open to dogs of a

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certain age, which varies depending on the breed. Chihuahuas achieve veteran status at 7 years of age. Since our breed has a reputation for longevity, classes are often divided. At a recent Chihuahua specialty, the divisions were 7 years and under 9 years, and 9 years and older.

The Veterans class is valuable because it illustrates the way a properly bred example of the breed matures with age. A soundly bred dog should remain sound for the majority of his life. We pride ourselves on the breed's longevity, and it is important that these older examples of the breed be represented in the ring.

The ARCs' Grand Champion program is a positive one. Because of it, many owner-handlers and hobby breeders who can't necessarily mount a long specials campaign will be coming back to the ring with their champions to compete on a more local level. Hopefully this will include a lot of veterans. Great dogs who were not campaigned are still great dogs. Most of them loved the show ring and would enjoy nothing more than being there again. This could be a very positive development.

The Chihuahua Club of America will be offering a Veterans sweepstakes at the national specialty in Chicago this fall. We are hoping that this will encourage even more participation in this wonderful class. The sweepstakes

judge also does the puppy sweeps, so this provides that person with a chance to see both ends of the spectrum. Since we do a lot of judges' education at this show, the participation of veterans will definitely help illustrate how the breed can hold together. If you have a veteran

at home, we encourage you to get ready and come to Chicago.

The CCA is moving in a positive direction by bringing you new and different voices in future columns, and I feel sure you'll enjoy reading them. This will be my last column, at least for a while. It has been eight years, and I have enjoyed it. It is a daunting job, because the column is the voice of the parent club, but it helps when you have a great parent club like the CCA. I want to thank breed columns editor Arliss Paddock and all the other great folks at the GAZETTE for their help and support.

Please visit the CCA website, [chihuahualubbyamerica.com](http://chihuahualubbyamerica.com).

—Bruce E. Shirky, San Antonio, Texas; bshirky@texaskachina.com ♦

## Chinese Cresteds

### Placement of the Crest

Breed standards are written so as to be subject to interpretation. They are the framework or the skeleton upon which a judge builds his mental picture of what the breed should look like and how it should move. Words like *slightly*, *moderate*, and even *rectangular* will mean something a little different to different people. Every judge has a slightly different picture in mind when entering the ring to evaluate our dogs.