

2014 AKC Sportsmanship Award to Rick Alexander, recognizing all he has done to help maintain the excellent caliber of our national specialties.

Jeanie Montford, of Elvenhome Cavaliers (Australia), had the honor of judging the 2014 breed specialty, and she did an exemplary job of handling another record entry. With an entry of 97 dogs and 158 bitches, Ms. Montford chose Turretbank Magic Spell, bred by Katie Sloan and owned by Richard Green, for Winners Dog, and Cempa Boom Boom Out Go Dalites, bred by Marianne Creary and owned by Penny Freberg and Marianne, for Reserve.

The AKC Delegates voted last December to create a dog show rule that allows the Reserve Winner at one national specialty a year to receive a 3-point major if the dogs in competition are greater than twice that needed for a five-point major.

Tuesday evening brought the annual general meeting. With so much happening in the ACKCSC, one might expect an endless meeting, yet president Patty Kanan kept it manageably short. One of the nicest presentations was Lu Dunham announcing that starting in 2015 there will be an obedience award honoring Joan Tennille. Patty presented a history of the formation of our club, and the charter members introduced themselves.

Wednesday saw intense competition with Bred-by-Exhibitor bitch Kean Ultraviolet, owned by Liz Keane, taking the honors of Winners Bitch. Clairboro Tuesday Afternoon, bred by Norene Oehler and owned by Norene Oehler and William Smith, took Reserve and a 3-point major to complete her AKC championship.

Best of Breed, Veterans, and Stud Dog and Brood Bitch competitions were held on Thursday. Best of Breed (Best in Show) was awarded to Ch. Milesip Licorice, a black and tan dog bred by Sheryl Skidmore and owner-handled by Sheryl Skidmore and Ashley Skidmore. Best of Winners was the Winners Dog, Turretbank Magic Spell, also a black and tan. Best of

Opposite went to Blenheim Ch. Sandi's Holly By Galli, bred and owner-handled by Sandra Harrison.

Complete details of all placements may be found online.

Thursday evening and the annual banquet and charity auction provided time to celebrate wins, make new friends, enjoy old friends, and have a wonderful meal. Renee Bruhn presented a video from the Rescue Trust showing some of the triumphs of the rescue program, as well as those friends who crossed the Rainbow Bridge. There wasn't a dry eye in the house. David Frei did a great job with the charity auction, and when it was all over the week's activities earned over \$40,000 for the Health and Rescue Trust—thus proving once again that “It's all about the dogs.”

It was hard to say goodbye, but don't worry—2015 and the national in Asheville, North Carolina, are just around the corner. The presentations by the Blue Ridge CKCSC indicate it will be one heck of a party. See you in Asheville.

(Condensed from my article appearing in The Royal Spaniels.)

—Dr. John V. Ioia, MD, Ph.D., *bonefixr@gmail.com*

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Chihuahuas

The Dog Breeder—Idealism vs. Realism

“People are creators. But I doubt that many realize this. We are not meant to go out into the world and find flawless things; we are not meant to sit down and have flawless things fall in our laps. But we are creators. We can create a beautiful thing out of what we have. The problem with idealistic people is that they see themselves as receivers instead of creators, and they end up hunting for the flaw in everything in order to measure it up to their ideals. When you see yourself as a creator, you can look at a chunk of marble and see an angel in it. Then you ‘carve until you have set that angel

free.”—C. JoyBell C.

We all know the statement “There's no perfect dog.” If we believe this, why do we expect to breed our perfect dog? Idealism is the behavior or thought based on a conception of things as they should be, or as they wish them to be, with a tendency to be imaginary or visionary. Realism, on the other hand, is the behavior or thought based on a conception of things as they are, regardless of how one wants them to be, with a tendency to be practical and pragmatic.

Many new to the breeding process suffer from idealism. Although this is not a bad thing, one must have some realistic expectations when dealing with possibilities beyond our control.

The genetics of dogs can be a huge handicap. Humans have 46 chromosomes (23 pairs), as compared to a dog's 78 chromosomes (39 pairs). The arrangement or sequence of the genes of the chromosomes is astounding. So you see, when dealing with living beings, we are at the mercy of genetics.

Awareness of the intricate patterns of heredity is a good way to begin to realize why traits don't always fall into predictable dominant-recessive patterns. The varying degrees of dominance, polygenes, and environment will affect the outcome of your planned breedings.

Since there are no perfect dogs, we need to set realistic goals, those long-term goals that will eliminate undesired traits and strengthen the desirable. Study the genetic diversity of your breed, and accept that undesirable recessives will crop up when you least expect them.

Ask those who have been successfully breeding for years, and they'll tell you of their early idealism and the puppy or puppies they wish they had kept. Their idealism got in the way and set their breeding program back another year or more. To expect to accomplish one's goal in one generation is unrealistic.

Remember, there is an element of art to dog breeding. Successful breeders acquire skills by experience, study, and

observation, as well as a bit of intuition. The best geneticists in the world can't predict what will happen when two dogs are mated, no matter how hard we strive for genetic reliability and consistency. Every generation is different and presents a unique set of flaws.

There truly is no formula for success. So sprinkle that idealism with a little realism, and carve until you set your angel free.

—Virginia (Jenny) Hauber, *wynjynchis@yahoo.com*

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Chinese Cresteds

The Beauty of Old Dogs

One of the tragic realities of dog ownership is the fact that canine lives are almost always shorter than human lives. When we hold that tiny, squirming puppy in our hands, we always know that someday he will break our heart because his time here is short.

In comparison to many breeds, Chinese Cresteds live a relatively long time. We can expect about 15 years on the average, but it's still never long enough. Some breeders actually try to cheat the loss of an older dog by placing the dogs whom they are through showing or breeding with someone else, but in my opinion they are missing one of the very best parts of their dogs' lives.

Old dogs know us best. They have been through a big part of our lives with us, and they understand us. They know our moods; they know what we like; they know how to make us crazy. We're comfortable together, and we probably share a lot of the same characteristics. Like old couples who have been together for years, we have grown to be alike in many ways. (It kind of scares me that maybe we start looking alike, too.)

Old dogs know things. They have been observing the world for a long time and, unlike humans, they are not distracted by "the shiny stuff." They understand human behavior better than

we do. They know when to lie next to us or put their heads on our knees. They are much more attentive to us than we are to them. And they are never too busy for us.

Most importantly, old dogs have things to teach us. They have a quiet dignity that humans would do well to emulate. They face old age gracefully, not kicking and screaming the way humans have been told they should do. Too many of us are busy getting face-lifts or having our bodies sucked into a different shape to stop and appreciate the beauty that comes with being older. Yes, it's different than the beauty of youth. It's more complex, more interesting, has more depth. There is nothing more beautiful than a 15-year-old Chinese Crested—or an 85-year-old human. The response from the crowd at a national specialty to the veterans' classes demonstrates the deep emotion that these old guys solicit from us. No class gets more applause or cheers.

In this house, any dog who is here at age 7 stays. He has earned the right to stay and be spoiled and pampered and get any needed medical care and special food until his journey is over.

The end of the journey is, of course, a sad time, but I wouldn't miss those wonderful golden years with him.

—Sue Klinckhardt-Gardner, *Tamoshire@qnet.com*

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Italian Greyhounds

The Italian Greyhound—Is It Right for You?

Sometimes a simple, easily reproduced handout explaining our breed is required, so I came up with the following.

In the past few years the popularity of adopting retired racing Greyhounds has raised interest in the IG among those who desire a smaller pet. The big Greyhound is a relative, and the IG's streamlined form is similar. Both are in the sighthound family and built for speed, but the resemblance stops at much more than the size difference.

Some people wanting the look of a Greyhound see the little IG as a scaled-down version of the highly advertised retired racing "couch potato." Having lived with from one to 18 IGs at a time for the past nearly 50 years, I know that isn't the case.

Like most small dogs, the IG is a bit more difficult to housetrain than larger breeds. His lack of protection from the elements—he has an extremely short coat, and a minimal fat layer—makes him dislike cold, wet, and wind, complicating matters. Persuading him to ask you to let him out to do his business can be frustrating. An easier method is to provide means for him to relieve himself without having to ask and wait. A doggie door, potty pads, or a litter box work more easily.

Since the IG is small and houses are large (at least in *his* perception), he may behave indoors in the same way he does outside. He will run, leap, and scamper—because he can. Indoors he will be as anxious to play active games as he is outside, flying from one piece of furniture to another and onto tables and countertops. He can be trained to tone it down, but his instinct is to enjoy a much higher activity level indoors than most people expect. He loves to snuggle and will enjoy quiet time with his humans, but this will usually happen only after his need for physical activity has been satisfied.

Outdoors, the IG loves to run and romp, and often to chase small animals. He does not understand that he is little, so he must be protected from the dangers that can befall a creature of his size. These include encounters with unruly larger dogs and wildlife, the risk of running into busy streets while chasing real or imagined prey, and especially the chance of becoming lost while engrossed in the chase. He should not be allowed to run in unfenced areas. Although not as fragile as he looks, his long, slender legs make him more susceptible to fractures than most other breeds, which is something to keep in mind around small children or larger dogs.

The IG is a very loving, devoted