

THE LAB REPORT

THE HURON RIVER LABRADOR
RETRIEVER CLUB, INC.

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DIANE MASSERANT

On November 12, 2002 we lost a valuable member of our club, Diane Masserant, a loyal friend and one who always said it like it was. Diane waged a year long battle with ovarian cancer, always with a positive, look to the future attitude. As a social worker Diane was forever there with an understanding and helping hand for those in need. She also lent her expertise to our membership and club events. Who will ever forget the transformation Diane made of herself when she became svelte and trim and was sailing around the conformation ring again! Pam Smith is taking Diane's dogs in and if you can help finding homes please talk to Pam. To Diane's family, we say thank you for sharing her with us these years. To Diane, we say welcome home to God's mansion, peopled with all those we have loved and lost, and in a special corner of heaven there surely is a space for our furry friends long gone.

DECEMBER 2002

**Happy
Thanksgiving,
Merry
Christmas &
Happy New
Year!**



Is that a Silver Lab?
NO! It's Logan & Babe Schnell!

VOLUNTEERS

NEWSLETTER EDITOR:
Maurice "Spike" Mortier
(517) 548-5429 or pmortier@ismi.net
WINS'N'GRINS: Pauline Mortier for
December issue
LITTER ADS: Pauline Mortier
NOTICES: Beverly Schnell
COMING EVENTS: Jeanine Asch
MEMBERSHIP: Cindy Skiba
SUNSHINE: Helen Bronson

LQ AD

All title winners for the year 2002 to be submitted for publication in the Labrador Quarterly must be in no later than JANUARY 15, 2003 & sent to Laura Michaels at laura@woodhavenlabs.com

CORRECTION IN MEMBERSHIP BOOK

Website addresss for Laura Reich is:

<http://www.lor-allabs.com>

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES, PICTURES, NOTICES FOR THE NEWSLETTER IS THE 15TH OF THE MONTH



HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

By Beverly Schnell

Dates to remember for 2003:
January 10---General Membership Meeting
January 21---Board Meeting
February 14---General Membership Meeting
February 18---Board Meeting
March 7---General Membership Meeting
March 18---Board Meeting
April 4---General Membership Meeting & Elections

Note: Unless otherwise notified the General Membership Meetings will be held at Hartland High School
At 7:30 p.m.

WAYS TO “KEEP” A GOOD CLUB

- ❖ Attend meetings
- ❖ Arrive on time
- ❖ Try to get there even if the weather is not good
- ❖ Be prepared to offer alternatives and positive suggestions if you don't like what is going on
- ❖ Evaluate committee and Board proposals and then exercise your duty to vote and/or voice your opinion
- ❖ Don't expect to be in total agreement with the Club on all issues
- ❖ Accept the challenge of a committee chairmanship and/or serve on the Board of Directors
- ❖ Whenever possible cooperate with Club officers and committee chairs
- ❖ Volunteer to help or agree to help when asked
- ❖ Encourage your fellow members to work together
- ❖ Give your fellow members credit for contributions they make or the ideas they present
- ❖ Give others the benefit of the doubt
- ❖ Pay your membership dues before the due date
- ❖ Pay attention to official notices sent to you and respond to them quickly
- ❖ Notify the Club of any change of address and/or telephone number
- ❖ Recruit new members

- ❖ Look for ways that you can contribute to the Club.

The above list was adapted from an article entitled “Fifteen Ways to Kill a Club.” We don't need to read an article to figure out how to do that, but following the guidelines above could help our club develop into a strong, active organization with a membership working toward that end. At the same time we'd be having a lot of fun.

A Club runs on the donation of time given by its members. How can you fit in this year? What's your DONATION going to be this year?

- ❖ Help develop programs
- ❖ Bring refreshments to meetings
- ❖ Plan or help plan an event
- ❖ Chair a match or event OR assist the chairperson
- ❖ Volunteer your house for a meeting
- ❖ YOUR NEW IDEA

Our club is a working club and you can help. Don't hesitate to volunteer for any position. Your Board is waiting to hear from you!

*By Pat Schaap, Shenanigan Shetlands
As printed in the Printed Paw from
The Atlanta Obedience Club*

(Perhaps the above gives us all a new outlook on our own Huron River LRC)



WINS'N'GRINS

**AG-1, WOODHAVEN IRISH SILK, CGC, NA--
-Laura Michaels---Dog Sports of Genesee
County---1st Place AG 2 – 2nd leg; Capital Cities
Canine Club---1st Place AG2---3rd leg and NEW
AGILITY 2 TITLE!**

**Can CH, U-CH, WOODHAVE HAT TRICK---
Laura Michaels---Dog Sports of Genesee
County---3rd Place AG1---1st leg; Dog Sports of
Genesee County---AG1---2nd leg; Capital Cities
Canine Club---AG1---3rd leg and NEW
AGILITY 1 TITLE and NEW ALL PURPOSE
AWARD WINNER!**

**ALEGRA SABO'S TOP GUN---Matt Pius &
Judy Trevino---Pontiac KC---WINNERS DOG
& BEST OF WINNERS; New Castle KC---
WINNERS DOG & BEST OF WINNERS;
Ravenna KC (Sat.)---WINNERS DOG & BEST
OF WINNERS; Ravenna KC (Sun.)---
WINNERS DOG!**

**U-GRCH SHR WAYNE'S CANDY
VICTORIAN ANGEL JH, WC---Patty Wayne---
K-9 Fanciers (Sat.)---won the Champion of
Champions class & got her 5th and final leg to
GRAND CHAMPIONSHIP!
K-9 Fanciers (Sun.)---won the GRAND
CHAMPION class & BEST OF BREED giving
her a total of 23 points & moving her into 4th
place on UKC top 10 Labrador list!**

**LOR-AL'S DIRECT DEPOSIT---Laura & Al
Reich---Mid Jersey LRC Specialty---3rd on
Thurs. & 2nd on Fri. Bred By Exhibitor Dog,
AOC**

**LOR-AL'S DIRECT FROM TANTARA---
Laura Reich---Mid Jersey LRC Specialty---4th
Open Yellow Dog on Fri.**

**LUBBERLINE MARTINGALE---Pauline &
Maurice Mortier---Mid Jersey LRC Specialty
(Fri.)---Winners Dog & Best of Winners---5
point major!**



CENTRAL OHIO LRC SPECIALTIES Sat. & Sun. Oct. 26th & 27th

**LUBBERLINE MARTINGALE---Pauline &
Maurice Mortier--- (Sun.)---Winners Dog & Best
of Winners---5 point major! A NEW
HOMEBRED CHAMPION FOR
LUBBERLINE!**

**VISIONS LUBBERLINE GRACEFUL---
Pauline Mortier & Kevin Henry---(Sun.)---1st 9-
12 month puppy bitch in Regular Class &
Sweepstakes Class**

WINS'N'GRINS (cont'd)

SUNRISE WINDFALL TAILOR---Sheila Norgren & Annie Cogo---Sat. Best of Opposite Sex in Sweeps & 3rd in Regular Class; Sun. 2nd in 6-9 months puppy dog Sweeps & 4th in Regular Class

EPOCH'S SOPHIE TUCKER---Cindy Skiba & Nancy Chargo---Sat. & Sun. 1st in Sweeps 6-9 months puppy bitch & 1st in Regular class on Sun.

CENTRAL OHIO LRC SPECIALTIES (cont'd)
WINDFALL'S STAR SPANGLED BANNER---Nancy Chargo & Annie Cogo---3rd on Sat. & 4th on Sun. in 9-12 months puppy bitch Sweeps & 4th on Sun. in Regular Class

INFINITY'S MATINEE---Michelle VeuCasovic---Sat. 4th in 12-15 months bitches Sweeps & 2nd in 12-18 months bitches Regular Class

BONAVENTURE'S OLIVIA---Tom & Gail Shearer---Sat. 2nd in 15-18 months bitches Sweeps; Sun. 4th in 12-18 months bitches Regular Class

BONAVENTURE'S SENTRY---Tom & Gail Shearer---Sat. 2nd in 6-9 months puppy dog Sweeps & 3rd in Regular Class; Sun. 2nd in Regular Class

BONAVENTURE'S CLEO---Tom & Gail Shearer---2nd in 6-9 months puppy bitches Sweeps & 4th in Regular Class on Sat. & Sun.

KREEKSIDE CITADEL'S RAINMAKER---Pam Smith---2nd in Am Bred Dog on Sat. & Sun.

LINRAY'S RAPTOR---Pam Smith---2nd in Open Black Dog on Sun.

WINDFALL PIPES UP AT BANNER---Nancy Chargo & Annie Cogo---2nd on Sat. & 1st on Sun in Am Bred Bitches

BONAVENTURE'S ELIZABETH---Tom & Gail Shearer---3rd in Open Chocolate Bitches on Sat. & Sun.

GAFF CINAMAR SWEET EXTREME---Mark & Cindy Adler---4th in Open Chocolate Bitches on Sat.

WINDFALL'S MERRY MAGIC BANNER---Cathy Culpert & Annie Cogo---2nd on Sat. & 1st on Sun. in Open Yellow Bitches

RALEIGH/DURHAM LRC SPECIALTY WINDFALL BANNER'S MAGIC GEM---Nancy Chargo & Annie Cogo---2nd 6-9 months puppy bitches Sweeps

SUNSPORTS PEPPERMINT PADDY---Brandy Leggett & A. Cogo---Best of Opposite Sex in Sweeps

SUNRISE WINDFALL TAILOR---Sheila Norgren & Annie Cogo---Best in Sweeps & 1st in 12-18 months Regular Class

WINDFALL'S PIPETTA O'SUNSPOTS---Brandy Leggett & Annie Cogo---RESERVE WINNERS BITCH & at Fayetteville KC WINNERS BITCH!

WINDFALL'S PIPES UP AT BANNER---Nancy Chargo & Annie Cogo---WINNERS BITCH!

WINDFALL'S PIPE MAJOR---Annie & Ron Cogo---RESERVE WINNERS DOG!

WINDFALL'S MAGIC IN BLACK---Bucky & Sue Simpson & Annie Cogo---3rd Open Black Bitch

SUNRISE RAGGED RUN BLACK BEARD---Bucky & Sue Simpson & Annie Cogo---2nd in 12-18 months dog in Regular Class & Sweeps

WINS'N'GRINS (cont'd)

LUBBERLINE ENDEAVOR BINNACLE---

Jeanine Asch & Pauline Mortier---Kent KC---1st
Senior Puppy Bitch all 3 days & Sun. WINNERS
BITCH, BEST OF WINNERS, BEST OF
OPPOSITE SEX, & BEST OF BREED PUPPY
for a 4 POINT MAJOR!!!



CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 7th @ 6 p.m.

Sheila & Norm Norgren's home
900 Gully Road, Howell, MI

POT LUCK---bring a dish to pass
OPTIONAL---\$10 gift to exchange

PROGRAMS---please bring 3 suggestions for
programs you would like to see presented in the
future.

WHELPIN' WAGGIN'

Disclaimer Clause: This list is for litters of our members that are in good standing with our Club and the American Kennel Club and has been made available for your assistance in finding a new puppy. BUT: The Huron River Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. makes no warranties, expressed or implied as to the condition of any dogs being offered for sale, standards or practices of any breeder, the quality of their animals or the accuracy of any of the information contained within the HRLRC, Inc. Newsletter Listing, or within the HRLRC, Inc. website or any links from the website. HRLRC, Inc. does not endorse, recommend, or guarantee any kennel, breeder or dog listed.

Reminder: Send \$5 litter ad fee per month/per ad to Pauline Mortier, 4611 Brophy, Howell, MI 48843. Please indicate in memo section of check the month that you are paying for. These litter ad fees go towards our Rescue Account. Please call (517) 548-5429 or email pmortier@ismi.net to renew or update your ad. Deadline is the 15th of the month. NEW POLICY: No litter ad will be published without receipt of the fee. Also beginning JULY 1,

2001 for ACTIVE MEMBERS fee remains the same---\$5 per month/per ad. For NON-ACTIVE MEMBERS fee will be \$100 per month/per ad. Read the minutes in the March 2001 newsletter for detailed explanation of ACTIVE MEMBERS & NON-ACTIVE MEMBERS.

Ch Moraine's Malcom At Zinfandel
LIMELITES MISTER MISTER

Limelites Hearts Afire

X

Hunt Club Lubberline Captain
LIMELITES CAPATAINS AFFAIR

Limelites Mad About You

Whelped: 9/14/02 4 yellow males; 2 yellow females

Bill Gardner South Lyon, MI
(248) 437-8016

Ch Beechcroft's Edgewood Tomarc
BONAVENTURE'S CHOCOLATIER WC

Wenwood Banner Ruby Begonia

X

Ch Honbury Enigma
BLUE GRASS LADY PUDDLES NOEL

Miss Cocoa Magic Noel Paision

Whelped: October 1 3 chocolate males; 1 chocolate female

Frieda Paision Dearborn, MI
(313) 277-1338 email: flpaision@msn.com

Ch Guidelines Century Condensed
Banners Place Your Bets

Windfall's Banner Lorna Doone

X

Ch Dickendall Arnold
INSELHEIM GEEZ LOUISE

Ch Inselheim Just Jokin'

Whelped: Oct. 27th 3 black males; 1 black female;
1 yellow male; 1 yellow female

Terry Bryson Swartz Creek, MI
(810) 635-4820 email: windmilab@aol.com

Ch Raintree Slippery When Wet, JH
BANNERS WINDFALL SEA LION

Ch Banners Sea Breeze, WC

X

Ch Dickendall Arnold, JH
NORTHMARKS EXTRAVAGANCE

Northmarks Eloquence

Whelped: Nov. 5th 2 yellow males; 2 yellow females

Karen Brines Midland, MI
(989) 832-9528 email: kbrines@tm.net

1 YEAR OLD BLACK FEMALE, all shots, housebroken,
crated trained, some obedience training. Contact Helen
Bronson (810) 659-8517

3 YEAR OLD BLACK MALE, all shots, crate trained,
some obedience and field training. Contact Terry Bryson
(810) 635-4820 or email: windmilab@aol.com

HRLRC General Membership Meeting November 1, 2002

A regular monthly meeting of the HRLRC was held at Hartland High School on November 1, 2002. The meeting was called to order by President Beverly Schnell at 7:38 p.m. Members in attendance were: Dolores Richards, Stella Blair, Annie Cogo, Sheila Norgren, Pauline Mortier, Mary MacLean, Cathy Sawyer-Culpert, George and Beverly Schnell, Gary Cooper, Bill Gardner, Frieda Paison, Cindy Skiba, Cheryl Wellnitz, Mike and Judy Merians, Michelle VeuCasovic and Jeanine Asch.

The general membership meeting minutes from the September meeting were read and approved as read. The board meeting minutes from the October board meeting were read and approved as read.

The treasurer's report was accepted as read. Cheryl mentioned the CD is about to mature. She will talk with Nancy Chargo's son to determine what to do with the money.

A notification for dues owed to the club will be sent out as a reminder to members. This reminder should go out in January. Dues are to be paid by May 15.

The prospect of changing our fall specialty to the St. Clair show is probably not a good idea since it is further for out of state entrants to drive. However, it would be an advantage to have MBF run the show.

We need to see how to best manage costs for future shows. There is a high overhead at Newport Fireman's Park. We made money on the lunches this year. Fireman's Park now has tables and chairs that we weren't aware of—in the future, we probably will not have to rent tables and chairs. The fall specialty obedience judge was paid twice. He will be issuing a check back to us for the overpaid amount. We have not yet received the deposit back from Fireman's Park. Annie will check into this. Annie sent out a big thank you to all that helped make the show a success.

For future fall specialties, we should consider advertising to obedience clubs and the general public to possibly draw in more attendees. We can advertise in a section of the Detroit News for free. Gary Cooper mentioned he will be growing pumpkins next year and will donate some for our specialty decorations.

Nancy Chargo, Sheila Norgren, Annie Cogo, Pauline Mortier, Cindy Skiba and Angela have volunteered to be on the judging committee.

A nominating committee consisting of George Schnell, Michelle VeuCasovic and Cathy Culpert was formed.

The club Christmas Party will be held Saturday, December 7 at 6 p.m. at the Norgren's house. Anyone wishing to participate in the gift exchange should bring a wrapped gift of \$10 or less.

For the 2003 spring specialty, Spike Mortier will do judge's hospitality including picking up the judges and chauffeuring them around. Peggy Krohn might possibly drive down. It would be nice if members would donate money to go towards the purchase of large ribbons for the specialty for WD, WB, BOB, etc. It would cost roughly \$50 for all the ribbons. A mailing list will be submitted to MB-F for the spring specialty premiums. Pauline motioned to not have obedience classes at the 2003 spring specialty. A discussion ensued. The motion passed. It might be possible to have all-breed obedience in the future to generate more money.

When guests are at our meetings, we should make a point to introduce them at the beginning of the meeting. It would be nice to have some fun events and activities at our meetings. We should have a committee for this and possibly a budget. This issue will be taken to the board. A survey might go out in an upcoming newsletter for people to make suggestions for upcoming events. This topic will be discussed again at the December meeting.

We might also consider including a flyer about the club in puppy packets.

Michelle contacted Oakland Kennel Club and they are extremely interested in working with us for a supported entry or specialty in conjunction with their show. OKC is willing to take suggestions for judges. It is possible we could have a 2004 supported entry. Another prospect is holding our spring specialty at the OKC show rather than the DKC show.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanine Asch, Secretary



Upcoming Events

AKC Shows

Date	Name of Show	Judge(s)	Entries close:	Location	Comments
1/3	Colubiana County KC	W. Everett Dean Jr.	12/18	Tallmadge, OH	
1/4	Rubber City KC	C.P. Herendeen	12/18	Tallmadge, OH	
1/5	Rubber City KC	Sidney L. Marx	12/18	Tallmadge, OH	
1/17	Livingston KC	Bud DiDonato	1/1	Novi, MI	
1/18	Livingston KC	Mrs. Laurie Doumaux	1/1	Novi, MI	Best Puppy
1/19	Oakland Co. KC	Mrs. Suzanne Dillin	1/1	Novi, MI	
1/26	Marion OH KC	Mrs. Susan St. John-Brown	1/8	Marion, OH	
3/6	Blennerhassett KC	Victor S. Boutwell	2/19	Marietta, OH	
3/7	Magic Valley KC	Ms. Dorothy D. Nickles	2/19	Marietta, OH	
3/8	Magic Valley KC	Lester R. Mapes	2/19	Marietta, OH	
3/9	Blennerhassett KC	Mrs. Loraine Boutwell	2/19	Marietta, OH	
3/15	Detroit KC		2/26	Detroit, MI	
3/16	Detroit KC	Elliott B. Weiss	2/26	Detroit, MI	

CKC Shows

Date	Name of Show	Judge	Entries close:	Location	Comments
1/17	Elgin County KC	Maurice Tougas	1/6	London, Ontario	Armband draws
1/18	Elgin County KC	Barbara Innes	1/6	London, Ontario	75th birthday party
1/19	Elgin County KC	Adrian Landarte	1/6	London, Ontario	Armband draws
2/7	Wildwood KC	Mrs. P. Taylor	1/22	Woodstock, ON	Armband draw
2/8	Wildwood KC	Mr. W. Thompson	1/22	Woodstock, ON	Armband draw
2/9	Wildwood KC	Mr. L Harfield	1/22	Woodstock, ON	
2/14	Ontario Breeders Assoc.	Mrs. A. Peach	1/29	Markham, ON	
2/15	Ontario Breeders Assoc.	Mr. T. Alexander	1/29	Markham, ON	
2/16	Ontario Breeders Assoc.	Mr. M. Lanctot	1/29	Markham, ON	
2/17	Ontario Breeders Assoc.	Mrs. P. Lanctot	1/29	Markham, ON	
3/22	Windsor All Breed Training & Tracking Club	Guy A P Jeavons	3/4	Windsor, ON	
3/23	Windsor All Breed Training & Tracking Club	Miss M. Macbeth	3/4	Windsor, ON	

Matches

Motor City Speciality Clubs Sanctioned B Fun Match-Friday, November 29,2002 7pm
MSU Pavilion, East Lansing, MI Registration 6pm Entry fee \$5.00 Sporting judge - Mark Stinson

Spartan Mid-Winter Match B-OB-Sunday, January 5, 2003 MSU Pavilion, East Lansing, MI. Entries are \$6 and are taken from 8:30 a.m. until judging begins. Obedience starts 9 a.m, conformation starts 10 a.m. For more information contact Mark Stinson or Dr. Al Stinson, 517 655-5363,fax 517 655-3724, E-Mail: stinson@cvm.msu.edu, <http://www.cvm.msu.edu/purebred/>

London Canine Assoc. all breed sanction match and obedience correction match-Sunday, January 12, 2003; Delaware Community Center 2 blocks north of Hwy. 2 in Delaware. For information, contact (519)438-0679, jeffandtracie@rogers.com, http://members.rogers.com/lca/sanction_matches.htm

Other Events

“Coaching the Canine Athlete” seminar by Chris Zink, DVM, March 8-9, 2003. \$110 for both days includes packet of materials, lunch and continental breakfast each day. Hosted by the Toledo KC at the Toledo KC building, 1161 Clarion Ave. Holland, OH. For information contact Lyn Kalinoski, lyninterv@buckeye-express.com, (419)381-1439



☞ Please let me know of events I have omitted and I will gladly include them in this listing. Thanks! jeanine@endeavorlabradors.com

THE JOURNEY: GROWING AS A CARETAKER OF THE BREED

Part 2—Anatomy of a Breeder: Eye, Heart, and Mind

By Denise Hamel

In the course of conversations with senior breeders, one often hears a perceptive and talented peer praised as someone who has “the eye of a breeder” or “a great eye”, or as someone who has “the heart of a real breeder”, or someone who “thinks like a breeder”. These phrases mean different things to different people, but they indicate some common qualities which lift a gifted breeder above one who’s merely adequate. How do we move from simply producing puppies, even mostly healthy, well-socialized ones, to the point at which we’re producing dogs and bitches of real quality, which in turn have the potential to reproduce their excellence, and so enrich the breed? Let’s explore these three critical areas in the anatomy of the dedicated breeder, the eye, the heart, and the mind, to see what we can learn to help us grow in our own breeding program.

THE EYE OF A BREEDER

No pursuit is more akin to the visual arts than dog breeding, and in no other non-artistic field is a well-developed visual sense more necessary. Dog breeding is all about one’s eye and vision: from the rudiments from understanding dog structure, and how that structure is revealed in movement, to an appreciation for the subtleties which separate dogs into the poor, the mediocre, the good, and the great, to the ability to see and understand beauty of line and “finish”, to the ability to envision offspring from any two given animals, and then to sort the resulting litters---every essential task of the breeder involves an educated and gifted eye, if one aspires to excellence.

As in art, only a few ever rise to the level of genius, but education and application can help develop one’s own gifts fully. Although it may sound ridiculous, learning to see---to really see---is where growth begins. As an illustration, let’s think for a minute about children and art.

When young children set out to draw a tree, they inevitably draw a green lollipop on a big brown stick. The object they're drawing is a complex one, but instead of observing a tree closely in nature, and drawing what they actually see, they draw a symbol which stands for a generic tree. Later, with more maturity, they make an attempt to show branches and leaves, but, except in the cases of the unusually talented, their drawings are still based upon what they believe a tree to be, not on what they actually observe. It takes some training to learn to see and observe an object in the way an artist does, and to faithfully record what the eye truly sees, not what the brain "knows" to be true. The mature artist knows that light transfigures form in nature, and for a painting of a tree to look accurate, real, and believable, one may well need to use the unreal colors or forms (light blue or lavender leaves in the light, winy purples in the shadows, and so forth), because that's what the eye perceives if it can ignore criticism from the rational brain. What part of this process relates to learning to really see a breeder?

The transferable skill that we're seeking is the ability to see intensely and precisely, a sort of "hyper-seeing", and to visually appreciate or fault an animal in its entirety, not as a collection of parts. One can begin to train the eye in this way by first focusing intensely on structure, studying photographs and videos which may be freeze-framed, and then progressing to applying that knowledge to compare and evaluate live dogs in the ring. A useful exercise is to select a portion of dog anatomy which seems difficult to understand, and to focus intently on that area of dog structure. Hands on evaluation with an experienced breeder to confirm what the eye is seeing helps one to progress in understanding. Similarly, evaluating litters is a valuable exercise in learning to see. It helps to go over many puppies from many different breedings---both those of interest, and those which are not---and to record one's observations. Following those puppies as they become adults provides a treasure trove of information about how various types and structural packages mature. These exercises help one to develop an eye for appropriateness or suitability in matings: it increases the chance that how one envisions the offspring from a given breeding will be correct in actuality. Taking a class in drawing, painting, sculpture, or photography---or just sketching on your own---also helps hone visual skills to a higher level.

To move from the understanding of the anatomy of the various parts of the dog to an appreciation of overall balance, the total package of the dog (the sum being infinitely more than its individual parts), and the nuances which lift a dog above the average, requires even more homework. It is a difficult truth, but a high level of visual understanding comes to the best eyes only after some hard work has been done. Casual ringside observance isn't enough, and settling for repeating the observances of others---which may be uninformed, although stated with utter conviction---is an easy way out which stops personal growth completely. The truth is that breeding and vision for a breeding program are solitary pursuits, and can't be obtained second hand.

THE HEART OF A BREEDER

To have the heart of a breeder begins with devotion to the breed, but it encompasses much more. A dedicated breeder's qualities of heart and mind are inextricably entwined, but certain characteristics are solely the province of the heart.

At the risk of repetition, the words which best seem to describe a person with a true breeder's heart are passion, commitment, and complete dedication. Talented breeders seem to have the quality of "magnificent obsession" in abundance; although they don't necessarily talk about it with others, there is nothing casual in their approach to learning and growing as a breeder. They are driven by visions and goals known only to themselves, which they pursue with singlemindedness of purpose.

The heart of a breeder is deepened and expanded by the tragedies, the sorrows, and the disappointments which attend the life of a dog breeder. An individual with a true breeder's heart admires and appreciates the work other breeders, and is overjoyed, rather than jealous, when he sees

other breeders produce great dogs and bitches. Such a person has the heart of a lion in defending the breed from pernicious influences; is large-hearted when helping cultivate the spark of commitment in others; and treasures the contributions which other breeders and their dogs make to the Labrador breed.

THE MIND OF A BREEDER

The mind provides the other essential element of a breeder's anatomy. Study and acquisition of knowledge, decision-making skills, the ability for independent thought, critical evaluation skills, the qualities of common sense and practicality---all are critical to growth as a breeder.

“Thinking like a breeder” implies having a thorough foundation of knowledge upon which sound and creative decision making can be based. The old phrase which states, “the harder I work, the luckier I get” certainly applies here! Instant success is generally not lasting success in dog breeding, unless a great deal of study and application has accompanied a meteoric rise to the top.

The foundation, then, for learning to think like a breeder begins with a desire for more knowledge. Studying pedigrees in general, and in particular those of animals you find appealing, is a good start. It's an informative exercise to study the pedigrees of an entire breeding program which you admire---what was done, when it was done, for what reason, and with what result? Another valuable exercise is to study the breeding program of a kennel in decline. What breedings allowed it to reach the heights, where did it start to go wrong, and how was its quality compromised? Other rewarding lines of thought involve tracing the evolution of dominant sire lines and the contributions of great taproot bitches. Thinking like a breeder inevitably requires lots of thinking in general!

Making decisions about which dog to use in a breeding, or which puppy, if any, to keep from a litter, or about the need to introduce outside stock to invigorate your breeding program is a critical part of the work of a breeder. In addition to a firm knowledge base, thinking like a breeder requires one to have the ability to think independently, to defend his decisions based on well-founded logic, and to form an independent vision and set of goals. There is a certain herd mentality which is present in abundance in dog breeding circles, for there is safety in numbers; to make a daring and uncommon choice in breeding is to expose oneself, for good or ill, as having jumped off the common path! If one has no opinions, it's very easy to hide behind the security of “group-think”, but it makes progress difficult.

Having trained one's eye, and with some study under the belt, however, one has a good chance of spotting the right dog for a given breeding, whether the choice is a popular or obvious one or not. Thinking like a breeder also applies to the owner of stud dogs, who uses a knowledge of local pedigrees and prevailing faults to import a dog who offers what's needed in the local population of bitches. Ill-considered additions to the stud dog pool are either rarely used, or used with poor success, while the stud dog owner who has a breeder's mind can offer something of real value to a region by intelligent choice.

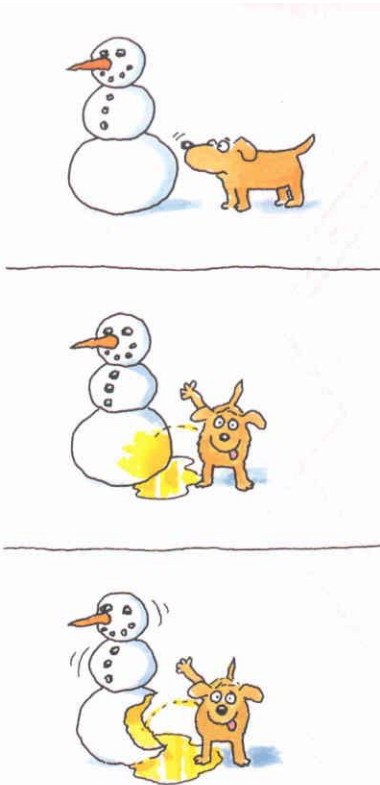
Critical evaluation also implies a certain ruthlessness of judgment. An individual with the mind of a breeder must be able to separate emotion from critical thought when making evaluations whether one is deciding that no puppy in a very expensive litter is worth keeping, or that the dogs in one's breeding program are getting poorer, and outside stock must be purchased to change direction, or something equally painful, good use of one's critical facilities requires suspension of emotion and kennel blindness.

A discussion of the mind of a breeder wouldn't be complete without mentioning the important aspects of common sense, practical husbandry knowledge, and experience, for these are the trump cards of the seasoned breeder. A gifted breeder invariably takes a long view of things, sometimes sacrificing success today for sustained excellence tomorrow. Patience is synonymous with growth as a breeder. Because true breeders take the long view, they tend to be very practical in their approach, not flying off on tangents or allowing themselves the luxury of self-pity when things go badly. Far from having their heads eternally in the clouds over “the vision thing”, they are very down to earth, making it a priority to learn

everything possible about practical animal husbandry. They know that no vision can suffice if puppies are dying, bitches are failing to conceive, dogs are going sterile, or semen is not surviving shipment!

Finally, experience is the earned advantage of the seasoned breeder, and the only way to acquire it is to put in a lot of time in the trenches. Experience tempers the over-optimism and unrealistic expectations of the novice, and serves as an anchor in unsettling times. Breeder experience acts to deepen one's joys in successful times, and cushions devastating blows when they inevitably arrive on one's doorstep.

Next time: Part 3, Hard Facts



From Beverly Schnell

A man was riding on a crowded busy, standing room only. The bus stopped and an elderly lady got on carrying a large picnic basket. She stood right in front of the man and grabbed the overhead rail so the picnic basket was above the man's head. Being a gentleman, he offered his seat to her. She quickly declined as she was only going a short distance. Soon the picnic basket began to leak. The man felt something drop on top of his head. As he looked up it hit beside his nose and ran down across his lips. He tasted it, looked up at the lady and asked, "Pickles?"

She replied, "No, no.puppies!"



