

threshold of success must remember that for someone to win, there must be someone to lose, and there will come a time when you will lose momentum and backslide a bit.

Few breeders can enjoy success without ruffling a few feathers along the way. It behooves you to mentor the newcomers, to give advice on grooming or handling and to help others as much as possible. Of course it might mean you will lose to a dog whom you just helped to groom. If a simple thing like pulling a few hairs means that a dog wins, then it must have been a pretty good dog to start with.

In an area where most of the breeders are bringing good dogs into the ring, those wins will be spread around. In that case, you will not see too many absences, and your fellow exhibitors will be more likely to be friends and not only competitors. Majors will be more easily found, and your fellow exhibitors will be more likely to enter puppies for the experience, if the dogs that are being entered are competitive.

I do think a good rule is to never make a major for any particular dog; all dogs entered must be competitive. Even if it is a puppy, it must be a quality puppy. You know there are times those puppies win.

It is much more sensible to be a friend to your competition and to mentor and help others over the rough spots than to go around complaining about how such an awful dog could win and that it must have been political, or maybe the judge didn't have a clue. —*Vigilia Matoni; briarlea@citlink.net*

Glen of Imaal Terriers Extremism

We can be extremists, we dog fanciers, going to extreme lengths for our beloved dogs. We can be equally extreme in our pursuits in the sport of dogs. We intrepidly forge on, despite satiric depictions of our "extreme" behavior on television reality shows and Hollywood movies. At times we even laugh at ourselves along with everyone else.

There is one area of our endeavors,

however, for which extremism should play no part, and that is in the interpretation of our breed standard. This is true regarding all breed standards but especially true of ours, where there is the temptation to overemphasize the breed's unique features—to prefer them in the extreme. It is an easy trap to stumble into, and it is almost understandable that one would trip up here. If a breed has a unique feature, then the more obvious or extreme that feature is, the more recognizable and easier to identify it becomes. This is a disservice to the breed, whether committed by judge or fancier.

Our standard cautions against this repeatedly: The modifying words *slight*, *slightly*, *moderate*, and *medium* appear over a dozen times in the standard, along with other cautionary phrases designed to guide us to what is correct rather than what is extreme. The examples are many.

In past columns we discussed this regarding the unique topline of our breed as well as the unconventional front assembly of a correct Glen. In both instances our standard calls for moderation, employing the word *slightly*. The topline should be straight but rise *slightly*. The dog should not be roached or swaybacked, which would be an extreme and incorrect expression of the trait.

Similarly, for the front assembly, the forearm should curve *slightly* around the chest, with feet turning out "slightly but perceptibly." The extreme expression of these traits would be a classic fiddle-front, which would be incorrect. As a result of the unique forequarters, the chest should drop to "below the elbows." The standard uses the elbow as the marker and certainly does not say that the chest should nearly touch the ground.

A Glen with that deep a chest, more like a Dandie Dinmont Terrier's than a Glen's, invariably has an incorrect front. Specifically, such a Glen almost always has too short a humerus, causing the chest to drop farther than it should. It isn't that the chest is exceptionally developed and "impressive" but rather

that the forequarters on the dog are too short, causing the chest to drop too low. This is extreme and incorrect.

The standard also cautions against considering the Glen as a "head breed." It acknowledges that the head should be impressive in size but cautions that it be "yet in balance with, and in proportion to, the size and symmetry of the dog" and that it shows "no signs of coarseness." It also says the skull should be—here's that word again—*slightly* domed.

And the list goes on. The breed should be *medium* sized. The coat should be of *medium* length. Substance should be impressive *for size of dog*. The neck should be of *moderate* length—and so on.

Yes, Glens possess unique features. But for a Glen to be correct, each of these features must appear in moderation and in balance with each other. None should appear in the extreme. —*Bruce Szostak; bluekafka@aol.com*

Irish Terriers Idle Hands—The (Dare)Devil's Workshop?

Long before the advent of dog shows, the Irish Terrier was integral to the agrarian life in both northern and southern Ireland. While there were some differences in appearance between the two regions, breeding the very best farm dog fixed the type and formed the character that we still aspire to today.

The Irish had to be the all-purpose dog to win favor with people of limited financial means. He was expected to guard, hunt, and serve as a steadfast family companion.

He was ferocious when required to be and fierce in battle. He was to be equally at home after rabbit or fox on land, badger and otter in the water, and rats anywhere. It was vital that he could differentiate these from the animals found on the farm. In the field he protected crops and not just potatoes! He was agile enough to dispatch even birds intent on doing damage to tender fruit-bushes and trees. He was to possess remarkable stamina, quickness, keen awareness, good humor, and abundant intelligence. He was to be comforting,

clever and competent—the quintessential pal.

Still today, the typical Irish Terrier remains resilient, watchful, game, and affectionate. This is a testament to the breed's genetic fabric. Far too few of them get to hunt, run miles, hang out at the local pub, or roam the farm. Their fatigue at day's end is likely to be the result of a pretty boring urban or suburban lifestyle. Some spend much of their time in crates, confined to a few rooms or to small fenced yards, getting out for walks on leads and maybe an occasional dog-park visit (that is, if they can manage to "get along"). They live lives under controlled conditions by necessity. This little world of inactivity can result in boredom, and we all know what boredom leads to.

As owners we have an obligation to provide whatever challenges in the way of jobs and varied activities we can to help our Irish use their brains as they were meant to be used. Exposure to people outside their immediate families in activities such as obedience, agility, Canine Good Citizen, therapy, and service are all possibilities for our daredevils. Play-dates with room to run provide excellent opportunities to socialize.

Mental and physical activity for an otherwise healthy and sound Irish will help channel energy in a good way, leaving none available for fractious or other unacceptable behaviors. A healthy, happy, and engaged Irish Terrier will be good tempered.

It has been noted by more than one commentator that the forbearance and faithfulness to family (especially children) is not usually found in a dog so game and independent. Yet the Irish has that capacity and more. We know of Irish who guard chickens as well as children, who manage to hunt quite successfully in suburbia, and who accompany their masters to their work. We have seen Irish who have never been in a hospital before adapt to wheelchairs and beds on wheels while they attend to vulnerable patients with care and sensitivity.

Ours is a breed that wants to be an integral part of our lives. That's what

makes them happy, and that's what the original breeders had in mind. Our job now is to keep it going! —*Marianne Kolve; m_dkolve@verizon.net*

Kerry Blue Terriers

This week's guest columnist is Maggie Hall, who has been competing in agility for 11 years. Her Kerries have qualified for the AKC Agility Invitational since the event began in 2006. Maggie's Kerry, Riley, was number one in agility for 2008 and 2009, and Birdie had that honor in 2011. Hopefully, her experiences will motivate others to participate in the sport.

The Road to Agility

Driving home with my first Kerry, Riley, I entertained him by telling him about my plans for us. Agility was at the top of the list, but I had no idea of how to begin. On television, I noticed that most of the agility dogs were herding breeds. I didn't know how a Kerry would do at agility, but I wanted to find out.

Basic obedience training came first. We began working with a trainer on *sit*, *down*, *stay* and the very important *recall*. Agility is an off-leash sport, so it was important to have reliable control of your dog. Six months later we were signed up for an agility workshop. We did some jumping and started training behaviors for the contact obstacles—the A-frame, dog walk, and teeter-totter. We worked on weave-poles, with fencing down the side to guide the dog's path. Riley was always eager and focused on the job.

A year and a half later, I started to think about entering a trial. However, after switching to a new agility trainer, I quickly found out how much we didn't know. We failed most of the tasks assigned us in our first evaluation. Riley couldn't weave without the fences to guide him, and I had no idea how to handle anything but a simple curve of obstacles.

I knew we had to practice at home if we were to succeed. A few jumps, and some "stick in the ground" weave-poles helped. Sessions were kept to between 5

and 10 minutes since I didn't want Riley to lose interest.

At a trial in August of 2000, I was thrilled to qualify on one of our two runs and to finally compete. Riley was still focused on me and on what I was asking him to do—even with distractions. The weave-poles continued to be a challenge for us, and his performance on the contact obstacles was not reliable. I now knew that it is important to find a good agility instructor from the start.

In 2003, I brought home Riley's niece, Birdie. She received a much better foundation in agility, and Riley's performance improved as well. I developed Birdie's drive for toys and food, two very strong rewards.

It may take two years to start a dog in agility. Contacts, weave-poles, a start-line stay, and sequencing skills take time to develop. Going to the ring before you are ready can reinforce bad habits, making them harder to correct.

Eleven years later, Birdie and I spend three to four weekends a month at agility triathlons. Riley retired in 2010 and passed away last April.

Every dog has different strengths and weaknesses and different lessons to teach us. Herding breeds, which still dominate agility, I think of as "employees." Most spend the majority of their time trying to figure out what their handlers want. I think of Kerries as "independent contractors." Very intelligent, they are always looking for another angle. They may start exhibiting behaviors that are more rewarding for them but not conducive to success in the ring.

As I contemplate a third Kerry, I am grateful for all that Riley and Birdie have taught me along the way. —*M.H.*

Thank you, Maggie. —*Gretl Kearney; heritagekerry@optonline.net*

Lakeland Terriers

So, You Want Your Cake and Eat It, Too PART TWO

In my last article I covered a proposed pre-whelping timeline for conditioning your Lakeland diva through maternity leave to bring her back into the show ring better than ever. Now I will carry description of the program to