

granddaughter of Tipper's from the Bred-by class, and I became an AKC Breeder of Merit. I have served as a past editor of the parent-club newsletter, *The Glen Chronicles*, and as a GITCA board member. I am a member of a local all-breed club and a founding member of a local earthdog club.

Back in 2000, when I decided I needed a dog to love, I never imagined how they would fill my life with so many new friends, travels, and adventures.

So, when Bruce asked me if I would write about living with Glens while he attends to his other passion for a time, how could I refuse? If it were not for his dog Kafka and that little article about Glens, I would have missed out on so many amazing things.

—Jo Lynn, irishglen@aol.com

Glen of Imaal Terrier Club of America website: Glens.org

Irish Terriers What Your Mother Said

“Even money?”

I glanced from the venerable Wax Waneforth to the ingénue couple, straddle-legged puppy in tow, even now making their way under the grooming tent toward him.

I shook my head in disbelief at what he predicted and then shifted my neck to a vertical nod. “You’re on.”

After a *gee-shucks* self-introduction to the *great* Mr. Waneforth, the novices finally got around to what they had come for: a genuine Wax Waneforth assessment of their puppy.

Wax bowed his body forward and pulled his bushy eyebrows together in a fierce, contrived peer at the pup. He was stalling for time, and I knew it. My heart sank as soon as the novices began to speak.

“We already know his faults,” the man novice said, and began to list some obvious problems with the dog.

All Wax said was, “I see,” and the woman novice took it as an invitation to jump right in and attribute faults to the dog that wouldn’t have bothered

breeders of great experience.

“Well,” Wax held out, “he has a nice headpiece. You might reset those ears and see if he doesn’t grow out of all those other issues as he matures.”

The couple went away in a joyful blither as if they had just heard a personal reading of the Sermon on the Mount.

The corners of Wax’s eyes crinkled with laughter as I forked over my money. “What made you think those people would voluntarily rip their own dog?”

“Part of it is that they want to ingratiate themselves into the circle of dog-people by showing what they already know. But most of it is the culture of the negative. No good comes from it, and once you start down that path, it’s hard to change course. Here comes a higher-level case in point.”

A young exhibitor waved and came over. After a round of hellos the exhibitor began to physically examine the dog Wax had on his table. Within a few seconds the criticisms and fault-finding of the dog began. Wax steered the conversation in another direction until the exhibitor wandered away.

“What my mother taught me,” I said, “was that if you don’t have anything good to say, then don’t say anything.”

“Hard to learn what’s right with a dog when you’re studying what’s wrong with it.”

A thought seemed to amuse Wax. “Imagine coming to a show to see what’s wrong with dogs instead of what’s right with them.”

“Yeah,” I mused, “How much can you learn about excellence if you sit ringside with people who can only point out what’s wrong with a dog but are incapable of or unwilling to point out excellence?”

“Or,” Wax asked, “Why would people even want to play this game when so many players are obsessed what is wrong with dogs?”

“So, how do we start to fix that?” I asked.

Wax smiled. “What your mother said.”

—Ellis West, e.f.west1@att.net

Irish Terrier Club of America website: itca.info

Kerry Blue Terriers Where Have All the Kerries Gone?

New conformation title holders used to greatly outnumber new performance title holders. In the USKBTC’s recent magazine, *Blueprints*, I have noticed that is no longer the case. Haven’t you heard exhibitors in conformation saying, “Where have all the Kerries gone?” Well, the answer might be that they are off doing other things. Events other than conformation have been around for a long time—so why has this balance between conformation and performance events changed?

Are we having fun yet? Some people feel that conformation is not as much fun to watch or participate in as performance events. Watching dogs hurl themselves off a dock into water to retrieve a toy in dock jumping or run excitedly around hay bales looking for vermin in a barn hunt event is more action than dogs going around in circles in a conformation ring. Agility entries and audience numbers have skyrocketed. Just look at the interest in the faces of the spectators or the obvious anticipation seen in the dogs getting ready to work their way through tunnels and weave poles, and you will see the fun all are having. Some exhibitors feel that even if their dog does not place in the event, they have had a fun day.

Where is the objectivity? All the events have judges; so there has to be some degree of subjectivity to scores or placements. However, conformation exhibitors often feel they have far less control of the final outcome. Many performance events have obvious and objective deductions for errors. You do not hear as many complaints, because it is clear why points were withheld. That is often not the case in conformation competition, especially if you see dogs that may win Best in Show one day