

TERRIER GROUP

be ready in their own good time, even if it is the worst possible time for us.

The responsibility of a good breeder doesn't end when the puppies are 8 weeks old. Being responsive to questions throughout the dog's life can be extremely valuable to new owners and help to increase their satisfaction with the breed. We carefully screen and educate buyers, but sometimes family situations change and a dog must find a new home. Breeder-members of the Glen of Imaal Terrier Club of America (GITCA) agree to take back any Glens they have produced or to assist in rehoming so that Glens do not end up in shelters or rescue situations. When you already have a number of dogs, being called upon to take one back unexpectedly is never easy, but it can be so rewarding.

Breeders need the support of a vet who enjoys working in reproduction, and finding one who provides health testing like OFA X-rays is a bonus. This is not easy either; there are more vets encouraging early spay and neuter today than there are those specializing in theriogenology, or reproductive science.

As if it weren't challenging enough to be a breeder, there is an anti-breeder movement that I find very disturbing. When the director of a shelter near me purchased a purebred dog, she received so many personal threats that she resigned in fear for her family. (The

slogan of the shelter was "Adopt, don't shop.")

There are currently 31 breeds in the AKC Terrier Group. Take your time, do your research, travel to meet the breed up close, and talk to a number of different breeders. It may take longer to find one of the "unpopular" breeds, but once you do, your dog will quickly become the most popular in your family for years to come.

—Jo Lynn,
irishglen@aol.com
 Glen of Imaal Terrier Club of America,
<http://www.glens.org/>

Irish Terriers

YOUR MALES

"It's sexist," Ms. D said from the other side on the whelping box.

Wax Waneforth, making his customary visit to inspect a litter once the pups could stand and pull up their tails, looked pained. "I didn't mean it to be," he said.

Wax and Ms. D are known to value their own opinions and to defend them vigorously. It wasn't nice when they were on different sides of the fence.

"I'm confused," I said. "Why don't you take it from the top again?"

Wax nodded.

Ms. D shot daggers at me and mouthed the

word *coward*.

"A long-term breeder of any merit has his or her own way of saying that you're not really breeding dogs until you're using your own males."

"And the bitches are what?" Ms. D taunted—"chopped liver?"

Wax drew another deep breath. "Let's not make this a tit for tat, dogs against bitches. That's not what this is about. It's a simple saying that hides a complex thought."

"I can't believe you'd encourage breeders to use a dog just because they *own* him," I piped up, partially to support Ms. D.

"Neither would I encourage a breeder to use his dog because the primary basis is that he *bred* the dog," Wax said. He put his hand over his eyes and then held his index finger straight up before him. "Very few breeders line-breed on their bitches. The breeding life of bitches is too short, and they produce fewer offspring than a well-used dog. Not that it hasn't or couldn't be done. It has."

Ms. D and I looked at him blankly.

"If you use a male and he improves your pups, then you keep those of his progeny that show the improvement. You may use him again, or mix together some of his get or grand-get. If a son, grandson, or more distant descendant of your original dog doesn't catch your eye and figure into your future breeding

plans, then there's a problem. The quality descendants who already exhibit some virtues of your original dog can now add some qualities of their own to the mix."

"From your bitch," Ms. D injected.

Wax touched his finger to his nose and pointed at her; then pointed into the whelping box. "When I looked into this box, I immediately saw pups with some of the qualities of their great-grandsire, some had qualities of their grandsire, and some looked like their dad."

Ms. D looked thoughtful. "And that's a good thing?"

"Sure. Imagine if you had bred to someone else's unrelated dog. Why, you'd still be sorting out the puppies with new good qualities from the surprises you didn't want. This way you can choose between virtues you know something about, and make a decision about which pup to keep based upon what you think will help your current bitches. Now you're using a dog tool as well as a bitch tool. You're making double the progress."

Ms. D. looked up.

"And if none of them are good, then you've chosen your dog poorly and have to start over building a dog line."

A witticism crossed Wax's face like a shadow, but his lips never moved. Instead, he raised his finger toward her once again and darted it for-

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ward and back as if adding a period to a well-chosen sentence.

—Ellis West,

e.f.west@att.net

Irish Terrier Club of America,

<http://www.itca.info>

Kerry Blue Terriers

NURTURE THE NEXT GENERATION OF FANCIERS

Have you ever checked the average age of your breed club's membership? I am sure you will not be surprised to find out that the average age is probably from 55 to 70. It is important for the continued support of the breed to promote and nurture the younger generation of breed owners.

What are some of the things clubs can do to support the younger generation of dog owners? Following are some ideas.

1. Have a list of breed mentors who are willing to answer questions any younger new owners may have. Often a quick phone call can help a younger owner tackle an issue.

Hopefully, the responsible breeder of their dog fulfills this role and supports, advises, and involves the new and young owner of the many options open to them, from conformation to performance events.

2. Run a handling and grooming clinic for

any new owners, and offer special awards to the young participants under a certain age (to be determined by the club).

3. Offer young owners (age to be determined by the club) club membership for free or at a much-discounted rate.

4. Compile a list of young handlers, and make it available to club members so that they can offer support and encouragement.

5. Make sure each breed club has a young-member coordinator, and use this person as a resource for coordinating activities that would appeal to younger participants.

6. At breed specialties, offer the youngest family members of participants dog-related coloring books or breed books. The AKC has coloring books available for purchase, as well as breed and health information and dog books.

7. Run contests for the best children's drawing, photo, or cartoon of their dog. Publish the winner on the club website and newsletter.

Having specific age limits for participants is necessary; you can include categories like 3–6, 7–12, and 13–18 years, and 18 and over. Offer awards in each age category. Similarly, you can hold handling or grooming competitions. Offer these younger breed owners a number of paid dog-show entries as incentives or awards.

8. Breed clubs should support Junior



Showmanship at shows or performance events by sponsoring breed trophies for younger participants.

9. Mail out activity sheets and the breed standard or handbook to young members. (The most difficult problem, which I will not tackle, is having your breed club decide on the age limit for what your club considers a "young member.")

10. Run a writing contest with a suggested topic or theme, such as "Me and My Dog." Offer prizes, and publish the winning compositions.

11. Establish a scholarship foundation. Suggest that each chapter club establish a scholarship fund, then combine the funds and distribute to multiple winners at the national specialty weekend.

12. Offer breed health information, coloring books, and the breed handbook or breed artwork to younger members participating in conformation and performance events.

In addition to what breed clubs could do, much of a younger person's interest in the breed and AKC events must start with the support of the child's own family. The family may include all the younger family members in any dog events they may be participating in. The family helps to transport the younger members to various events, offers financial support in the form of supplies and event entries, and involves them to help the adult participants in all dog events.

As Ben Franklin said, "Tell me, and I forget; teach me, and I may remember; involve me, and I learn."

The future belongs to the young. Help them prepare for their involvement! For more information, visit the USKBTC website, at

<http://www.uskbtc.com>.

—Carol Kearney,

heritagekerry@optonline.net

United States Blue Terrier Club,

<http://www.uskbtc.com>