

winning under most judges.

While you have been doing all the grooming and training, I hope you will have taken the time to have fun, play a game, laugh, and enjoy your dog. If you have fun, he will have fun also.

The final thing to remember is to walk into the ring with the confident feeling that you have a very competitive dog. That feeling will go right down the lead and make the two of you a team. One of the best reasons to do owner-handling is that you will get a great deal of personal satisfaction from going in the ring with your own dog and winning. Even if you do not win, you will still have the satisfaction of knowing that you and your dog did the very best you could. My personal feeling is that it beats sitting home and waiting for a phone call to let you know how your dog did at the shows.

—Virginia Matanic,

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American Fox Terrier Club website:
aftc.org

Glen of Imaal Terriers Intermission

After eight years of sharing my thoughts with you about this fascinating breed that I adore, I tell you with no small degree of sadness that this will be my final breed column, for a while anyway. I have recently committed to a theater project that will keep me otherwise engaged, and entirely so, for at least a year. As exciting as this theater project is for me, it comes at a price. I shall sorely miss the opportunity to explore with you the rainbow of issues that inform my love for Glen of Imaal Terriers.

As of this hour, I cannot introduce you to my successor, though I have an inkling as to who that might be. Regardless, I am confident that a new voice on the subject will be refreshing and this column will be in confident and imaginative hands. I know I will follow it closely. I hope you will as well.

Over the years, I have been fairly stunned by the response my columns have drawn from you. Unlike the great

wit Dorothy Parker, who once mused that she didn't much care for writing but loved having written, I so enjoyed writing these columns that it seemed reward enough just to have had that opportunity. Having people respond to them has been the proverbial icing on the cake. I thank you for that—for reading the columns and for taking the time to write me or pull me aside at a dog show to share your thoughts, extend kind words of support, or offer deeply appreciated compliments. Your generosity in this regard will not be forgotten. And if I also ruffled a few topknots along the way—good.

Many of you know that writing is not only a love of mine but also my career. I have a long and varied history of writing for all media and with all manner of editors. I very much want you to know that my editors at the *GAZETTE* rank with the very best of them. And I say that after reflecting on 40 years' worth of editors and the like. My long collaboration—and it has truly been a collaboration—with *GAZETTE* editors has been nothing but an unmitigated pleasure. They have all been consummate professionals and the AKC is blessed to have them. They too-often go unacknowledged for their tireless work and enormous talent. Two must be mentioned by name. Arliss Paddock has always been there for me. Her support, article by article, has been unwavering and inspiring. As for Erika Mansourian, well, I can simply say she is a treasure who would make any publication a finer thing to read. I will add to that that she is just about the most delightful human being whom I have ever had the pleasure to know. I consider them both colleagues and friends, and they will be deeply missed.

It would not surprise me if at some point in the future this column once again bears my byline. Perhaps at such a time I can look back at these past eight years and realize it was merely Act One, and that the final curtain is not falling at this time. Rather, it will turn out to be merely ... intermission.

—Bruce Sussman,

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

Irish Terriers Walkin' the Walk

Getting an invite to visit Arty Schemer at his place up in the country always feels like a cross between a chance to see a new Rube Goldberg diorama and an invitation to the Mad Hatter's tea party. Arty is obsessed not only with the logic and proportion of evaluating show dogs, but also by the idea that he can build physical devices that improve the process.

"I got something up in the barn I want you to see," he said, as I clambered out of my car.

I wasn't aware that my hands had been shaking until I got out of the vehicle. The looks on the faces of my fellow sojourners reminded me of the faces of the inner circle that had gathered to see Mia give birth to Rosemary's baby. We stumbled like zombies up toward the barn.

When Arty rolled back the big door, it appeared as if a similar door suddenly opened at the far end of the barn. We all jumped back, then sighed with relief when we saw that it was only a large mirror standing against the distant wall. Between our feet and the mirror ran a wooden structure that appeared to be an approximation of a narrow-gauge railroad track. The rails were two-by-fours, set about as far apart as a man's hips. A raised strip of plywood ran down the middle of the track.

"What the heck?" was heard from someone in the back.

"I'll second that," from another. This was followed by the sound of a screw-top flask coming undone.

"This is a rear-movement demonstrator," Arty said.

"Of course it is," said one of the wisenheimers near me.

"Look," Arty said, demonstrating as he spoke. "Put your feet just inside, but up against the outer rails. Walk forward keeping your feet against the rails." He did so.

“Yore shoulders is pitching from side to side like a danged drunk,” said one of the inner circle.

“Exactly!” Arty beamed. “That’s just how a dog moves when his feet are as far apart as his hips. It rocks from side to side to keep his balance over the planted foot.” He shoved an unsuspecting denizen onto the track. “Try it, and look in the mirror to see how you sway!” The new dog staggered just like the old one.

“Now,” Arty announced, “I’m going to walk with my feet on the center strip.” He did so without any evidence of the previous swaying.

“Pretty smooth,” from an old-timer.

“Correct,” Arty said. “When the foot moves under the body towards the center of balance, then there is no need for the body to move to find the center of balance. It’s far more efficient when the foot moves properly.”

Some new fool got on the track and looked foolishly normal.

“Now,” Arty said, “I gotta build a contraption to show how a four-legged critter throws it’s weight to the corresponding front leg to alleviate the cross-body rock, and then ...”

“I think we got the basic idea,” I offered.

“Wouldn’t it be easier just to breed a good-moving dog?” someone in the back asked.

Arty’s face snapped around, and he glowered as if he’d discovered a heretic among the faithful. He shook his head in resignation.

“You’d think.”

—Ellis West, *e.f.west1@att.net*

Irish Terrier Club of America website: *itca.info*

Kerry Blue Terriers

If you have ever gone to a major dog show or watched one on TV, you most likely have seen the professional handler and breeder Margery Good in the show ring. Margery has spent her entire life working with a variety of breeds. She has won prestigious shows like AKC/Eukanuba, Westminster, and Crufts and continues to share her

knowledge with newcomers to the sport. Sealyham and Kerry Blue terriers under the Goodspice kennel name have long been a fixture in the fancy. Working with a variety of breeds, she is more than qualified, as a guest columnist, to comment on the importance of good temperament in the dogs we breed.

Good Temperament Required

The good Kerry Blue Terrier was bred by the Irish farmer to kill vermin around the home and barnyard, keep predators away from the livestock, herd the sheep and fowl, retrieve game hunted by the farmer, and protect the family and property. Affectionate and quick to learn, he makes a wonderful family companion. He is a proud dog and is made happy knowing he does his job well. However, any of these good traits taken to an extreme can create unacceptable situations that could be avoided with the help of knowledgeable breeders and careful breeding practices. Kerries bred for good temperaments with an even-tempered personality should be a goal and the responsibility of every breeder.

Although a Kerry may have the drive to be a good hunter or protector, it is up to the breeders and owners to make sure that this drive is tempered with good judgment. As a breeder, do you search for a dog with good temperament as well as good conformation? Appropriate temperament is necessary for our dogs to live within a home with children or with guests coming and going and outside doors opening and closing. Careful selection of the sire and dam for desirable personality traits, as well as conformation requirements, is an important first step in producing dogs that people would like to own. Of course, puppy socialization and training is always helpful. We must remember that in the show ring, a fired-up Kerry looking for trouble can be flashy, but an even-tempered Kerry can be just as flashy and more predictable!

As breeders, we must strive to pro-

duce a dog who is level headed and dependable in a variety of situations, demonstrating the best of the dog’s traits with the hope to characterize the breed as a whole. Since the majority of a dog’s life is spent outside the show ring, dramatic and fierce showmanship cannot become more important than the behavior of the dog *outside* the ring. We must breed for Kerries who will show well and who are alert, with an air of intelligence and confidence. This is a dog who will serve his family well for his entire lifetime and characterize his breed justly.

Responsible breeders and exhibitors need to focus more on breeding Kerries true to the breed’s history of being “jack of all trades”—and we must remember that one of those very important trades is being a loyal and trustworthy family companion. Dog owners of today want a dog they can trust to behave as a good citizen in the home and in the community with other people and dogs. The future of the Kerry Blue Terrier depends on breeders who concentrate on all aspects of the breed: conformation, good health, and ... *temperament*. —M.G.

Thank you, Margery.

—Carol Kearney,

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United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club website: *uskbt.com*

Lakeland Terriers

Epigenetics

Breeding animals is both art and science; if one ignores the art dimension, one robs oneself of much of the enjoyment of creativity. Ignoring the science is a ticket to a Fool’s Paradise. Remember the ad slogan “It’s not nice to fool Mother Nature”? If you want to be a dog breeder for the long haul, and leave your breed in better genetic shape than when you began breeding, you need to pay attention to advances in scientific knowledge.

One of the most important recent advances in the understanding of inheritance is the field of *epigenetics*, the