

usually doesn't silence the dog completely, leaving them with a little sound. This can be an advantage in that if there were a dogfight or a real alarm, you'd be able to hear the dog cry out. I also understand some dogs who have had the second procedure can regain some of their voices to a certain degree.

Oh, did I mention that either procedure can be expensive? Veterinarians generally prefer not to do it.

Now, I am not a vet, so don't rely only on my word for this information, but for some owners, this may be their only recourse if they want to keep their pet.

At any rate the dog in question eventually went to a farm, where he is very happy and barking to his heart's content at birds, leaves, and whatever. So it worked out. But excessive barking is a real problem for some dog owners, and it is unfortunate that by having their animal debarked, they would be breaking the law.

We have had several Smooth Fox Terriers undergo this procedure through the years and haven't had a problem. A couple of them found they weren't making a loud noise and actually quit barking. (These must have been the ones who liked to hear themselves "speak.")

Anyway, it would be nice if everyone had a choice, not a mandate. Just my opinion. —*Billie Lou Robison, Sun Valley, Nev.; raybillfox@aol.com* ♦

Wire Fox Terriers



The Owner-Handler

Money is tight, jobs are scarce, and things are not much fun right now, but you have this lovely Wire dog that should be shown. You are not sure you can afford a pro handler and wonder if you could afford to show him yourself.

There is no reason that you cannot compete with professional handlers and do some winning. It does take hard work with our high-maintenance breed, and the time can be difficult to find when you have a family and a full-

time job.

An owner-handler's advantage is that most have only one or two dogs to keep in coat, while pro handlers have to work with many dogs. Once you have that good Wire coat, you need to put in only a couple of hours a week maintaining it, keeping the furnishings trimmed, and making sure your dog is in good weight and condition. Many owner-handlers find that this grooming time releases stress, and they really enjoy the closeness that results.

Most kennel clubs hold conformation-training classes, which are generally taught by experienced show people. That is where you will learn the fine points of handling. They will give you advice on your showing technique while building your confidence in what you are doing. It does help the chances of winning if your dog can walk in the ring, look the other dogs in the eye, and say, "I'm here; the rest of you can go now!"

Join a local kennel club where you will be able to meet other show people. Some of them may be willing to travel together and share expenses. If you carpool and take along your own food and other supplies, you can show "on the cheap."

Make friends in other breeds as well as your own, as you can learn a great deal from them. It also helps to have a friend critique you and your dog's performance from ringside.

I am sure you have heard all about "politics," and yes, there are some judges who do not judge the dog but rather the handler. There are also newer judges who are still learning about our breed; since their mistakes are honest ones, we can push for more judges' education and hope for the best. However, these problems are not as common as one might think. If you have a dog as good as your competition, and if it is groomed and trained as well, you have a very good chance at 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 Mutanik, Maple Plain, Minn.; briarlea@citlink.net* ♦

Irish Terriers



Winning Isn't Everything

The reason that most of us give when asked why we breed, show, or commit to doing activities such as agility, obedience, or performance is that we love the dogs. We love their potential, ability, enthusiasm, intelligence, looks, antics—and, of course, how they make us feel. We need them, and they need us. With luck we'll end up bringing out the good in one another and neutralizing the bad.

But sometimes the competition makes us less than the person our dogs think we are.

The desire to win—primarily in the conformation ring—can upset the dog-cart, so to speak.

The ambition to win becomes a priority that can cloud judgment. It can take away from the time required to study and learn pedigrees and to make the right breeding choices and do whatever is necessary to see them through. It can affect our objectivity, so we forget

that not every precious pup is a show prospect. It becomes difficult to resist the urge to sell them as such; it makes it hard to resist the urge to place pups for the opportunity to have them



shown, even when we know in our heart that they aren't that good.

Even worse is the inability to resist imposing upon novices to arrange for a sufficient number in the ring to guarantee a major. Winning this way isn't really winning at all. This is especially true if all you are doing is taking advantage of a well-breeded novice's naïveté. Winning at the expense of an untried beginner is a fine way to drive the person away from the show ring—and quite possibly from the breed altogether. It makes no difference whether the novice uses a handler or shows himself; the thrill will be short-lived for all.

It is also shortsighted to think that by having achieved a few championships, one is now expert enough to "educate" others. Winning is not a shortcut to knowledge. Opinions and preferences are not the same as breed intelligence. The passing off of so much blather does little to advance the interests of the breed. It promotes misunderstanding and betrays the trust of those who rely on us for mentoring, leadership, and guidance.

So what is a reasonable substitute for winning? Consider carefully how much goodwill can be generated by selling a nice, healthy dog with a great temperament to a wonderful family. Breeders' reputations are built on that, too.

Seeking out real competition is the only way to really see how your choices stack up. Maybe you don't win that much in the beginning, but what you gain in the process can be a very enjoyable part of learning and improving. It gives you the opportunity to get your hands on more dogs, to discuss coats, the standard, temperament, nutrition and exercise, and to share grooming tips. That give-and-take in a spirit of camaraderie is more dog focused. And isn't that what all this about—the dogs?

Winning cannot be the ultimate. Sure, it's nice up on cloud nine after a sweet win over nice-quality, well-groomed, properly presented competition—but so are the camaraderie and sportsmanship that showing dogs offers. So is the joy of raising healthy, confident litters time after time. And is there any greater reward than seeing the improvement

you bred for arrive in that one special pup? Owning and enjoying dogs is a process that can take years to master. What's the rush? —*Bob Clyde and Marianne Kelsoe, Plainfield, N.J.; m_dkelsoe@verizon.net* ♦

Kerry Blue Terriers

Jack-of-All-Trades

There is not much that a Kerry cannot do. The farmers who first owned them in Ireland realized that they needed just one dog who could do it all. The law of William III, from 1698, implied that only people who were rich could keep a hound, Beagle, Greyhound, or land-spaniel. So it comes as no surprise that this jack-of-all-trades, the Kerry Blue, became a popular companion for the family and a versatile worker on the farm. A Kerry's keen mind and his dedication to his owner give him the ability to accomplish most tasks. Why not try a few of the following activities with your dog?

Participation in the conformation ring, which highlights the Kerry's unique coat and striking physical characteristics, only scratches the surface of what one can do with this multi-talented breed. Obedience and rally events are well within their intellectual ability, although a Kerry's personality may give some owners a challenge. To avoid a dog lagging behind while heeling, one instructor said, "Have confidence in your dog. Don't look down or throw your left shoulder back. Just stare straight ahead."

"Slow ... fast. Left turn ... right turn." One Kerry knew *she* could do the exercises, so she left her owner to sit in heel position by the judge and then returned for when the judge said, "Exercise finished."

Agility trials always appear to be a special love for Kerries. After all, at these they are running, jumping, and weaving as fast as they can, all while their human companions try to keep up. Herding events really bring a Kerry back to his

roots. Their natural ability is immediately evident when you watch them work a small flock of sheep. A friend recalls how one Kerry would move cows from the fields to the barn just at the correct time every evening without so much as a reminder. Herding is the most recently AKC-approved performance event for the breed. Kerries have even participated in tracking and cart- or weight-pulling events. Another Kerry lives with an avid cross-country skier, so skijoring was the obvious pastime. Dog skijoring is a sport in which one or more dogs assist the skier by pulling him along the trail. What more could you ask for in a breed?

Yes, Kerries can do just about anything, but can they swim? Not only can they swim, but I was told of a Kerry who loved to body-surf. Once on the sand, the Kerry would run back and forth barking until the owner took her out again to wait for just the perfect wave, so the dog could again body-surf into shore. There are even pictures of Kerries sitting in canoes and jet skis, so bring your dog along on your next aquatic adventure. Recently I have heard of a dock-jumping Kerry. For this event, dogs compete in jumping for distance from a dock into a body of water. No, Kerries can't fly; they just look like they do as they jump from the dock.

Kerries can be seen doing just about anything from riding along with you in a snowmobile, shooting through a tunnel in agility, gliding around the conformation ring, retrieving an article in obedience, or jumping off a dock to just sitting next to you while you watch TV. I guess that is why we love them so.

—*Carol Kearney, Somers, N.Y.; heritagekerry@optonline.net* ♦

Lakeland Terriers

This article will conclude my discussion of the original Lakeland standard written in 1921 and the interesting reflections 13 years later by one of its authors, Thomas Hosking. As I

