



GRIFFIN GEORGIA KENNEL CLUB

AUGUST, 2010 ISSUE

President: Walt Sanderson – V. Pres: Jo Gahm – Secretary: Tammy Sasso – Treasurer: Jeff Gahm
Board Members: Lois Milligan-Noel Clarke-Willie Crawford

Next Meeting

Tuesday, August 17, 2010

7:30

Ryan's Steakhouse
1323 N. Expressway
Griffin, GA
770-233-3326

There WILL be a Board meeting this month - 7:00

Note the earlier time for the board meeting. Fifteen minutes didn't give the board enough time.

Plan to attend this meeting and get caught up on everything that is happening. Besides talking about shows, matches, and training classes, we have to do the important things, too, like planning the picnic !! Note the information on training classes further along in this newsletter.

I am including an article by JP Yousha on Owner-handlers, which I think is a great article.

Don't forget to send your awards forms to Lois so you can add the names of all your new winners to your plaques! If you need a form, let Lois know. I don't know how to attach it to this newsletter via email...

Willie

Griffin Georgia Kennel Club Board Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2010

Walt called the meeting to order at 7:16 PM.

Walt said he didn't have much new information about the show. Joyce Gibson will no longer be show chair for Kennesaw. Joyce sent a bill for half of the deposits. Walt asked the board if we should send the money for the deposits. Walt is not sure we should establish the cluster fund without Bobby agreeing to fully share income. We will not share the tent for hospitality with Kennesaw. We need to have another meeting with them. Our board is in agreement about the contents of the written agreement with Kennesaw. Tommy and Walt will try to set up another meeting. Tammy will send a copy of the agreement to Jeff, Jo, and Willie.

Members present: Lois Milligan, Walt Sanderson, Tammy Sasso, Noel Clarke, Willie Crawford, Jeff Gahm, and Jo Gahm

General Meeting Minutes

Secretary's Report

Noel moved to accept last month's minutes and Helen seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted. Tammy reported we got a banner from Canine Health for our donation and we can display it at our events.

Treasurer's Report

Jeff gave the report of our current financial status.

New Business

Lois handed out a new form to be used when applying for an award. These forms need to be turned in soon for 2009 – 2010.

Helen reported the match flyer would be coming out soon. She will try to use trophies that have been donated and those in the storage area. Noel asked for a budget for hospitality at the match. Jeff said we spend between \$110 – \$140. The match is Sept. 25.

Tommy reported that Bobby doesn't want to share a van to transport judges. So we need to rent a van or tell the judge to rent a car.

The summer picnic was discussed. Tammy suggested a September picnic at the Sanderson's but not the day of the match.

Helen will be giving handling classes at her house on Monday nights. These will start in September when it is not so hot.

Keith moved to adjourn and Willie seconded the motion at 8:11 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Sasso

Members present: Lois Milligan, Kelly Burge, Keith Bates, Walt Sanderson, Helen Sanderson, Tammy Sasso, Jeff Gahm, Jo Gahm, Tommy Yates, Sue Yates, Willie Crawford, Chuck Crawford, Noel Clarke, Walter Jung, Deb Yelvington

Guests present: Carolyn Stauffer, Debbie Hertz and Christina Hertz



Looking For Training Classes?

Sign up now:

Location: Walt & Helen Sanderson's Home
825 Five Points Road, Barnesville, GA
Phone 770-358-9918 Email: Touchtown@aol.com

Training starts: Monday, Sept. 13, 2010

Cost: \$10 per class

Bring as many dogs as you want.

Directions to Walt & Helen's - From Griffin, take US 19/41 south, and continue on US 41 (as US19 turns off) Go 12.1 miles and turn right onto Five Points Road. Go 3.6 miles and you should arrive at 825 Five Points Road on your right.

OR ~~ Program your GPS ~~



OWNER-HANDLERS: ADVICE FROM PROS AND PEERS

Compiled & edited by JP Yousha

INTRODUCTION. Owner handlers: they should be the backbone of our sport. After all, they represent the everyday person who is the bread and butter of the sport of dogs. Their ranks are filled with conscientious and patient breeders who bring their carefully crafted puppies to be exhibited, and hopeful and studious owners who bring their precious purchases to the ring. And yet they are often thought of (by themselves as much as anyone else) as second class citizens. Sentiments like "if you'd put that dog on a handler, you'd be able to finish him," and "he'd finish if I'd just put him on a handler," are heard too often. We ought to be able to take a good dog, adequately handled, into the ring and win. Certainly the professional has the advantage. We have less time in the ring than the pros and it often shows. We can be our own worst enemies. We lack more than "pull," we can lack professionalism and we can lack finesse. We lose for our dogs, or we hamper their chances in the ring. Since we must compete against our professional counterparts, we must have adequate skills to succeed. Complaining about the pros will never get a dog finished. Perhaps with some of the following tips from judges, professional handlers and seasoned owner-handlers we can be more competitive more often.

LEARN FROM THE PROS. "Local handling classes are great for socializing your dog and practice, but to learn those tricks the [pro] handlers use, you need to learn from a professional." Go early and stay late and watch the pros at work-especially in the Group ring. "Good handlers have a reason for everything they do." Here are free classes for you in handling--sign up by planning to watch other breeds and the Groups-and the Juniors too can be teachers to the new owner handler. Attend a seminar put on by a top handler. Assist a handler at their job for a weekend or even a circuit. Hire one to show you just how your dog is supposed to be groomed and presented. Be a steward and work for the judges. Not only will you learn a lot about your judge de jour you'll learn a lot about ring procedure.

DOES NOT KNOW RING PROCEDURE. "Nothing irritates a judge more [than] to have someone [be] clueless about where to stack their dog and where to move their dog." This is a very typical comment I received and a very legitimate complaint. Why should the judge care enough to put up your dog, when you don't care enough to learn how he wants his ring run? "Unless you are in your very first show, you have no excuse." And maybe not even then: shouldn't we learn about basic ring procedure before we step in the ring? (If not, then is it fair to expect to win?) The pros know the judges and how they want their ring ordered and this makes the judging easier; the judge can then concentrate on the dogs being shown to them, not the handlers needing extra help. So help the judge find your dog by being more invisible. Show up early enough to watch enough of that judge's ring to know how they want the dogs moved and stacked. Watch carefully and try to make life a little easier for your judge. A smile and some easy grace may go a long way towards making a favorable impression.

DRESSES INAPPROPRIATELY. "While every breed ring is different, an owner-handler has to really do it right." Dress neatly and professionally. After all, the judge has come in a coat and tie usually if a male, and a dress/suit of some kind if a woman. Shouldn't you "come to the party" similarly attired? "Pretend like every dog show is a job interview." Now that is a great one-liner to remember. Jeans, cut-offs and casual shorts and slacks generally stand out, and not in a favorable way, even at a small outdoor show. Fussy clothes and excessive jewelry are not only

distracting but can be dangerous. Outrageous or odd-ball clothes may draw attention away from your dog unless you have enough cachet to carry them off, and too short skirts can be a disaster. Men often keep too many jangling keys, change and other oddments in their pants pockets, which are a jingly distraction. And wear shoes you can gait your dog in, but that doesn't mean you need to tog out in hiking boots; wear something comfortable, but suitable to your outfit and the outing.

BRINGS A DOG IN POOR CONDITION. "If he is not even properly groomed, how can he be treated as a serious exhibit?" For heaven's sake, bring your dog to the ring clean and well groomed, and in the proper trim, so people will believe you know the nuts and bolts of the breed. Dogs cannot always be in perfect coat, or in full bloom and bursting with perfect vivacity and vitality, but we can admit what we have to work with today. If your dog is obviously out of coat, or out of condition, and that is more obvious than the dog's overall quality, then keep him at home until his virtues outweigh his shortcomings to the objective eye. "Many owner-handlers do not have the knowledge or experience to groom their dogs like the professionals." Learn from a pro how the job is to get done. Pay someone to learn if you have to. And don't overlook conditioning or the basics either. "Fat, flabby dogs are not in 'show-weight'!" "Long nails are my pet peeve. It's bad for the feet and it is just poor grooming to boot." Don't expect a sympathetic response from strangers to a dog you know is not quite right. Fix it before you show up ringside, and if you need an objective opinion or some help, find it, & when you find it, take it. "Owner handlers often don't know the value of pre-show preparation."

FIDGITS, FUSSES AND FIDDLES. "Novices just cannot quit stacking their dogs!" Stop. Less is more when it comes to handling. Too much fussing, for example, with an easty-westy front just draws attention to the dog's worst fault. Don't over handle. Let the dog alone to look his best whenever possible, and when helping him, use smooth, unobtrusive movements to correct his stack. Admire him yourself while in the ring. Relax: this gives the dog the confidence to unkink his muscles and pull himself up. A happy handler has a better-presented dog. All of us have seen the effect a frowning, fussing or obviously out-of-sorts handler has on the dog, the judge, the audience and themselves. It's a show-so act a little if you have to: show people what a wonderful time you are having with a wonderful dog who charmingly stacks and gaits himself to advantage.

IGNORES THE JUDGE. "Your dog starts off with at least one strike against it if you manage to irritate the judge before s/he even gets to look at your dog." Be ready ringside. Know when your class is coming up, have your armband, leash, bait and all else you need to walk in ready to show. "I have seen too many people pulled out by a judge, only the exhibitor does not see it and keeps fiddling with their dog." Here we are winning and still missing our chance. Keeping one eye on the judge at all times is as important as keeping one eye on your dog. Again, this is more than good tactics: it is common courtesy. You are in their ring with your dog, and you should be making it easy for the judge to favorably view your dog. He shouldn't have to concentrate on helping you do your job. "[Have] your dog already set up when the judge turns to it; don't make the judge have to instruct you to get your dog in place, etc." Pay attention to where the judge is looking; even when you are nervous. Expect to win; expect to be pulled out-and be ready for it!

LOSING COMPOSURE: "Your obvious nervousness will scream Novice while [it] also [is] being transferred to your dog." So pretend like you have it all under control even when you don't. It will not only help your handling; it will help your dog. Concealing your nerves will also keep the judge from focusing on you and your obviously novice status. After all, it is the dog that you

brought to be looked at. Also this includes getting intimidated-by judges or other exhibitors. Keep your cool. You've paid your way in and have just as much right to receive courtesy as to offer it. Know the rules and know the customs. Knowledge calms the nerves. If you cannot gain experience at the speed of a pro, with a bit of study you can catch up with what they learn "on the job."

WATCH FOR RING MOVEMENT. "Ringside folks will literally scream the person's name to...have them move out." Delaying the ring movement will at least aggravate the other handlers (your peers!), and, like running up on another dog, is a personal pet peeve of a lot of the pros. Move your dog while watching where the others are, and knowing where the stops and start are to achieve a fluid look, as well as not impede others who are trying to do the same job you are. "When it comes time to move your dog with the others, let the person in front of you take a few steps out. This gives plenty of room to show your own dog and allows for following space in case the ones in front must stop or slow. "Know the CORRECT gait for your breed and practice it so you can show your dog to its best advantage. Almost all judges HATE the racing around that so many exhibitors are doing these days." So don't feel rushed and don't rush around the ring. Sing a song with good cadence (silently), and move your dog at his best pace to offer the judge a picture of the dog's best performance.

DOES NOT KNOW JUDGE'S PREFERENCE. "How can they expect to win when they take a straight dog with a good head to a judge who is a fanatic about good angles and balance and will forgive a lesser head, but never lack of angles?" There were a variety of comments offered in the same vein. The pros know, by weekend trial and error with several dogs, what the judge is looking for in his ring. The pro takes the right dog to the right judge and thus increases his chances of winning. The owner-handler normally has only a few dogs to show, and novices often show them to anyone and everyone (in any condition and at any age). A little homework and some networking can correct these mistakes. Collect dog fancy magazines and study the winners pictured. Note their virtues and how they are consistent under certain judges. Take careful and honest notes about the winners for each judge you are under and look for the pattern. Exchange your experiences with other owner-handlers. Join "Judging the Judges" and other such archival formats to be able to enhance your experience without having to take 12 dogs to a whole panel of judges each weekend (which may go a long way to explain why the pros have the advantage over the novice). For each of us alone, to acquire the ring experience of a pro would take more than the one lifetime we each have, so we must strategize to make up the deficient we have in ring experience. The pros know the judges' predilections and preferences. We can too: with a little work (and a little help from each other?) we can end up taking the right dog at the right age and stage in the right competition to the right judge.

KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SHOWING. Being objective about your dog goes a long way to improving your chances of winning. Know his faults and how bad they are and how to minimize them. Know his virtues and how to pour them on. Know your competition and learn to cast a cool eye over whom is out there and who could beat you. Then set yourself in motion to exhibit your dog so he is the most winning package out there that day. He doesn't have to be perfect, but this is not the time to focus on his faults. Recall how he has looked his best in the past; how he's convinced others he is a good one, and set out to make him look that way today. Right now.

SHOW GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP. "They could do every last thing wrong from start to finish and still blame their loss on 'politics;' it's maddening!" Be a good sport-even if it hurts. Don't

grouse ringside, and don't run down other dogs or other handlers (at least until you are in the safety of your own van, or in the arms of your loving family!). Having a chip on your shoulder won't get you the points. So it's unfair--life's unfair. Analyze why you lost and resolve to correct the problem. Treat each day as a learning experience, and the learning as something you did win. Plan to fix your mistakes and plan to win next time as a result. Be a pleasant person people look forward to seeing in and out of the ring. Be hungry for wins, but don't be a ravenous wolf ringside-win or lose.

KEEP YOUR PRIORITIES IN ORDER. Don't use the bad behavior of others as an excuse to indulge your own worst instincts. Pettiness may win a show or two, but it cannot enhance your career as an owner-handler, and certainly you don't put the breed first by pushing so hard for the "career" of your dog, you forget that "dog" comes before show, and the breed comes before the dog. Don't show at the expense of your dog or your breed-watch out for the ego on the end of the lead; it can have a bad habit of taking over, and making you over into less than you are. Remember dog shows are first and foremost a gathering of interested parties; a sort of "professional conference" where peers can exchange ideas, make future plans, and reassess their own stock by having the opportunity to see that of others. Even if a few people are always whispering that winning is everything and the only thing; it is obviously not in dog shows even if they are a competition of sorts. No win was ever as important as the bigger goals of preserving, protecting and promoting the breed(s) and the sport you love.

CONCLUSION. This is (or at least should be) a middle class sport in which than the average exhibitor, with a good dog, proper preparation, and a little work can successfully compete. It should be a great joy to bring to the ring that special dog you have bought or bred. We cannot change the judges' preferences and most of us do not breed enough dogs (or enough styles of dog) to suit every judge. We cannot always choose our competition. But we can know our judges, our shows, our circuit, and our sites and ring procedures. We must choose our shows wisely, study up, vote with our entries, and conserve our modest funds to put us in the right place on the right day with the right dog. We cannot gain experience at the rate the pros do, so we must make sure we are not defeating our own good dogs' chances with our lack of skills, and we must use every (legitimate) advantage we can find. We can work a little harder for our dogs. (After all they are certainly worth it?) We can take away every legitimate excuse for not putting up an owner-handler by a little study and a little determination. We can make BBE the glory it should be! We cannot likely ever level the playing field in all respects, but that does not mean we have to give up or give in. There are always excellent owner-handlers out there who are deservedly winning with their good dogs. Many of us just need a little boost and a bit of polish to be there too. This is the sport that we love, and we should take command of ourselves and be a force to be reckoned with. To do that we have our work cut out for us! But remember we too have advantages we can make work for us. "Owner-handlers have a big advantage over a professional handler as they have a bond with their dog that a professional can never achieve; your dog will perform for you better in that respect." So we can bring to the ring a more secure partnership, and should be able then to get a more able performance from our partner. Of course, we also get to take them home with us; that is, in itself, a noble privilege. And this wonderful bond is where we all, judges, handlers and the rest, begin and end with when it comes to dogs. We work this hard because we believe that they are worth it...and more.

First published in the American Canine Exhibitor.

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