**Please take the time to read this.  As lovers of dogs we are all being attacked.  Thursday’s ruling by USDA/APHIS has driven a stake through every breeder’s heart, yet most have no idea what has happened.  Please friends, visit the AKC legislative page and find out what is being proposed.  If you will, get active in fighting those who want to destroy our sport.  At the very least, educate yourselves.  It is your life that is being affected, and your liberties that are being taken away.  PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE AKC Mr. Alan Kalter.**

Chairman's Report

**September 2013**

*-- Changing the Future --*

**New York, NY** – Last Thursday we posted a charming photograph of three Golden Retriever puppies on the American Kennel Club Facebook page. The caption was “I love my breeder” with a request to “share your love for your dog’s breeder.”  The image was shared 2,500 times, received 11,000 likes and almost 500 comments. We posted this because we love responsible breeders, but also because we wanted to see the reaction it would elicit.

The post sparked a lengthy conversation about the merits of finding your new dog at a breeder vs. adopting a dog. That passionate debate proved two important issues. There are ardent, articulate, and knowledgeable supporters of responsible breeding who possess facts and are capable of persuasively educating the public about the truth of responsible breeding. However, it also proved that there is a great deal of misinformation about responsible breeding that result in significant prejudice against breeders. There is no doubt that prejudice against breeders has impacted our breeders, our sport, and the public’s ability to enjoy the unique experience of a purebred dog in their lives.

Just 20 years ago, a purebred dog was the dog to have in your life. Twenty years ago, a responsible breeder was viewed as a respected resource. Twenty years ago there were virtually no important legislative efforts aimed at eradicating all dog breeding.

What changed in those 20 years? The noble quest to give every dog a “forever” home was co-opted by the animal rights organizations as a method to raise funds for their mission to completely eliminate pet ownership. Under the guise of supporting adoption, they have been raising a significant war chest - over $200 million last year alone – to fuel a campaign aimed squarely at destroying our ability to preserve breeds for future generations.

As told by AR groups, responsible breeders have been dishonestly accused of being the sole cause of dogs in shelters - not irresponsible owners.

As told by AR groups, purebred dog breeders have been maliciously portrayed as evil people only interested in money and winning at events, at the expense of their dogs’ health and well-being.

As told by AR groups, purebred dogs have been wrongly defined as being plagued with genetic health and temperament problems caused by breeders.

After 20 years of this propaganda – mostly unchallenged by those who know better – a portion of the public has accepted this fiction as reality.

No more.

AKC Staff led by Chris Walker along with Bob Amen and I have been working with Edelman, our new public outreach partner, on the plan that will change the current conversation, as demonstrated in that Facebook post, by confronting the prejudice and telling the truth about purebred dogs and their responsible breeders.

We will focus our efforts on two key audiences – families with kids 8-12 and empty nesters. These groups represent the critical inflection points for dog ownership and hold our best opportunities to correctly educate the public about purebred dogs and responsible dog breeding.

An additional audience will be federal and local legislators. Our experience makes it clear that once legislators know the truth, the legislative outcome is positive.

We will expand our voice to include breeders, dog owners, AKC thought leaders, veterinarians, and AKC’s over 700,000 grassroots followers.

We will relentlessly focus on these foundational story themes: the unique qualities of purebred dogs, the desirability of purebred dogs as family pets, the truth about the health of purebred dogs, and the truth about responsible breeders.

We will use every outreach channel to relentlessly tell our story in a shareable and searchable way, including national and local media, hybrid media, AKC’s own media, and social media.

By focusing on these key audiences with expanded, credible voices centered on our core narratives we will get better stories in the media, more often.

In addition, we will immediately and aggressively respond to any attack utilizing our partners, our supporters, and our full media assets.

There are three things you can do to help regain control of our destiny.

Tell us what you are hearing from your community, what the toughest questions are that you face. We’ll compile the answers and get you a toolkit to respond from a position of knowledge, strength, and pride.

Tell us your story - how you picked your breed, why you became a breeder and what has changed about the health of your breed due to the efforts of your Parent Club.

Tell us who you know who can help tell the truth – supportive officials in parent, children’s, or seniors’ organizations either locally or nationally; a veterinarian who is actively involved in a professional organization either locally or nationally; or an informed and outspoken government official.

You can share all of this information with Chris Walker at cxw2@akc.org or 212-696-8232.

As an avid Bullmastiff breeder, I am reminded of the description of that great protector of the family and property – fearless and confident, yet docile. I believe the AKC is a great protector of our rights to responsibly breed dogs. We too are fearless and confident, but it is time to stop being docile regarding the lies and propaganda that defile purebred dogs and responsible breeders.

We will communicate the truth about purebred dogs and their responsible breeders, emotionally and memorably.

We will increase the desire to own a purebred dog.

We will de-stigmatize responsible breeders.

We will change the conversation.

We will change the future.

As always, your comments are most welcome at atk@akc.org.

Sincerely,

Alan Kalter
Chairman

Chairman's Report

**"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character,**

**give him power." - Abraham Lincoln**