



February 2023

Current Board Members
Jodie Jeweler pvpresident@pviwc.org
Kathy Lewis pvveep@pviwc.org
Christina Buckner pvtreasurer@pviwc.org
Susan Wine pvsecretary@pviwc.org
Carole Silverthorne pvboard1@pviwc.org
Judy Chantelois pvboard2@pviwc.org
Michael Quigley pvboard3@pviwc.org
Linda King pvboard4@pviwc.org
Virginia Thackston pvboard5@pviwc.org

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please contact Kathy Lewis.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Volunteers are still needed for our Specialty Shows. Consider stepping up to help and bring a friend, it's a lot of fun and there are lots of dogs to meet!

We are still in need of sponsors and donors for our Trophies for the 2023 Specialties.

February 20th, 2023

Dear fellow PVIWC members and friends,

This year our specialties will again be at Harford County Equestrian Center, Bel Air, Maryland, April 1 (Rally and Obedience) and April 2 and 3 (each day is a Specialty show). We are still seeking sponsors for trophies for classes.

We are asking for donations in the amount of \$50.00 for all four placements, or any amount would be appreciated. If you'd like to contribute, please make a check **payable to PVIWC** and **send it to Christina Buckner at 1348 Sycamore Ave, Annapolis, MD 21403**. In order for us to acknowledge your support in next year's catalog, please have your payment to the club by March 1st, 2023.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me, at (301) 518-8701. Thanks again for your support. Hope to see you in April. Sincerely, Virginia B. Thackston, Trophy Committee Chair

Welcome.....

Wicca, Carole Silverthorne's new puppy!



How Do I Get My Puppy Started in Dog Shows?

By Denise Flaim Feb 13, 2023 AKC

[pictures removed to save space, KL]

Showing dogs—the formal term for it is “**Conformation**”—**is a sport.** Like any football game or tennis match, dog shows have rules, too. But folks who sit on the sidelines can easily become bewildered if they don't understand how guidelines apply to the game at hand.

Whether you're taking aim at a fastball or trotting with a terrier, no one becomes an expert overnight. It takes time, exposure, and research to really understand the subtleties of any sport. So the best way to get involved in dog shows is to just go to one. Don't be self-conscious about being a novice.

Yes, the bustle and drama of dog shows can be a bit intimidating, for some, and it can take time to find people who are willing to educate you. But your persistence will be rewarded with an ever-deepening knowledge of your dog and their breed. Don't forget a resource you already have: your breeder! And most dog shows offer new exhibitor tours.

Even if you don't plan on showing your current puppy, learning the ins and outs of dog shows will come in handy for any other four-leggers who might

join your family down the line. And if you have children in the family, competing in Pee Wee competitions and, later, junior handling can teach them responsibility and good sportsmanship.

So, in the spirit of every journey starting with a single step, here's a beginner's guide for new puppy owners who are interested in learning more about dog shows.

What is a Breed Standard?

The point of dog shows is summed up in that fancy word: "conformation." When they are evaluating dogs in the ring, judges are determining how closely each dog *conforms* to the written description of the breed, or its standard. Each breed is its own universe, and what is correct for one—think height, color, eye shape, or temperament—might not be for another.

But reading the standard isn't enough: You also have to know how to interpret it, and how to prioritize its many demands. The best person to help you with that is your dog's breeder, who can also tell you whether your puppy is a potential contender for the show ring.

Understanding the Order of Dog Shows

Dog shows are structured like an inverted pyramid, with the greatest number of dogs first competing among their own breed.

Within those initial breed competitions, a judge sorts through the non-champion dogs first (in what are informally called "the classes," or class competition). The judge selects the best male (called Winners Dog) and then best female (Winners Bitch, and you'll need to get used to that word, which is used without self-consciousness in the sport to relay its intended meaning: a female dog). Depending on the number of dogs they defeat, Winners Dog and Winners Bitch can earn points toward their championships. (The judge also selects runners-up: Reserve Winners Dog and Reserve Winners Bitch.)

There are other ribbons awarded by the judge, but the most important is Best of Breed. In that competition, all the champion dogs, as well as the Winners Dog and Winners Bitch, compete for the purple and gold ribbon, and the chance to compete at the group level. The American Kennel Club

recognizes seven groups with breeds classified according to function: Sporting (bird dogs, including pointers, retrievers, setters, and spaniels); Hound (dogs that hunt fur-bearing game, often independently); Working (protection and draft dogs); Terrier (dogs that hunt vermin and game that goes to ground); Toy (dogs bred purely for companionship); Herding (dogs that tend livestock), and Non-Sporting (sort of the catch-all for breeds that don't quite fit anywhere else).

In the show's ever-narrowing progression, the judges for each of the groups select their top winners, placing them one through four. Then the first-place winners from the seven groups move to the very tip of the pyramid, competing in the Best in Show ring for that top ribbon, as well as the runner-up slot, Reserve Best in Show.

Watching Your First Show

Dog shows are a spectator sport: Handlers and dogs are certainly there to be watched, by the gallery as much as the judge. But there are some unspoken ground rules when you're attending a dog show. Ask permission before petting or greeting a dog, and don't approach handlers to talk before they are about to go into the ring.

Take a seat ringside and watch the goings-on. Typically, handlers enter the ring when their armband number is called, line up with their dog, trot as a group around the ring, then await their turn to "stack," or pose their dog for the judge. Once that individual exam is complete, the judge will usually ask the handler to trot the dog in a straight line to a corner of the ring and return ("down and back"), then trot around the ring to the end of the line.

After all the dogs have been examined, the judge then makes their placements. Every judge has a slightly different procedure, but watching carefully will help you pick out the patterns that are commonly followed in the ring.

Resources for New Exhibitors

Many dog shows offer new-exhibitor tours: A knowledgeable fancier or AKC representative will take a group of newcomers around the show to provide

an overview of what's happening, and why. In addition, the American Kennel Club also offers a New Exhibitor Mentor program that will pair you with an experienced fancier. A dog-show mentor can fill you in on things you didn't even know you were supposed to know, like how to request your dog's armband number (ask the ring steward), or what to do if your dog takes second place in their class. (You need to stick around, in case the first-place dog wins, then you are called back in the ring to compete for reserve.)

Becoming a Dog Show Expert

There's a wealth of dog-show knowledge to be found on AKC.org, including a list of Conformation resources that explain everything from how to count championship points to how to fill out a dog-show entry form.

If you'd like an in-depth understanding of your breed and its standard, the American Kennel Club's Canine College offers a growing list of breed courses to educate judges and fanciers alike. And even if you're not a breeder, its free breeder-education courses on topics like anatomy are a terrific way to learn the difference between a pastern and a stifle. (That's the dog's wrist and knee, respectively.)

Before the Six-Month Mark

The sooner you get started with any kind of socialization and training with your puppy, the better for both of you. Even a basic puppy kindergarten class will expose your puppy to new stimuli, get them used to the presence of other dogs, and teach him the value of working with you to get rewards – all valuable lessons for the future. One great choice is the AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy Program.

While dogs cannot officially compete in AKC shows for champion points until they are six months of age, they can enter a 4-6 Month Beginner Puppy Competition. These competitions are very relaxed and low-key: a great place for both you and your dog to get accustomed to the sights and sounds of a real dog show. Wins earned in this special competition count toward the AKC's Puppy of Achievement certificate. And if you segue into formal conformation dog show competition with your puppy, wins earned in puppy classes up until 12 months of age count, too.

Where to Practice

When it comes to the show ring, just how complicated could running your dog around in a circle be? Actually, handlers make what they do look deceptively easy. Since you and your dog are both novices, your first stop should be a handling class. There, you'll learn the basics of stacking (positioning your dog for the judge's exam) and gaiting (that aforementioned running in a circle). Dogs of any age can attend these classes; just make sure your puppy is up to date on shots.

Ask your breeder for help in locating a nearby class; alternatively, inquire with a local kennel club. And while you're at it, ask for a membership application: By attending club meetings and volunteering at events, you'll expand your dog-show network. Someone who doesn't own the same breed as you can still provide valuable insights, especially since it comes from a different vantage point.

Compete in a Match Show

Once you've gotten your feet wet at handling class, it's time to put what you've learned to the test. Match shows are low-key, informal competitions that don't count for "real" points, but you'll perform the same patterns and routines that you would at an "official" show.

You can find sanctioned AKC match shows on *akc.org*.

Find a Specialty Show

Every breed has a national specialty – a large, widely attended annual show in which only dogs of that breed are permitted to be shown. Depending on a breed's popularity, some national specialties can be week-long events, encompassing not just conformation, but often Obedience, Rally, Agility, breed-specific performance events such as Lure Coursing for Sighthounds or Field Trials for Sporting dogs, and a host of social events, including ice breakers and dinners.

Most clubs post information about their national specialty on their websites, along with a comprehensive schedule. If your breeder is active in the sport, chances are they will attend this show; while you don't want to monopolize all their time, see if you can dedicate some time to watching a segment of

the show together, so you can pick their brain about handling, presenting, grooming, and general breed knowledge.

Continue Learning

If there's one truism in dog shows, as in life, it's that things are always changing. Keep in touch with your breeder and let them know how your dog is developing. Some lines mature early; others, not until four or even five years of age. Listen to what your breeder says about the best time to show your dog, and whether your dog is competitive.

Ask for complete candor from your breeder. In turn, be willing to acknowledge things you might otherwise not be happy to hear. An ugly-duckling puppy can very well transform into a beautiful swan, but the opposite happens, too. Breeders don't have crystal balls, and it's quite possible that your once-promising show prospect might fizzle out with time.

It might be disappointing to give up your pursuit of fancy rosettes and win shots on a podium but remember to put things in perspective: Your dog is still the lovable, valued family member that you took home as a puppy.

Dog Shows Should Be Fun

No matter what you do, remember that winning shouldn't be your main goal: Instead, it's having a positive, enjoyable experience for both you and your dog. After all, even the fanciest ribbons fade with time, but memories are forever.

If Conformation isn't for you, there are many other ways to bond with and socialize your dog, including over a dozen other dog sports, from Obedience to Agility. There are also official competitions that let your puppy show off the skills needed for doing the job their breed was created to do. Even if your breeder isn't actively involved in competitions such as, say, Scent Work or Flyball, they can point you to people who are. The goal, as with anything with your dog, is to have fun and continue building your lifelong bond.

TIDBITS, did you know...? C. Silverthorne

"Did you know that Irish Wolfhounds specialties are usually held outdoors unless there's a weather event or some emergency requiring them to be held indoors?"

Did you know that if you're entered in our dog show and want to help hand out armbands, you can't do that until you have finished showing your dog?

Did you know if you co-own a dog with an AKC judge who is judging at an AKC multi-day cluster, you cannot show that co-owned dog in that cluster?

Do you have any Tidbits you would like to share? Please send them to Kathy Lewis, email at top of page.

How To Read Dog Body Language

By Stephanie Gibeault, MSc, CPDT Jan 27, 2020 **AKC**

Key Points

- Deciphering dog body language is an important part of communicating with your canine.
- Dogs use posture, facial expressions, and other body language to communicate.
- Understanding your dog's body language is a key aspect of responsible ownership.



- communication

Dog body language involves a series of unique methods for communicating emotions and intentions. It can be quite different from how humans communicate.

A lot of canine communication consists of barks, whines, and growls, so it's important to know what dog sounds mean. More often, though, dogs rely on nonverbal body language. That can lead to plenty of human-dog misunderstandings. Sometimes, dog body language is simply unfamiliar (after all, people don't have tails). At other times, it's in direct contrast with what that same signal means to a human, such as with yawning or looking away. To better communicate with your canine companion, learn some tips on reading dog body language.

Tail Wagging

Tail wagging seems like an obvious body language signal. *If a dog's tail is wagging, the dog is happy, right? Wrong.* People misinterpret this signal all the time. All a wagging tail means is that the dog is emotionally aroused. It could be excitement, but it could be frustration or worse. To interpret the dog's emotions and intentions, look at the speed and direction of the wag as well as the position of the tail.

Basically, the faster the wag, the more aroused the dog. Think about those long, slow, side-to-side tail sweeps your dog makes when greeting you — the type that wag the dog's whole body. That's a relaxed dog. A faster twitch-like wag indicates a higher level of arousal and possibly in a negative way. Think of a guard dog on alert.

The direction of the wag may hold clues as well. A recent study on tail-wagging showed that dogs tend to wag more to the right when they feel positive about something, like interacting with their owner. Tails wagged more to the left when dogs faced something negative. Then, there's the helicopter tail wag where the dog's tail spins in a circle. Without question, that's a happy wag. You'll usually see it when a dog is greeting a beloved person.

Finally, the position of the dog's tail relative to the ground holds important clues about their emotional state. Essentially, the higher the tail, the more

assertive the dog. Dogs with their tails pointing down to the ground or even tucked between their legs are feeling fear and stress. Dogs with their tails held up like a flag are feeling confident, perhaps even aggressive. Relaxed dogs hold their tails in a neutral position, but neutral depends on the breed. Some breeds, like Chow Chows, have tails that naturally curl over their backs whereas breeds like the Italian Greyhound have a very low neutral tail position. If you get to know your dog's neutral tail position, you will more quickly recognize when their emotions have shifted.



Raised Hackles

When a dog's hackles are raised, it means the hair along their back is standing up. Technically called piloerection, the fur can fluff up across the shoulders or down the back and all the way to the tail. This is a definite sign that the dog is aroused, but not necessarily in a negative way. The dog might be upset or stressed but could also be excited or intensely interested in something. It's often an involuntary reaction, like goosebumps in people.

Posture

A dog's weight distribution can tell a lot about mood and intention. Consider a cowering dog that is hunched toward the ground. That's a sign of fear or stress. The dog may be trying to get away from something and the posture makes the dog appear smaller. In other words, it says, "I mean no harm." The extreme of this posture is a dog that rolls onto their back exposing the belly. This may look like a dog soliciting a belly rub, and in a relaxed dog, it often is. But it can actually be a sign of considerable stress and anxiety. The dog may even urinate a little in appeasement.

The opposite posture is a dog with his or her weight shifted forward. This dog is trying to get closer to something. This might simply indicate the dog's interest. But it could also indicate offensive intentions, particularly paired with other aggressive body language cues like a twitching tail held high. In this case, the dog is trying to appear larger.

An easy-to-read aspect of dog body language is the play bow. This is when dogs place their chest on the ground with their rump in the air. As the name implies, it's used to initiate play with other dogs and even with people.

A less easily understood signal is the paw raise. In the pointing breeds like the English Setter, the paw raise is part of pointing behavior where the dog indicates nearby prey. But outside of this context, a raised paw often indicates a dog is uncertain about a situation or perhaps feels a bit insecure.

Facial Expressions

Dogs have similar facial features as people, but they don't use them in the same way. Consider yawning. People yawn when they're tired or bored, but dogs yawn when they're stressed. According to Turid Rugaas, author of *On Talking Terms With Dogs: Calming Signals*, dogs use yawning to calm themselves in tense situations and to calm others, including their owners. She suggests yawning at your dog to provide comfort at stressful moments like a vet visit. But don't be surprised if your dog yawns back. Just as yawning is contagious in people, dogs can "catch" yawns too.

Lip-licking is another bit of dog body language that people often misinterpret. Just like people, dogs will lick their lips after a delicious meal, but they will also do it when they feel anxious. Sometimes the tongue flick is so quick it's tricky to notice. Your dog isn't signaling a desire to lick your face, but rather discomfort with a given situation.

The most confusing facial expression is **smiling**. Yes, some dogs smile, and if you're not familiar with the expression it can look terrifying. Usually, when dogs bare their teeth, it serves as a warning, as if they're saying, "Look at my weapons." It's hard to mistake the aggressive intention of a

snarl, especially when it's paired with a menacing growl. The corners of the dog's lips form the shape of a C and the front teeth are fully displayed.

Smiling dogs also display their front teeth, but the meaning is the complete opposite. Also known as a submissive grin, this expression is often found on a happy dog with a loose and wiggly posture. The dog's overall attitude says, "Hello, I come in peace."



Keeshond and young Samoyed sitting side by side outdoors.

Eyes

You can learn a lot about your dog's internal state by looking at the eyes. First, a dog's eyes can be soft or hard. Soft eyes have relaxed lids and sometimes look like the dog is squinting. They indicate the dog is calm or happy. The opposite is hard eyes where the eyes seem to go cold. These indicate a negative state of mind, and you'll know them when you see them. The dog might be guarding a toy or feeling aggressive. A hard stare, where the dog looks intently at something, especially for a long time, usually signals a threat.

Eye contact is an important signal for dogs. Just as the hard stare can be a precursor to aggression, looking away is meant to calm a situation. When dogs feel stressed, they will pointedly look away and avoid eye contact. People often interpret this as their dog ignoring them or being stubborn, but the dog is expressing discomfort.

The whites of the eyes are another key indicator. Known as "whale eye", when a dog shows the whites of the eyes, it's a signal they are feeling anxious or stressed in a situation. You might see them when you make

your dog uncomfortable, like when you pat your dog on the head, or when they're afraid someone will steal a bone or toy.

Deciphering Dog Body Language

None of these dog body language signals act alone. They are all part of a package. So, when you read a dog's communication, look at every signal the dog is using from the tail height to the eye shape. Your dog is "talking" to you all the time. If you learn what your dog is saying, you will develop a deeper bond of trust and respect. Plus, your newfound understanding of your dog's emotional state will help you predict your dog's behavior and prevent problems before they occur.

Just For Fun

English	Irish
Dog/dogs	Madra/madraí
Wolf/wolves	Mac tíre/mac tíre
Big dog/dogs	Madra mór/madraí
Hound/hounds	Cú/cúnna
Wolf dog	Madra mac tíre
Wolf hound	Cú mac tíre
Wolf	Mac tíre
Big dog	Madra mór
Big hound	Cú mór
Irish wolfhound	Mac tíre na héireann
Puppy	Coileán



PVIWC List of Meeting & Events 2023

January 8	Regular Meeting
January 12-15	Winter Celtic Festival Havre de Grace, MD
February 12	Regular Meeting
March 2019	<u>St. Patrick's Day Parades and Festivals</u>
• March 4	Alexandria, VA
• March 5	Annapolis, MD
• March 11	Manassas, VA
• March 11	Gaithersburg, MD
• March	Washington, DC
• March 12	Baltimore, MD
• March 18 & 19	ShamrockFest
• March 18	Harrisburg, PA
April 1, 2 & 3	Specialty Harford County Equestrian Center, Bel Air, MD
April 2	Regular Meeting - Following judging at Specialty
April 17-20	Irish Wolfhound National Specialty Myers Park, McKinney, TX
April 21&22	Dills Celtic Festival, Dills Tavern, 237 Baltimore St, Dillsburg, PA
April	Faerie Festival, Marshy Point Nature Center, Baltimore
May 6	Annapolis Irish Festival, Anne Arundel County Fairgrounds, 1450 Crownsville, MD
May 21	Show Wrap Up Meeting
June 10	Carroll County Celtic Festival, Agriculture Center
June 11	Regular Meeting
June 17	Penn Mar Irish Festival, Shrewsbury, PA
June 24 & 24	Celtic Fling (<i>with a concert on Friday night</i>) PA Renn Faire grounds
August 13	Regular Meeting
September 2 & 3	Virginia Scottish Games
September 17	Fun Day
October 15	Regular Meeting
November	Maryland Irish Festival, Timonium, MD
November 19	Regular Meeting
December 10	Holiday Party
December	Druid Hill Winter Solstice 5Miler, Baltimore, MD
December	Military Bowl Parade, Annapolis, MD

Dates, Time, or location to be determined and subject to change on some events.

Need Volunteers to Host meetings.

