Spring sneaks through the trees on rays of sunlight...
Ziggy, the All Purpose Farm Dog

Kilronan Ziggy Stardust
NA NAJ OA OAJ CGC NF
AX AXJ RN RO RS

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About The Cover

This eerily beautiful photo is of Finn, running free through his favorite woods in Arcadia, A forest path dream, Michigan. Photographer: George Davis
From the President

Each year the Board meets in January or February to plan the upcoming year. This is the BIG “face-to-face” meeting of the year. We returned to Phoenix, Arizona for two days of meetings January 23rd and 24th. We had a full agenda, and I highlighted a few items in my earlier post “Board Bytes.” As directed by our club policy, the Nominating Committee is elected at this meeting. The Committee is directed to put together the proposed slate for the upcoming two-year term. This year, the President’s class will be up for election. The class consists of the President, Treasurer, Corresponding Secretary and two directors. Thank you to this year’s committee members for their willingness to take on this very important task.

Our Club archivist retired several years ago and recently moved, necessitating a new home for the Club archives. The majority of the Club records have been transferred to past Recording Secretary, Cindy Shea, for storage. The remainder is being held temporarily by our Corresponding Secretary, Kayce Healy. Several boxes of VHS tapes featuring the judging at our National Specialties are a part of the archives, and we are working on a plan to convert the tapes to DVDs. These tapes offer a wonderful history of our breed over the years, and we hope to make them more accessible to our Club members.

Our Club history also includes what we, as breeders and owners, have done to try to eliminate the health issues that affect our breed. Over the years, we have sponsored research, participated in the Open Registry, provided DNA, and carefully followed the recommended health testing protocols. Through our efforts and those of our researchers, we have the newest testing protocols, effective treatments for many Wheaten health issues, and DNA tests to help ensure a brighter future for the health of our dogs. We have come a long way since the last Soft Coated Wheaten Health Survey was done over twenty years ago! It is time for another health survey to see where our breed is today. While we have made great strides in some areas, we are now seeing an increase in cancers such as Hemangiosarcoma, Melanoma and Transitional Cell Carcinoma. It’s time to track the incidence of these diseases. Other data we might consider are: what is the current status of behavior/temperament issues? What about allergies? In an effort to determine the health status of the breed, the SCWTCA Health Committee has proposed that we put together a new Health Survey to be administered through CHIC (Canine Health Information Center), which consolidates test results from various databases. The go ahead was given to the Health Committee to put together a proposed health survey that will be presented to the Board. Watch for additional details from Health Chair, Molly O'Connell, and her committee.

Mark your calendars now for two fabulous Specialties! Our National Specialty with Montgomery County Kennel Club is set for October 8th and just three short months later, our Roving National Specialty will be held at the Brooksville, Florida circuit January 20, 2018! Karen Bilda and Jan Van Ness, along with their committees, are busy planning a great week of festivities for Montgomery. It’s not too late to join in the fun by volunteering to help! Roving Chair, Kathi Elliot, and the members of the SCWTC of Greater Tampa Bay, are excited to welcome Wheaten exhibitors and fanciers to their beautiful state for the first ever Roving held in Florida!

I was recently looking over the list of SCWTCA committees, and was again impressed by how many Club members are willing to give of their time and talents. I can’t thank you enough for all you do to make SCWTCA so special. If you’re a new member or maybe an “old” one who would like to get more involved with club activities but aren’t sure where volunteers are needed, please contact our Vice-President Lee Martin at leemartin1@sbcglobal.net and she’ll help you find the perfect fit. We’d love to have you!

Cecily Skinner

“Some things just fill your heart without trying.”
From the Editors

It’s amazing to think we are already three months into 2017. My grandkids just turned 17 and are driving...YIKES! Everybody off the road!

March Benchmarks is typically a small issue with no specialties to report on… well, we have taken advantage of the space and jam-packed a wide variety of topics that we hope will interest you and spark some renewed excitement about all the possibilities available for enjoying more activities with your Wheatens.

Betsy Geertson, Performance Chair, helped write and organize an entire 12-page feature piece on “Performance” with some interesting articles and fun stories from our members who participate and/or compete routinely. From “thespian” to “search and rescue,” our breed is amazingly versatile.

Deb has done an interesting piece with input on an article about reading pedigrees. A topic that many of us do not fully grasp the importance of.

In Wheaten IQ we take a closer look at a past topic...HEAD! We have reprinted an article by Cindy Vogels (Essence of Type) and have attempted to expand our understanding of the Wheaten head with a more detailed view of “what lies beneath.” The section on dentition should be especially understood by breeders. We often see some peculiar bites, and there is much we can do to improve mouths.

In Wheaten Health News, Molly covers an important and surprisingly more common disease than originally thought, Degenerative Myelopathy (DM). You will be shocked by the information presented and the frequency of DM reported by OFA; I certainly was.

The Devil (Pam Mandeville) is busy nursing a new litter, so she’ll catch up next time.

We are so pleased to see more and more participation from our members and readers, and encourage all to be a part of this publication with ideas and articles.

Helen Fraguela

This quarter’s “Survey Says …” article focuses on a particular passion of mine … Pedigrees. The answers which came back from those esteemed breeders who have led the SCWT breed were fascinating to me. Their responses confirmed my own thoughts over the years … pedigree research and coming up with breeding combinations is both an Art and a Science. Studying genotype and phenotype is the key, and knowing the very best and the not so great features of your bitch, is essential to finding the stud dog who will complement her perfectly.

Several of the answers alluded to online pedigree programs as an essential tool for the well-meaning breeder. We’re fortunate in the SCWTCA to have the online Stud Registry. The Stud Registry is useful to see photos, health clearings, and pedigrees of dogs who are currently available at stud, or who were available in the past and are represented in prior generations. We’ve also been fortunate to have access to the SCWTPEDS online program. SCWTPEDS allows users to create trial pedigrees, to see photos of many of the dogs in those pedigrees, to calculate Inbreeding Coefficients, and to see AKC registration numbers & titles, DOBs, and PLN DNA results for a number of dogs.

Both of these wonderful online tools are labor intensive for their administrators. As a club I think we owe a huge debt to the many members who voluntarily devote many hours of their personal time for the betterment of our breed. In the case of SCWTPEDS I personally am at a huge loss if this essential database is less available in the future. My question for the club and for the administrator is what can we do to help? Would a subscription fee be a way to offset the enormous time and effort? Would more volunteers to update data help? I’d love to know how we can all continue to make use of this extremely useful tool to research pedigrees and come up with the perfect breeding pairs.

Deb Van De Ven
Happy Birthday Seniors!

“Hadleigh”
Harbour Hill Diamond Lane
(CH Aranbriar Adonis x
CH Harbour Hill Porsche Carrera)

“Bumper”
Ch. Harbour Hill Speed Bump
(CH Harbr Hill Where’s My Blanket? x CH
Harbour Hill Porsche Carrera)
01-11-2003

On January 11 dear sweet Hadleigh and Bumper turned 14! Siblings from the Harbour Hill "Freeway" Litter, Hadleigh keeps the sofa warm in Ashland, Oregon while brother Bumper is busy traipsing about the Northwoods of Maine. They may live 3000 miles apart but there is always and only a “freeway” between them. There is no doubt these two littermates are two peas in a pod. Strong, intelligent, funny, and loyal to a fault, each has brought boundless joy to their families for every minute of their 14 years. We are all so blessed to have them in our lives. Their many accomplishments over the years pale in comparison to the happiness they have brought to us…. that is their true legacy. Happy birthday Hadleigh and Bumper…may they have many more!

Richard & Susann Traister (Hadleigh), Dave & Sherrie Wight (Bumper) and Susan Sakauye

The Open Registry is a joint project of SCWTCA-sponsored research at NC State University, University of PA and the University of Guelph (Canada). Its purpose was to publish information on confirmed cases of genetic diseases in Wheatens and to maintain health and genetic records for SCWTCA-sponsored research.

The Open Registry lists dogs affected with Protein-losing Enteropathy/Nephropathy, Addison’s Disease, Renal Dysplasia or Irritable Bowel Disease.

For membership form, visit SCWTCA web site at http://scwtca.org/documents/health/or_membershipform_20100630.pdf.

For a complete list of Open Registry members, email kccarlson@comcast.net.

Please remember to support Wheaten Health with your tax free donations. Checks payable to SCWTCA Endowment. Keep in mind the Open Registry is an important tool in our tool box as breeders. We need your continued support and participation.
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CH Seannacy TD’aze Top Story
GCH CH Star Bright Mystic Gal
CH Moonstruck Rhumba Rhythm AX OAJ CGC
GCH CH Whindancer’s Sweet Dreams Are Made Of This
The dog sport offers many different competitive and non-competitive events/activities you and your dog can enjoy. They build confidence, burns off mental and physical energy, and reinforces the bond between dog and owner. Wheatens are enthusiastic Terriers, energetic and eager to please. Thus many do quite well. Most of all it’s great fun and a very social opportunity to meet other dog enthusiasts. The following section features some great activities along with articles, fun stories, and some significant accomplishments.

INCLUDED ARE:

Article: Performance...Picking The Right Puppy for the Job  By Karlie Meuller-Brough

CGC: Amy Ambrose
AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy: Amy Ambrose
Therapy: Bob Peck
Acting: Betsy Geertson
Rally: Sue Peters
Obedience: Amy Feldman
Agility: Kathy Clarke
K9 Scent: Lee Martin
Barn Hunt: Kathy Meuller-Brough
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Herding: Linda Hallas
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Article: Max, The Therapy Dog
By Betty Jo Faulkner
Performance...Picking The Right Puppy for the Job

By Karli Mueller-Brough

There are many things to consider when picking a performance puppy out of a litter. The main key elements are: Breeding + Upbringing + Evaluating = The best possible pick in a performance puppy.

Breeding:

No matter the intended purpose of puppies in any litter, you always need to start at the source. Most Wheaten breeders are not breeding strictly for a certain area of performance, like breeders of hunting or protection breeds. Breeders should be breeding for well-rounded litters. Parents need to be good examples of structure, health, and temperament (including a balance of drive and know-how). Within those litters you will have good possibilities for conformation, performance, and companion puppies.

Upbringing:

Raising your puppies to their highest potential plays a major role. If you have a litter that has not had enough of your focus and time invested in them, it will hinder your ability to choose the best puppy for the job at hand. For the most accurate performance picks you cannot just go off good structure and general outgoing temperament. You must go deeper than that.

You want to cancel out anything that could cloud your evaluation of the litter. Desensitizing, socializing, and exposure are some things that should be done with every litter. For dogs to get out in the world and perform at the top of their ability, they must have a good foundation from the breeder. If these things are not done, they have a greater chance of reacting to sights and sounds in the environment we are asking them to focus and work in. Teaching them early problem-solving techniques if also very helpful in getting to know each puppy’s ability in different situations and where they excel.

Puppies should have performance-type items introduced into their environment occasionally to see their natural reactions and abilities. For example, agility equipment (puppy size), scent objects, drive toys, pool, etc. Doing this is beneficial for all puppies in the litter as it broadens their exposure to new items.

Evaluation:

Evaluations play a major role in picking the right puppy. Not all performance areas are the same or require the same mindset. Depending on the type of performance work you are seeking a puppy for will depend on what type of evaluation you will want to do. I am often looking for multiple performance dogs within a litter for families, and they can vary greatly on the type of performance work desired. I tend to run all the puppies through several different tests during the evaluation process. The breeders who have most of their day to dedicate to their litters will usually know the outcome of the tests before you even do them. Some great tests out there are the Puppy Puzzle, Positive Puppy Preview, and Volhard. These are not the end all of testing though. I suggest that when using these tests you keep in mind our breed. I have altered any test I have used to fit our breed and our breeding program and have much more success with those evaluation tests. I test on drive, social skills, basic behavior testing, and agility skills.
A note on drive and know-how: this is a piece of the puzzle I personally put a lot of stock in when evaluating puppies in general. For a truly well balanced dog, breeders should be aware of the sire and dam’s drive and know-how when pairing the dogs together. I find it to be a very important key part in choosing our pairings. This is something I don’t usually hear breeders discuss. Drive and know-how should be discussed as much as any other aspect in selecting a breeding pair. What I mean by drive and know-how is the level of drive a dog has and the amount of know-how it must have to effectively use the drive. As a trainer, I focus most of my time on Wheatens, so I can say the offset of the drive and know-how has become a growing issue in our breed. It can affect any dog from companion to performance dog. If a dog’s drive is high (which we want in performance) yet it lacks the know-how, then it falls apart. That dog will act out, have anxiety, or shut down because it cannot figure out the outlet for that drive. Can know-how be taught? To a certain degree, yes. But you must first know what aspects that dog is missing to properly fill the gaps. This is especially noticeable when breeders breed American heavy coats to Irish imports. We are breeding dogs that have often lost most of their know-how, simply because we have bred a lot of drive out of the companion dogs. When breeding to an import we are often breeding to a dog with high drive and good know-how. At the end of the day what does that translate to for the litter? A bit of mismatch of abilities. Some will have high drive and good know-how, others will have little-to-no drive but will have know-how, and lastly high drive and no know-how. The last one I mention is one I tend to see a lot when dealing with behavior issues in a Wheaten. My advice is when you are looking at the sire or dam you want to breed to, ask about their drive; find out if they have any obsessive qualities, anxieties, etc. You want to be pairing the right dogs together to have the well-balanced temperament for performance and any puppy for that matter.
**CANINE GOOD CITIZEN (CGC):** The AKC Canine Good Citizen® (CGC) Program is designed to recognize dogs who have good manners at home and in the community. This rapidly growing, nationally recognized program, stresses responsible dog ownership for owners, basic training and good manners for dogs.

**AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy:**  Puppy classes are a must for all new owners!

The AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy is an exciting new program designed to get dog owners and their puppies off to a good start. It is an incentive program for loving dog owners who have recently taken the time to take their puppies through basic training classes. Training classes teach how to best communicate with your puppy and provide an opportunity for your dog to socialize with other dogs. AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy training is a natural lead in to the AKC® Canine Good Citizen® Program. CGC started in 1989 and is designed to reward dogs who have good manners at home and in the community. The Canine Good Citizen is a two-part program that stresses responsible pet ownership for owners and basic good manners for dogs. All dogs who pass the 10-step CGC test may receive a certificate from the American Kennel Club. Many dog owners choose Canine Good Citizen training as the first step in training their dogs. The Canine Good Citizen Program lays the foundation for other AKC activities such as obedience, agility, tracking, and performance events.

Nelson and Riley passed the CGC this past November after having been out of obedience class for a couple of years. I would definitely suggest to those planning to have their Wheaten take the test to brush up on obedience commands. If it’s not a command used in agility then I had forgotten it. I looked rather foolish having to ask what "about turn" meant. Although they both walk well on a leash, we do not walk them both on the left side as required in obedience so I had quite the time trying to keep Nelson from cutting behind me to get on my right side. Also, be sure to have someone other than a family member that the Wheaten trusts, to check ears and front feet. Riley got rather miffed and I eventually had to hold her collar to finish that part of the test. I went in having no idea she would act like that seeing as I am constantly checking her.

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**THERAPY DOG:**  Wheaten Terriers make friends wherever they go and it should come as no surprise that they excel at therapy work provided they receive obedience training and have the right temperament. Anyone who has felt a connection with a pet and experienced that unconditional love, understanding, and acceptance knows the value of a pet’s companionship. These qualities make dogs ideal therapeutic visitors for children programs, hospital patients and other medical facilities.

A group of high school students who have each lost a close family member sit in a circle on the floor of the guidance center. Under the guidance of their counselor, they discuss life without a family member. They offer each other understanding and support. One student says that since her mother has recently died, her father is unable to put up a tree or Christmas decorations. The grief of losing a spouse is too much for her father. She and her siblings need the normalcy of holiday trappings. She is close to tears saying how much she needs those family rituals. A therapy dog senses her distress and snuggles up to the girl providing comfort. The girl throws her arms around him.

This is a real-life experience. Therapy dogs fill a large number of jobs. They visit seniors in nursing homes, people in hospitals, and college students during finals week. They provide comfort to people in dependency court, let children read to them in elementary schools and libraries, and of course provide comfort to grieving students.

This wide range of duties requires an equally wide range of skills for the therapy dog. What characteristics must a dog have to fill all of these roles? Therapy dogs need to love people, have empathy for people, and make direct eye contact. They need to see new situations as adventures rather than stressors. Wheatens are a great fit. As a bonus (very wheaten) they need to be fluffy, huggable, and like to perform tricks. They lighten the mood in all situations and consistently elicit the comment....."He made my day."

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Bob Peck
AGILITY: Running a dog in an agility trial is the ultimate game for you and your dog and is an exciting spectator sport. This form of dog competition, where the animal's fitness and the handler's ability to train and direct the dog are tested to the max. Agility is a highly competitive sport in which handlers direct their dogs over a timed obstacle course. Dogs race against the clock as they jump over hurdles and through tires, climb and descend ramps, dart through tunnels, maneuver across seesaws, and weave through a line of poles. The goal is to complete the obstacle course in the shortest possible time without any errors. It is fast, furious, and a great favorite with competitors and spectators.

A STAR IS BORN: While being a canine actor is not a performance sport, it is an activity that can bring such joy and amazement to our hearts.

In 2014 Dylan (aka Orion Trebol Hot Off The Press, VCD2, BN, GN RAE MX AXJ MXP2 MXPB MJP2 MJPB) was asked to play Sandy in a local theater group presentation of Annie. We practiced for a couple of months and did five performances. Dylan did a great job despite never having been around kids. He was eight at the time and I figured that was the end of his show career. However, I was contacted in the fall by one of the actors who had been in the play. She was now a teacher at a local school and the students were doing the play. She asked if Dylan could reprise his role. He is now 11 1/2 and getting a little hard of hearing and not as steady on his feet as he once was, but I said we'd give it a try. Honestly, he and I had a great time. He has always been highly food motivated, so teaching him to run out onto the stage when Annie first spots the loose dog was a really easy thing to teach him. Annie was armed with some string cheese and Dylan happily ran onto the stage! The kids were all so nice to him, giving him lots of attention and string cheese at the rehearsals. He didn't do things exactly to script, but no one seemed to notice or care. There were just two performances this time with different girls playing Annie each day. That was fine with Dylan. He loved both of them. Dylan loved the opportunity to come out of retirement and play Sandy once again.

When I first started in agility with my boy Killian I was afraid to start going to trials. Me, the person who had been showing dogs in the breed ring for about 30 years at the time. I think it was the unpredictability of having the class clown as a teammate. When I did finally start, he didn't fail making sure everyone laughed at some silly antic he pulled.

One of our embarrassing moments for me was the time he saw my mother & sister sitting in the bleachers, of course right by the start line. I was waving frantically at them to leave...did they get the hint? Of course not! They just waved back! I was trying to be cool and leave him there to do my lead out. He wasn't good at start lines anyway- this is where you take the dog off the leash and walk out so you can call your dog to start your run. At this particular moment he took one look at me and then over at my family, back at me...want to guess where this one ended? Yes, over to them he went, thrilled that they were there. No qualifying score for us that day.

At the time I was mortified! Now it's funny. Those non Q's stick out in my mind more than the clean runs. There are some great people in the sport now but back when I first started, I was the only one in my state to run a Wheaten. Nobody took us seriously, and I have to say looking back I had more fun when I didn't take myself seriously.

Killian was a real trooper. I remember one trial in the mountains in the middle of a rain storm, the wind was blowing tents around and they kept running the Novice dogs. Now mind you it had been a long day waiting around watching all the excellent dogs run their courses. By the time it was our turn, only a few people hung around. We get to the start line and of course the rain starts to pour down...but, we're Terriers and we're tough. We get to the triple which was always a challenging jump for him. Just as he gets to it, a huge gust of wind blows over my boy...he doesn't even miss a beat. In spite of the “mini tornado”, over that jump he goes to finish the run. I look over at the judge and she is chuckling. She asks if I want to do the run over, I ask was it clean? It was and I took it!
**RALLY:** Rally is an AKC obedience sport. It involves a team of a handler and his/her dog performing skills that are compared to a walking obstacle course. The team follows a series of signs that are set up in various ways for a challenging course in a ring setting. Those who are new to obedience may find this sport a fun outlet with a bonding experience for the handler and dog since you can talk to your dog while on the course. Rally consists of Novice, Advanced, Excellent and RAE level titles. You must earn three legs to achieve a title except the RAE title which is earned after 10 qualifying Advanced and Excellent trials.

One of the most memorable times I had in Rally showing my first Wheaten, Wrigley, was in an APDT Rally event. Wrigley became blind at nine-years-old but had earned an AKC Rally title prior to his disability. APDT allowed blind and deaf dogs to earn Rally titles so I thought this would be a good challenge for Wrigley and me. I worked for several months with Wrigley making sure he could hear my clues because you cannot touch your dog in Rally. He came through with his title (three legs) in three tries and it meant so much to both of us. The judge was thrilled to award him his title ribbon and said, ” many people would consider putting down a blind dog but you have helped him realize he still has a job in his life.”

**OBEDIENCE:** This demonstrates the usefulness of a dog as a companion to humans. Trials highlight the human-canine bond in an impressive show. Each level of obedience competition requires mastering a specific skill set, increasing in difficulty, before advancing to the next level. Good canine companion skills exercise the dog in the most challenging class.

I got bitten hard by the obedience bug years ago when I had a naughty dog who needed house manners. While watching an advanced obedience class, I was mesmerized by the way dog and handler moved together, the skills of the dog and the rapt attention the dog gave its partner. I remember thinking, "I want to do that.”

And so I jumped into the world of competition obedience so green that I didn't even know that there are typical “obedience breeds” and Wheats aren't one of them. I just figured that any dog could be trained to do the exercises. Only later on did I learn that the other half of the equation is about the relationship. My current obedience dog is Posey (Orion Trebol Hot House Flower UD PCDX BN OA AXJ CGCA) and we are currently working towards our UDX title. To achieve this, we have to qualify in Open and Utility at the same show ten times. (Previous titles such as Novice, Open and Utility required qualifying three times.)

Some of the exercises are heeling, figure eights, retrieving a dumb bell on the flat and over a jump, hand signals for down, sit and come from across the ring, scent articles, stand for exam, directed jumping, group sits and downs and more. All teams start with 200 points, deductions are taken when errors are committed by dog or handler and score must be 170 or higher to qualify in each class. As Posey's partner, I have to make it fun and challenging. She knows the exercises so I must coach my canine athlete because I want her to keep wanting to play this game with me. I mix things up, incorporate play and food and train in different locations.

Posey and I have been invited to the National Obedience Championships to be held in late March 2017 in Perry, Ga. One hundred seventy of the top obedience dogs in the nation will compete. I am thrilled and honored to have been invited to represent our breed. Wish us luck!

In sharing our story, my hope is that other Wheaten owners will find the joy in the game of obedience. It’s a sport in which our smart, bouncy terriers can excel.

Amy Feldman
**K9 SCENT WORK:** K9 Scent work is a sport sanctioned by the National Association of Canine Scent Work (NACSW). It is patterned after the training of detection dogs and borrows elements of that for recreation. The Founders of NACSW are from California where the sport quickly spread.

Nose work is a relatively new sport that is an outgrowth of canine narcotics and bomb-detection training. Advocates realized that all dogs love to use their noses and developed a sport in which dogs search for a scent (birch, anise, or clove) in containers, building interiors, building exteriors, and on vehicles. In the initial training dogs are heavily rewarded with food or toys for finding and indicating the scent to their handler. Dog and handlers of all ages, temperaments, and physical capabilities can participate in nose work, which has added to its popularity. The National Association of Canine Scent Work (NACSW.net) is one of the sponsoring organizations. Their website has information on how to get started, where classes are offered, sources for the essential oils, and how to train and trial.

I started my Wheaten puppy in nose work at six months and she loved it; a few months later I started my eight-year-old Wheaten and he also was successful. As I have discovered, there are nuances to handling the dog that take some experience. A knowledgeable instructor is helpful. Before trialing, the dog must pass an Odor Recognition Test (ORT) in which the target odor is placed in one of 12 boxes set on the ground in one or two rows. My puppy dragged me into the room, paused at a box, then moved to another box, then went down the row to the last box and stopped. I called "Alert" which means this is the odor, right here. The judge said, "NO!!! She dragged you right to it first thing. You pulled her off the odor when you moved away." Turns out it is easy to misdirect the dog by where your feet are pointing. A friend had done a lot of box work with her dog as a puppy, teaching him to use all four feet independently in preparation for agility. He is now three and he hasn't forgotten that training. In the ORT he put his front feet on the first box, then his rear feet on the second box, then moved to the third box and tried to get all four feet on it. On the fourth box he extended a leg behind him to touch the box with a toe. Clearly, he understood where his feet were but didn't understand that this was a new game and he needed to actually sniff the boxes. He left a trail of squashed boxes behind him to the dismay of the trial organizers.

**Barn Hunt:** is based on the traditional roles of many breeds in ridding farms, barns, crop storage areas, and homes of destructive vermin. Some breeds were specifically created to fill this role, and for many of those breeds, Barn Hunt provides their first true opportunity for responsible breeders to test proper working traits in their dogs. It is also open to any dog of any breed or mix who wishes to play the game and can fit through an 18” wide by bale-height tall tunnel. Barn Hunt has titles, levels of increasing difficulty, and championships.

Barn Hunt is a newer sport that is catching on like wild fire. Dogs compete individually on a straw bale course designed for tunneling and climbing. Tubes are hidden around the course and completely covered with loose straw. The object is for your dog to tunnel, climb, and find the number of rats in the designated time for their class. There are decoy tubes on the course as well, some contain dirty litter and others are empty. Many Wheatens excel in this sport if they have a good prey drive. I enjoy watching them get back to their roots.

One of the things I enjoy most about this sport are the people. This is such an easy-going sport and people are genuinely happy for others when they do well and cheer them up when they don’t. Turk and I have been competing in this sport since it started just over three years ago. We have enjoyed the journey it has taken us on and the many wonderful people we have met. If your dog likes to hunt out in your yard, this may just be the sport for you. FYI no rats are harmed in this sport.

— Lee Martin

— Karli Mueller-Brough
AKC tracking is a natural fit for Wheatens. It combines the ability of a dog to use its nose and the dog's natural ability to lead. Dogs have a very highly developed sense of smell, at least 100,000 times stronger than humans. It’s the reason that dogs are often trained to find lost people and animals, drugs, bedbugs, and disaster victims. Dogs are also trained to detect cancer and alert for oncoming seizures. AKC tracking is a canine sport that demonstrates a dog’s natural ability to recognize and follow a scent. In AKC tracking the dog is completely in charge, and it is the handler’s responsibility to teach the dog to follow a scent and then learn to read the dog after he has that skill. For many people the greatest pleasure of tracking are the hours spent outside training with their dogs, leading to the thrill of the competition when he finds the glove at the end.

I KNOW BETTER
Everyone has their own reason for tracking with a Wheaten. It might be because they have a friend that encouraged them to go with them one sunny day, or, it’s a good reason to be outside doing something other than raking leaves or pulling weeds.

In other competitions, obedience or rally, it takes three ‘passes’ or legs to get a title. In tracking, it takes ‘one’. However, that’s not really how it is. In order to enter a TD (Tracking Dog) trial, you must get ‘qualified.’ You have to prove to a judge the dog CAN track by following the trail the judge has designed and someone has laid. It’s a regular track, just like the one he must follow to get his TD. When he gets into a test, the track will be designed by two judges. They have to agree on the place and the design. When the dog passes and finds the glove at the end of the track, voila! He’s earned his TD. All in all, three judges have been involved.

Believe it or not, last night I received the best advice I’ve been given throughout all my tracking. Carl said, ‘He finds it relaxing because there’s nothing much he can do. He just follows the dog’ REALLY? But I’ve always known where the track was, better than the dog! Nah. I’m kidding.

The best thing about tracking is that, I have NO control. The dog does it because he has a built-in finder - his nose, and he does it naturally. I can’t ‘see’ it. SO - TRUST YOUR DOG.

JoAnne Vogt

Coursing Ability Test: (CAT) fashioned after the sport of lure coursing (hunting-by-sight).

The Coursing Ability Test (CAT) is an introductory event fashioned after the sport of lure coursing. It tests a dog’s basic coursing instinct or hunting-by-sight ability. The dog chases an artificial lure, and the test is a non-competitive pass/fail event with dogs running one at a time. To pass the test, a dog running alone must pursue a lure, completing the course with enthusiasm and without interruption within a given time. Most dogs will happily go after the lure! The CAT provides a lively and healthy activity attractive to many dog owners.

I had never heard of CAT until I saw it listed as an event at Palmyra this past October. Riley was making the trip out and wasn’t signed up for an event, so after I read up on CAT I decided to enter her as it sounded like a lot of fun and may be something she would enjoy. To say Riley enjoyed CAT is an understatement. She was born to run! It was amazing to see her instincts take over. She couldn’t wait to get the white plastic bags. Nelson was lukewarm to the idea; I had to help get him going as he wasn’t sure what the purpose was. Of course he (being my agility dog and still having a couple runs left) was the one who tripped over the strings and rolled. He got up and finished his run though. Riley had three out of four successful runs earning her CA title. She ran out of steam on the last run, bless her heart. I would highly recommend to anyone if they ever have the chance, let their Wheatens run a CAT!

Ashley Ambrose
**HERDING:** The purpose of competitive herding trials is to preserve and develop the herding skills inherent in the herding breeds and to demonstrate that they can perform the useful functions for which they were originally bred. Although herding trials are artificial simulations of pastoral or farm situations, they are standardized tests to measure and develop the characteristics of the herding breeds. Dogs must have training and prior exposure to livestock before entering in tests or trials.

Like most performance events, herding requires a good working partnership between you and your dog. Unlike other events herding is an instinct driven activity in which your dog is exhibiting a modified prey drive. Sheep are the preferred stock for wheatens although goats, ducks and cattle can be used. If you would like to try herding, the first step is to have your dog’s instinct tested; this requires no previous training. It is a gauge of your dog’s instinct and trainability. Our club has hosted herding days, and Wheatens exhibit a wide range of interest in the sheep; we have had dogs who were afraid, dogs who were completely disinterested others that immediately moved the stock in both directions and then mine that saw the sheep as a living buffet! If your dog passes the instinct test, you can begin training your dog to herd. Herding lessons are expensive; here in Florida I pay $70.00 per hour. There is no sense spending money on herding lessons until you have trained your dog to sit or down and to stay until released. Before your first lesson, perfect these behaviors off-leash at a distance of 50 feet in an environment that includes distractions. My Wheaten Molly had advanced obedience and agility titles and had been the star of an Animal Planet movie before starting herding. I found that once she was on sheep, getting her to respond to basic commands was a challenge. Speaking of challenges, another thing that you (not your dog) will want to practice before getting started is walking backwards quickly. In the beginning stages of herding, you must develop your dog’s ability to work the stock in both directions, and you will spend a great deal of time walking backwards. Sounds easy but with sheep stepping on your feet you will save yourself some embarrassment and bruises if you are proficient at walking backwards. Herding can be great fun for you and your dog. It is the only performance activity I have participated in where my dog is not performing for a reward from me, but rather because she loves what she is doing.

Linda Hallas

**DOCK DIVING:** If your dog loves the water and loves to retrieve, then the fun sport of dock diving should be a natural. The AKC began recognizing titles of the new North America Diving Dogs (NADD) organization in June 2014, so now you can also add a dock-jumping title to your dog’s AKC records. The sport is open to all dogs, including mixed-breeds, and one of the first NADD record-setters was an All-American Dog named Augie who achieved a 24-foot air retrieve to tie the world record. In addition to Air Retrieve, NADD also offers competition in distance Jumping.

Training to be competitive at dock diving includes having a willing accomplice that likes to swim as well as the basics of obedience including mastering the stay and a solid retrieve. There is nothing quite like that moment when your dog comes thundering down the dock, vaulting into the air and splashing down eager to retrieve their article. Although the North American Diving Dogs (NADD) is the official organization recognized by the AKC, there are three including the popular Dock Dogs and Ultimate Air Dogs that can give wannabe competitors a leg up. Often it is a matter of geography that draws participants to a particular organization as the setup requires a large outdoor pool, and training conditions can be affected by weather. Many offer “try it” days and lessons for those eager to take the plunge. There are two categories for jumping: distance and vertical retrieves, and there are divisions including the Open class and Lap cass for those dogs under 16” at the withers. Every qualifying jump that your dog earns applies toward a title no matter what division it is earned in for the entire lifetime.

Krista at seven years young (Canadian CH Holweit’s Red Grenadine CGC, CGCA, CGCU, RN (CKC/AKC), THDA, HT, BN, TDA, DN, DJ) is the first Wheaten Terrier to compete and earn two titles in this sport, Dock Novice and Dock Junior.
I don’t think there is anything she enjoys as much. Want to give it a try? You can prepare now before taking your first leap using dry land training and conditioning. Choose a floatig article that your dog loves to retrieve. I prefer a 4” canvas soft retrieving dummy since it allows her to close her mouth when swimming. Since Wheatens do not have the jowls to drain water as Labs do, it is important to make sure they do not swallow too much water. It can be dangerous. We use a “platform as our ”mark” rehearsing STAY in multiple settings and using a long line when in public. Another concern unique to our breed is keeping our dogs comfortable both in and out of the water. In the beginning many will use a life jacket that can add additional warmth but may also impede the ability to jump. I use a wetsuit out of the water to keep muscles warm if the climate calls for it. As with any physical activity, it is important to get your vet’s approval and work up to strenuous activity.

Krista and I were so happy to represent the breed at the recent AKC NADD Nationals in Orlando this past December. We love the friendships that we have made in this athletic sport. And I still marvel at the tenacity, courage, and joy I see every time I see her push off the dock. We hope that other Wheaten owners will give this fun sport a try.

For more information on how to get started including videos: http://northamericadivingdogs.com/how-to/

Dorice Stancher

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**Max The Therapy Dog**

Many of you have seen this photo at one time or another. In fact, a good friend just sent me a hand painting of the photo. This lovely litter out of Jason, CH Greentree Darcove Fairy Tale and my Flirt, CH Marland Moonstruck Minx, is pictured in my husband’s antique 1959 Corvette (his passion). The pup in the center was always one of my favorites, so sweet and loving... we called him “Chinny Chin” based on the white blaze he sported. I had planned to show this boy along with several littermates, but family relocation gave him a far more significant path to follow...

He became Max, Moonstruck Once Upon a Time, and he and his owner, Betty Jo Faulkner, have made me so very proud!

*Get your vest on sweet Max! Let’s go play with your friends!*'

And the energetic, playful Wheaten terrier, Max, bounds out the front door and into the waiting car! He is always ready for his next assignment as a certified therapy dog!

Several days each week, Max participates in pet-assisted therapy. He helps enhance the quality of life of the elderly and otherwise restricted friends. An affectionate soft coated Wheaten brings happiness and improves the lives of individuals confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and children’s centers. Fun-loving Max spends Saturday afternoons in the playroom at Ronald McDonald house. He has become a hero there among the families with children with long-term illnesses. Many families staying at the Ronald McDonald house are from other countries and do not speak English. Max understands love in any language as he interacts with even the smallest of the babies. He assists the children on their walkers. He sits beside the little ones recovering from surgery. He pulls the toddlers around on little cars. His soft-silky Wheaten fur makes him like a real pillow-pet. They love to hug his neck and rest their weary heads on him.

Max is one of nearly 600 dogs in service in South Florida with a national pet therapy organization, Share-a-pet. Their mission began in 2003 to certify pets and their handlers to perform pet-assisted therapy. This loyal Wheaten especially loves going to the second-grade classrooms to listen to the children read. The program, "Pawsitive" is designed using pet-assisted therapy to improve the reading skills of struggling students! Many school children have overcome their fear of dogs as Max, the gentle, loving Wheaten, quietly sits by their side and patiently listens to every word they read!

Fun-loving Max is a favorite family member at the nearby assisted-living homes. He brings a piece of home back to those who once had a dog as a loyal companion. When he bounds through the front door of Williamsburg Landing, Eddie always greets Max with such love, yelling across the room,"Here comes my dog!" And Max eagerly responds by leaping into Eddie’s lap and smothering him with lots of Wheaten kisses! And somehow Max manages to greet every resident and fills a void in their hearts, as he works his way around the agility course of metal walkers and wheel-chairs, to quietly sit at their feet! The motto of Share-a-pet is "Some angels have wings, others have fur!" And truly therapy dog Max, is an angel. When invited, he jumps right into the laps of patients receiving chemotherapy in the infusion rooms. The agility of a Wheaten truly comes into play as Max can jump right through IV poles and tubes and always land perfectly on...
each lap. At the hospital, Max can navigate in and out of tight places and even jump into the highest hospital bed! He obediently follows the lead of the care-givers, nurses, and technicians! He is the best diversion for patients as he energetically brings happy rays of sunshine to every corner of the hospital! And the heavenly soft-coat of a Wheaten terrier is like a much-needed natural medicine!

Each Christmas, Max participates in the Twelve Days of Christmas caroling at the nursing homes in South Florida. Many dogs in their finest festive attire, join with other handlers to bring much joy and Christmas cheer to those in need! Therapy dogs are so valuable everyday, but, they are especially needed at Christmas! The pure love of therapy dogs definitely fills many hearts with lots of love at Christmas. Max was even the lamb in the Sunday School Christmas pageant and Santa’s special helper at many special events! There is nothing quite as joyful as an enthusiastic Wheaten "angel with fur!" Every Tuesday evening, Max joins friends, as the finest "Greetin' Wheaten," in feeding the homeless in a nearby park. Max is a much-loved participant each week in sharing lots of kisses and love as he greets those special hungry street friends. The pure unconditional love of a Wheaten terrier is priceless. Max looks way beyond the outward appearance and sees only the heart. And during that hour, the presence of a therapy dog helps to make those special needy friends forget their hard times and feel a touch of home!

The traits of a joyful, friendly Wheaten Terrier make a great therapy dog! And at the end of a busy day of assignments, and the therapy vest is removed, I say "What a fun day we had with our friends, Max! You are a great dog!"

"Some angels have wings, others have fur!"
"Treasure the Moments,

Cherish the Memories"

Looking forward to seeing you at the 2017 National Specialty on Sunday October 8!
Join us at a variety of performance events and conformation shows. And, don’t forget the fabulous boutique and beautiful Wheaten weathervane raffle item.
Save the date!
***

"Watch for the mailer in Spring"

RAFFLE ITEM
This stunning hand-crafted copper and bronze running Wheaten weather vane showcases our beautiful breed. It is fully functional as a weather vane or as a decorative table top statement piece. It is complete with a free standing brass base.
Size: 15” W x 24” H
Friday, June 2, 2017
Purina Event Center, Gray Summit, Missouri

Sweepstakes Judge: Ms. Patrice Chevalier
Breed Judge: Mrs. Patricia V. Trotter

Superintendent: Foy Trent Dog Shows
foytrentdogshows.com
“Start June in St. Louis” Cluster
Mississippi Valley Kennel Club

Closing Date: Wednesday, May 17, 2017

Five Show Weekend Thursday, June 1 - Monday, June 5
Thursday, Gateway Terrier Association: Mr. Darren Bowey
Saturday, Mississippi Valley Kennel Club: Mr. David J. Kirkland
Sunday, Missouri Rhineland Kennel Club: Mrs. Karen C. Wilson
Monday, Missouri Rhineland Kennel Club: Mrs. Charlotte P. Patterson

Information: www.scwtcasl.com - eazerolo@centurytel.net
"GOLD GRAND CHAMPION"

LIL’TOWN WHEATENS OF ARDNACASSA
GC LIL’TOWN FIDDLER’S LULLABY OF ARDNACASSA
(CH Modny Style Great Expectations x CH Lil’Town Lullaby Of Ardnacassa)

"FIDDLER"

GCH – Bronze
GCH – Silver
GCH – Gold

MULTIPLE BOBs
BOB – DEVON, 2014
BOS – HATBORO, 2015

MULTIPLE GROUP PLACEMENTS
AOM – HATBORO, 2012
AOM – HATBORO, 2015
AOM – MORRIS & ESSEX, 2015
AOM – SCWTC of Greater St. Louis, 2016
AOM – HATBORO, 2016
AOM – Westminster, 2017

SINCERE THANKS TO ALLISON SUNDERMAN FOR HER EXQUISITE HANDLING AND TO JOE AND LAURA GUIBORD FOR ALLOWING ME TO SHOW THIS VERY SPECIAL BOY!

Carol Shaltz fcshaltz@sbcglobal.net http://www.lil-townwheatens.com/
THE LUCK O’ THE IRISH IN 2016

"Dempsey"

GCH Greentree Feis Dancer Midnight Tobasco Waltz
Am GCH & Can Ch Greentree Keepsake Tobasco Cat (Link) x Ch Greentree Wind Dancer (Carleigh)

Westminster KC
Select Dog

National Dog Show
BOB

Thanks to Judges
John Walsh, Jr.,
John Constantine,
Lloyd Amodei,
Doug Holloway,
Harry O’Donoghue.
and esteemed
breeder/judge
Gay Dunlap

Bred by Bev & Kevin McDonald and Donna & John Baird
Owned by Kate Heller, Bev McDonald, and Donna Baird
kheller1@optonline.net

KADEN

Greentree
CH Bradberry’s The One I Love

GCH Mackanme One Love One Heart x CH Bradberry’s Summer Fiona Lilly

Thanks to the following judges for recognizing Ghilley; Wayne Bousek, Melinda Lyon, Mareth Kipp, Kalen Dumke, Kathy Ferris, and Elliott Weiss

Ghilley

Ghilley is owned and loved by Sarah & Allen Berry
Co-owned and bred by Deb Van De Ven

Bradberry WHEATENS

Deb Van De Ven
deb@bradberryswheatens.com  702-308-9542
"BOGIE"
GCHS ÁINLE SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT


#2 SCWT IN 2016 (ALL SYSTEMS, ALL YEAR)
RBIS; BISS (Terrier);
MULTIPLE GROUP WINS & PLACEMENTS; 59 BOBs

Special thanks to Esteemed International Judge Mr. Frank Kane, and to the many other judges who have recognized Bogie in his short career. Congratulations and thanks to Brian Tuel, PHA for his skillful and exclusive presentation of Bogie.

Breeder; Kathi Elliot
Owner; Linda Robison
bogieboy2015@gmail.com
Áinle Wheatens... Touched by the “Magic of Orlando”

Áinle Talk Of The Town; Best of Winners, 5 point major from the BBE class
Owned by Mary Page, Kassidy McIntosh, Kathi Elliot
GCH O’Lorcan’s Mystery Writer x GCHG Áinle
Villanova Mouth of the South

“Whisper”

Áinle Once in a Blue Moon; Winners Dog
Owned by Antonio and Jacksete Castro, Kathi Elliot,
Owner Handled by Jacksete Castro
GCH O’Lorcan’s Mystery Writer x GCHG Áinle
Villanova Mouth of the South

“Zeke”

GCH Áinle Gift of the Gab; Select, Best BBE, #5 NOHS
Owned by Kathi Elliot
GCHS Lochlinear Gleanngay Cha Ching x GCHG Áinle
Villanova Mouth of the South

“Marlie”

GCHS Áinle Something To Talk About; Best of Breed
Owned by Linda Robison, Handled by Brian Tuel PHA
GCHS Lochlinear Gleanngay Cha Ching x GCHG Áinle
Villanova Mouth of the South

“Bogie”

Bred by Kathi Elliot  kelliot@tampabay.rr.com

Official publication of the SCWTCA, Inc, volume 45, number 1, March 2017
TAVIA
DOES IT AGAIN!

Another weekend of 4 wins in 4 days at
the Palm Springs shows, January 2017

Thanks to Mr. Ferruggiaro, Ms. Coleman Hutchinson, Ms. Sweigart and
Mr. Green for making this another great start to another great year.

CH Azydeco How Can U Surpass Perfection

Owned and bred by Cathryn Bennett cathryn.bennett16@sbcglobal.net
BEAU’S GONE SILVER!

GCHS SUNDANCE MY BEAU’S A ROXSTAR

CH Mackanme Foreign Affair V. Bodasca x CH Sundance Order of the Irish Rose

Owned by: Cheryl Johnstone
772-597-5365
RoxStarWtns@comcast.net

Beautifully presented by:
Tracy Szaras & Luiz Abreu
Harbour Hill...When You're Hot You're Hot

New CHAMPIONS

“Holly”
CH Harbour Hill Deck The Halls
Harbour Hill Toy Story X CH Harbour Hill Atas EVOO
Bred by Susan Sakauye and Jeanine Flavell
Owned by Susan Sakauye

“JayCe”

“Sally Carrera”
CH Harbour Hill Radiator Springs
CH Melandee’s High Wire Act X CH Harbour Hill at Wisteria Lane
Bred by Susan Sakauye and Jeanine Flavell
Owned by Susan Sakauye

Harbour Hill
Susan Sakauye
“Play with fire? Double Dog Dare ya!

Group winner
Multiple group placements
New GRAND CHAMPION
“MISTER UTLEY”

GCH Harbour Hill Double Dog Dare
Harbour Hill Toy Story X CH Harbour Hill Atas EVOO
Bred by Susan Sakauye and Jeanine Flavell
Owned by David and Sherrie Wight and Susan Sakauye

BW AKC National Championship 2015
AOM Del Val Bucks County
22 BOBs
5 Group Placements
Group 1

Harbour Hill
Susan Sakauye
SSakauye@aol.com
805-967-0953
Krista and I want to thank our many Wheaten friends for your support and encouragement!

Krista enjoyed representing the breed at the AKC NADD Nationals and came within inches of a top placement. She looks forward to competing in 2017! She has proven herself both in and out of show and performance rings with courage, tenacity and joy. We are blessed to have her as part of our family and look forward to more fun adventures with this perky little bitch.

www.caninescando.com

Owned by Dorice and Mark Stancher
Bred by Sylvia and Bil Hamilton
Pedigrees are much more than names on a piece of paper. To top breeders, pedigree analysis is more important than DNA because a top breeder can “read” genetic soundness.

Purebred dogs are much more than a pretty cover so it is the “family tree” that determines what is inside the eye-catching exterior.

Most kennel names on the pedigree should be familiar, and certainly some dogs should have the coveted CH. or even GCH, and ideally, some dogs should be recognized top producers.

It’s a fast paced world out there and increasingly, everyone is or wants to be in the express lane. As you may have noticed, that can lead to pileups. If you’re too busy to study a stud dog’s pedigree and learning basic genetics seems like a waste of time, well, your “breeding program” is headed towards a fatal crash.

According to AKC records, the average life span of a new breeder used to be 5 years but I’ll wager it is now less than 3 years. So it only seems fair to take 3 minutes to learn things that can improve your time in dogs. Small rewards, like "bait" lead you onwards and help you succeed as a breeder.

First, accept the fact that names on the pedigree tell you nothing unless you’ve seen at least half of the first 14 dogs.

If a dog is “repeated”, i.e., appears more than once, pay particular attention and research that dog. If you haven’t observed the dog in person, try to get a video. Photos are better than nothing but be aware that digital retouching is common today and the very fault you are trying to eliminate from your breeding program can be erased from a photo.

Parents and grandparents usually represent the most dominant genes in the pedigree but not necessarily. We’ll get to the “doubled up on” factor shortly but for right now, you need to know the phenotype and genotype of the first 6 dogs; sire, dam, and all four grandparents.

The importance of having a knowledgeable AND objective mentor in the breed can’t be stressed enough. Depending on which bloodline the pedigree represents, your mentor may be a bit biased. It’s human nature. The important thing when selecting a mentor to help you sort out a particular pedigree is: Has your potential mentor actually seen the first 6 dogs on the pedigree and hopefully, some of the siblings?

Look for genetic evidence of thoughtful line-breeding on a particular dog within the third or fourth generation of the pedigree you are literally buying into. If that dog produced consistently well, count him as being in the first or second generation because his genes are more concentrated and should therefore be more powerful.

A dominant, linebred great-grand sire repeated on the pedigree can contribute as much as one of the first 6 dogs.

Hang on though, before you run into that pedigree pileup, you need to know there’s a little glitch in the above statement. More so today than ever before, most so-called line breedings occur as a matter of economy or convenience, not due to study of the genetics involved. A mediocre dog repeated in the pedigree can be bad news. It’s up to you to ferret out the concentrated dog’s quality before getting excited about a “line-bred” pedigree.

Top ranked BREED winners in the first two generations indicate someone was willing to spend time and money to prove their quality. Those dogs could be your super highway to breeding success. If the pedigree doesn’t reflect one or more verifiable top ranked Best Of Breed winners within the first three generations, it means one of two things; either there are no outstanding dogs despite any claims to the contrary OR you just learned that incompatible top winners bred to each other for the wrong reasons do not guarantee success. Even if a dog and bitch are outstanding representatives, it matters not unless they are genetically compatible.

A compatible pedigree means that neither sire nor dam share the same fault either visibly (dominant) or hidden in their genes (recessive).

Ideally, both would be dominant for the most important features of breed type and/or soundness. Do not mistake compatibility as being “from the same bloodline” because frankly, very few real bloodlines exist today. Anyone can get lucky once or even twice. Before you buy into a pedigree, you need to slow down and take a good look at the road ahead. You must have a readable map (pedigree) because there’s no shortcut.
Don't let the scenery distract you; see the dogs and apply what you've learned into structuring a pedigree that will last and hopefully, become a superhighway for someone else!

As a Master Breeder, I've presented dozens of seminars on breeding practices but as years went by, it became increasingly obvious that many breeders read names on a pedigree but have no idea if those dogs were prepotent and if so, for what? Today breeders put more emphasis on ring fame and not nearly enough on prepotency and actual quality. Breeding to a top dog means saleable puppies but it may not increase your reputation as a gifted breeder. Ring success can be bought with a good handler and a fat wallet. What you do afterwards involves you! I trust you are willing to take the time (gasp) to learn the basics and apply yourself to doing it right.

Portions extracted from AKC Gazette Toy Fox Terrier column, June 2008 and ShowSight Magazine 2012 #149s151
http://www.thedogplace.org/GENETICS/Reading-Pedigrees_BJA-133.asp

Survey Says...

The preceding article, “Reading Pedigrees, A Lost Art?” was referenced by Cherie Turner Fogarty on Facebook.

We felt it had a great deal of merit and wanted to tap the brains of those Wheaten Terrier breeders who have a "line"... a recognizable "look" to the dogs who carry their kennel name, so Deb sent it to some of our top breeders, and asked the following questions:

1. What one piece of advice would you give to today’s breeders who want to educate themselves on Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier pedigrees?

2. How can breeders lock in desired features in their "line"?

3. What important additional point would you like to add to this article?

Sue Goldberg, Wheatens of Shandalee

1. Study the pedigrees and get your hands on as many Wheatens as you can — not just the stud dog you’re considering, but his offspring as well as his dam and sire, grandparents, siblings, etc. to try to get a sense of the traits (including the very important temperament and longevity) they have in common. Talk to those breeders who may have seen or gone over the more distant ancestors and are familiar with the line.

2. I am a great believer in line breeding to set a style that defines your line within the breed Standard, assuming you have virtues that you want to perpetuate and a minimum of faults to overcome within your "family" of dogs.

In our Shandalee line, we strive to consistently produce Wheatens that are moderate, square, and short -backed, with correct coats and happy, outgoing temperaments. We’re proud that our line is easily identifiable and pretty consistent. There is no perfect dog, but in developing your line, it's important to double up on the virtues and to breed away from the faults, so that what you’re keeping continues to lead you toward your goal. Look at ancestors whom you admired, try to find their offspring that carry — and pass on — the traits you are seeking. Furthermore, every breeding should be planned with the next generation in mind, i.e., where and to whom would you breed the puppies you are about to create? If you don’t consider the long term, you are breeding in a vacuum.

3. Having been there from the beginning, I am very fortunate to have been witness to the evolution of Wheatens in this country and the setbacks along the way, many of which resulted from breeders breeding to a dog they liked — or one who was winning — with no regard to how the pedigrees matched up. While occasional outcrossing is recommended, you cannot develop a line, a "look," if the pedigree is a mishmash of one from Column A and one from Column B without regard to consistency, generation after generation, in the virtues you seek. A pedigree should read like a road map, making it easy to understand why this dog was bred to that bitch and what characteristics each one brought to the breeding. There must be ancestors in common who share the virtues you wish to preserve if you are to build on and develop your line.

Presented by Deb Van De Ven
Gay Dunlap, Gleanngay Wheatens

1) When studying a pedigree, know the dogs. If you don’t know them yourself, research them. Seek to determine whether a dog is dominant for a specific trait, understanding that a dog with a "hodge-podge" pedigree will probably not be dominant for anything. Find a knowledgeable mentor. If a specific dog shows up multiple times in a pedigree, take the time to find out as much as possible about him or her. This dog will greatly influence the resulting offspring. There is a formula that, as a breeder, I have always sought to employ. It is: "Let the sire of the sire be the grandsire of the dam on the dam's side." But remember, it can’t be just any dog! Quality, quality, quality! Breeding without considering genotype is pretty much guaranteed to be a crap shoot! The best possible route for the serious breeder is to develop two distinct lines, totally disconnected from each other. And the best way to do this in today's world is to partner with another breeder that is like-minded.

2) Many of today's breeders use the term, "my line," with no concept of exactly what the term means. A breeder can refer to his/her dogs as, "my line," only if said breeder's dogs have a certain, distinctive look that has remained relatively static down through several generations. Otherwise, the breeder's dogs reflect a "breeding program," not a "line." Developing a line within our breed (the Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier) in today’s climate, is more than challenging. There was a time, in our breed's past, when many of us had established, or were at least on the road to establishing, a "look." I remember being told more than once by other fanciers that they could always recognize my dogs in the show ring because, "they just had a certain look." Sadly, all of that changed with the onset of PLE/PLN. We were suddenly facing fear and the belief that survival of the breed required out-crossing. Many of our breeders were terrified to come back into established lines. Consequently, the consistent type that many worked so hard to establish went down the tubes. This is not to say none of today's breeders are breeding dogs of consistent type. But I truly feel we have only a handful of them. And what this means is that there are but few places to go if a breeder wants to be confident of acquiring certain desired traits.

3) Line breeding is the only way to cement breed characteristics. Inbreeding is a form of line breeding but one in which a breeder should not indulge without clarity regarding the potential outcome. Always remember that, A) Any mating of a dog to a member of an earlier generation of the dog's bloodline (line breeding), will not only bring to the resulting offspring a dog's good traits but its bad ones as well. B) Line breeding, without strong phenotype, will often fail to offer anything of value with which to move forward. Further, C) Breeders must be able to distinguish between quality dogs and those that are not. I see the latter as the leading problem we face in this breed. The other is the fact that the DNA test, upon which so many breeders now base their breeding programs, has done severe damage to our breed in terms of maintaining strong breed type. The practice of considering only those dogs that test clear of the genetic marker has been very destructive. As a breeder/judge, I have seen only a handful of dogs that I consider to be of outstanding breed type and most of them have a marker. Thus, they have been relegated to the trash basket. This is a travesty!

Emily Holden, Amaden Wheatens

Reading the article and following the advice would be a great start for any breeding program. Actually study the Illustrated Standard, watch lots of videos of Wheatens both current and historical, talk to the breeders responsible for the majority of the dogs in the pedigree, and learn the history of the dogs that have fallen off the right side of the pedigree, have not disappeared. Their strong points will enhance your breeding program and their faults will come back to bite you. A lot of work YES, but put in your time and it will pay off.

Too many people consider themselves breeders because their name shows up on the AKC form in that spot. There are very few real breeders in any breed and ours is no exception. Because you think it looks nice, or because you prefer it that way is no reason to deviate from the standard.

*From the 1973 MCKC until the later videos became available, all available breeders would meet at Shoemakers’ house on the Monday after a specialty weekend to discuss the entry. Catalog markings would be compared and after that was completed, dogs would be critiqued, yes even those owned or bred by the people attending. It was a great learning moment for everyone. Even the best of the breeders misses something once in a while. Time was not used to critique outfits, who should have won, or who snubbed whom. It was spent on type, coat, movement and perhaps, on how grooming may have affected the outcome of the judging. People learned by listening to one another and by getting PERSPECTIVE.
*Jim Andrew’s pedigree program was great because it actually allowed ten generations and then told the user how many times each dog showed up in each generation. Dog X may be a great-grandparent and not even show up on a three generation pedigree, but he may be in the previous generations as many as several hundred times (no exaggeration). He could easily influence the pedigree as much as a parent. Assume that hypothetical dog X has had a history of producing flat feet and feet are exactly the thing you want to change. You may want to change your mind about the breeding and find a better choice. Now, if you have already promised your best friend, who you ride to shows with each week, that you will use her dog, you may have a problem. Don’t settle for mediocrity because it is convenient or politically correct! Talk to people who knew those dogs who are in generations way back. Borrow videos of specialties from the earliest to present. If it is boring to watch your beloved dog’s past, think about another hobby.

Finally, I am going back to question #2, locking in a look. Years ago I would have suggested line breeding and I stand by that answer, but it is easier now with genetic tests for everything. I would still like a test to predict tarter build-up. Kidding, but the doctors are probably close. Just remember that dog X did not have the benefit of all this testing and he does show up hundreds of times in the pedigree even if he is not on the AKC certified pedigree. You may be safe with PLN, DM and other alphabet problems but those flat feet are still there. Just saying...

Shari Robinson, Keepsake Wheatens

1. I would recommend starting with a complete understanding of what qualities makeup a great Wheaten. Understand balance, good front, rear, neck length, transition, headpiece, tail set, angulation, movement....understand how your dog conforms to the standard. Don’t look at your dog with your heart- be brutally honest about virtues and faults. If you honestly aren’t sure how to go over and assess your dog, ask someone who would know. Only in understanding your own dog’s virtues and faults can you understand how to pick a suitable mate for them. Picking from a pool of top-ribbon winners is a common mistake. Know what you have and understand what you need, and find that.

Our best resource for the most up-to-date wheaten pedigrees is the online wheaten pedigree program. Reading through pedigrees isn’t enough though; you need to educate yourself about the dogs in those pedigrees. If you haven’t seen the dog yourself, pick up the phone and call, or send an email, ask those specific questions you need to know. Keep notes on various dogs. Breeding better dogs is a combination of pedigree research, critical eye, and complete objectivity where the dogs are concerned.

2. Technically, line breeding is difficult to accomplish in Wheaten, due to health issues. Staying within a family of lines isn't even always easy. So locking in desired features is a little more of a challenge. People often throw around terms like line breeding, in breeding, etc., but there is also breeding through selection. Keeping puppies that have the qualities that you desire to lock in and only breeding to dogs with those same qualities, from dogs with those same qualities. For example if you want to produce Wheaten who are square with good fronts, then you only keep dogs with those specific qualities, and breed to similar type with the same qualities. Within a couple of generations, you should see the fruits of your labor. But, focusing on one or two things is hard. You may have to give up some virtues to focus on others, and this can be a slippery slope. You may find within a couple of generations that you have that square dog with a good front, but the rears have gone, their tail sets have dropped.....never ignore the total balance and quality. Remember that you need to judge your dog from nose to toes, understand virtues and faults.

3. I think we are often afraid to admit what we don't know or understand, and we are nervous about looking like we don't know everything, so we don't feel comfortable asking someone to explain. Never be afraid to ask questions, and never stop taking an opportunity to learn. Being a breeder is studying dogs and pedigrees; it’s a lifelong quest of continual learning. And the more you learn, the more you discover you don't know. At the risk of “aging” myself here, gone are the days of mentors, true knowledgeable role models who did not compromise. If the dog didn’t measure up, it was ejected from the breeding pool. Many people now hang up their “breeder” shingle too fast. It is imperative that you understand the virtues and faults of your breeding stock. If you are looking for a male for your female, know what you are looking for and why. What are you looking to improve on your girl? Look at dogs that compliment not only her genotype, look also at her phenotype. If someone wants to use your male at stud, ask them what they are hoping to get from him. Follow up with those pups to better understand what your dog may produce. When you see consistency in a couple of litters, you can say the next time someone is asking to use him, well in his first 2 litters we saw these specific traits. Most of all never be afraid to ask questions. Knowledge is something that works better for all when shared.
Michael DeCarlo, Bendacht Wheatens

1. Many people who breed do not have knowledge of the dogs in the pedigrees. They have not taken time to learn what those dogs were like, or what they threw in terms of looks, temperament, or health. They need to learn more about the pedigrees and learn some basic genetics information. Genotype and phenotype are very important and both need to be studied.

2. You lock in type with line breeding. People who plan to line breed should ask lots of questions of other breeders. Just be sure to talk to longtime breeders known to be HONEST! Just because someone wins a lot doesn’t mean that the person is knowledgeable, money can buy wins.

Make sure that you spend time learning about kennel names that appear more than once in the pedigree. Get to know the breeder behind that name and be certain that the person has an excellent reputation and is known for honesty. Be sure the person breeds to the standard for the standard, health, and temperament. It is really important that you find an honest mentor!

3. Know the standard and how it looks on the SCWT. Memorize the Illustrated Standard. Breed only dogs that come close to that ideal. Rome wasn’t built in a day.

2017 Specialty/Supported Entry Plan

Specialties
- SCWTC No. CA, Sacramento, CA, Fri. April 14...Pat Rutherford
- Del Val SCWTC, Erwinna, PA, Sat. May 6...Cherie Turner
- SCWTC Greater St. Louis, Gray Summit, MO, Fri. June 2...Elaine Azerolo
- SCWTC So. CA (#1), Long Beach, CA, Fri. June, 23...Karla Baer Cohen
- SCWTC So. CA (#2), Long Beach, CA, Sun. June 25
- SCWTC Greater Milwaukee, Waukesha, WI, Fri. July 28...Nancy Andersen
- Greater Denver SCWTC, Greeley, CO, Fri. August 18...Patrice Chevalier
- SCWTCA Nat’l Specialty, Blue Bell, PA, Sun. October 8...Karen Bilda

Supported Entries
- Desert Empire Terrier Show, Fri. January 6...Ann Leigh
- Dog Fanciers Assoc. of Oregon, Sat. January 21...Patti Strand
- Louisville KC, Sun. March 19...Debbie Hibberd
- No. Cal Terrier Assoc., Thurs. April 13...Pat Mullin
- Columbia Terrier Assoc., Fri. April 21...Cheryl Turner
- Missouri Rhinelander KC, Sun. June 4...Elaine Azerolo
- Great Western Terrier Assoc., Sat. June 24...Karla Baer Cohen
- Oklahoma KC, Sat. July 1...Holly Million
- Waukesha KC, Sat. July 29...Diane Cocos
- Greeley KC, Sat. August 19...Toni Wieland
- AKC National Championship, December...TBD
The Essence of Type

Essence – “the intrinsic nature of something; the quality which determines something’s character” (Oxford University Press)

The essence of breed type can be defined as how the various parts of a dog come together with the requisite temperament to make a breed unique.

Part 2 - Head

In the last issue of Benchmarks, I wrote about the importance of understanding the essence of Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier breed type. That article addressed what I consider to be the most important aspect of the essence - silhouette. The next component I will discuss is head.

The Soft Coated Wheaten head is not very complicated or dependent upon nuance of detail. Yet lately, I find heads to be lacking in breed character. The standard is quite specific regarding head qualities, but ours is a coated breed, so the conscientious breeder must be sure that their dogs’ heads are correctly made, and not just giving the correct impression through clever grooming.

In profile, the head should be rectangular in shape and be in balance with the body. In this case, rectangular should be interpreted as considerably longer than deep. The original Irish standard called for the head to be “long.” Therefore, it must never appear like a squarish box. Balance is an individual perception, but if a head appears too small for the body, it probably is. Rarely are overly large heads a problem.

Skull and muzzle should present the appearance of two equal rectangles. The width of the skull should not be as wide as the average span of a man’s hand from thumb to middle finger and should be rectangular not square but rather longer than wide. The muzzle should be the same length as the skull and taper only moderately caused by chiseling under the eyes. The two head planes (nose to stop and brow to occiput) should be parallel. Of late, I have seen many heads that fall short in this area. We are getting overly coarse and bumpy skulls that fall away causing broken head planes. Prominent zygomatic arches (bony protuberances on the sides of the head) have always been a problem, but now we are also seeing over-developed cheek muscles.

It is a combination of proper skull construction, eye placement, ear-size and placement, and nose that give the Wheaten its characteristic expression.

Ears are probably the single most distinguishing characteristic of a Wheaten head as they, more than anything else, structurally separate us from our Kerry Blue cousins. The standard describes them as being “small to medium” in size and “breaking” level with the “skull” “the inside edge of the ear lying next to the cheek and pointing to the ground rather than to the eye.” They should be pointed, not rounded - not too heavy in leather, but not so light as to be fly-away. Far too often there is a tendency for ears to flair away from the skull - pointing at 8 o’clock and 4 o’clock rather than the correct 6 o’clock. It should be noted that although the standard says the ears break “level with the skull,” a more apt description would be that they appear to break level with the skull.

Because the hair on the head adds height to the appearance of the skull; properly set ears actually sit just above the level of the skull. Conscientious
Note from your Editors

The June 2017 issue of Benchmarks will feature a more in depth study of movement which discusses some of the anatomical issues that affect proper movement.

Remember, Benchmarks is your publication, and we depend on your input and contributions to make the magazine interesting and informative for all.
Well balanced and in proportion to the body. Rectangular in appearance; moderately long. Powerful with no suggestion of coarseness. **Eyes** dark reddish brown or brown, medium in size, slightly almond shaped and set fairly wide apart. Eye rims black. **Major Fault** — Anything approaching a yellow eye. **Ears** small to medium in size, breaking level with the skull and dropping slightly forward, the inside edge of the ear lying next to the cheek and pointing to the ground rather than to the eye. A hound ear or a high-breaking ear is not typical and should be severely penalized. **Skull** flat and clean between ears. Cheekbones not prominent. Defined stop. **Muzzle** powerful and strong, well filled below the eyes. No suggestion of snipiness. Skull and foreface of equal length. **Nose** black and large for size of dog. **Major Fault** — Any nose color other than solid black. **Lips** tight and black. **Teeth** large, clean and white; scissors or level bite. **Major Fault** — Undershot or overshot.
**Eyes** dark reddish brown or brown, medium in size, slightly almond shaped and set fairly wide apart. Eye rims black.

*Major Fault* — Anything approaching a yellow eye.

Correct-almond shaped eye with rimming of black “mascara” evident. Eye color is rich.

![Eyes diagram]

**Skull** flat and clean between ears. Cheekbones not prominent. Defined stop. **Muzzle** powerful and strong, well filled below the eyes. No suggestion of snipiness. Skull and foreface of equal length. **Nose** black and large for size of dog.

*Major Fault* — Any nose color other than solid black. **Lips** tight and black.

![Skull diagram]

**When Is Eye Discharge a Problem?**

Eye discharge becomes a problem when it is excessive, abnormal, or accompanied by other signs of a problem. A small amount of clear discharge can be considered normal, but excessive tearing or consistent watering should be investigated.

**Canine Conjunctivitis:** Conjunctivitis in dogs is caused by a bacterial infection of the conjunctiva. Symptoms include swollen eyelids, redness inside of the eyelid, mucous discharge and dog eye redness.

**Keratitis:** Caused by bacterial infection of the cornea. Symptoms include dog eye redness and mucous discharge.

**Dog Dry Eye:** Caused by a tear gland problem or malfunction (also called keratoconjunctivitis sicca) results in an overabundance of thick stringy mucous across the eye. Can also cause a secondary condition where melanin pigment is deposited in the cornea.

**Tear Staining** occurs in some dogs and cats. Animal tears contain components that can cause brown staining of the fur around the eyes. In pets with light-colored fur, this discoloration can be more noticeable than in pets with darker fur. Tear staining is not generally considered a medical problem but if tear staining is excessive, ask your veterinarian about other management options.

**Encyclopedia of K9 Terminology**

By Edward M. Gilbert, Jr, Patricia H. Gilbert

The head is often considered the hallmark of a breed, and the most important element in establishing “type.” The zygomatic arch forms the cheek bone and determines the width of the head. The cheekbones are NOT prominent in the SCWT. The stop, sagittal crest and zygomatic arch are three of the major contributors to head shape.

Cheeky, thick in skull is due to bony and muscular development of the temples.
**Some common problems**

**Ears** small to medium in size, breaking level with the skull and dropping slightly forward, the inside edge of the ear lying next to the cheek and pointing to the ground rather than to the eye.

A hound ear or a high-breaking ear is not typical and should be **severely penalized**.

![Objectionable: standaway ears](image1)

![Objectionable: overlarge, low-set ears](image2)

![Objectionable: high breaking ears](image3)

**Chronic Ear Infections**

Ear infections are the most frequently treated disorder in the veterinary practice. They are typically secondary to inflammation of the external ear canals. The most common cause of **fungal ear infections** in dogs is yeast. Yeast is constantly present on the bodies of animals, but when the immune system isn't in prime condition, yeast can overgrow and cause an infection.

**Bacterial Infections** are more common than fungal infections, and are classified as either pathogenic or nonpathogenic. Pathogenic bacteria are abnormal inhabitants of your pet's body, picked up from an outside source, for example, contaminated pond water. The overgrowth of these organisms causes more inflammation. Inflammation of the ear canal causes swelling, making the ears very itchy and painful. Severe ear infections can lead to eardrum rupture and middle and inner ear infections. Deep infections can lead to deafness and neurologic signs.

Certain disorders or diseases may be the primary reason ear infections develop. These conditions include:

- **Allergies** (environmental and food)
- **Ear mites**
- **Foreign bodies**
- **Skin disorders** (like seborrhea)
- **Thyroid disease** (in dogs)
- **Tumors or polyps in the ear**

Keeping ears trimmed and cheeks clean can help to circulate air into the ear canal, minimizing some of these problems.

**To Pluck or Not to Pluck**

If you decide to pluck ears, do it before the ear is cleaned. That way you can flush out the powder and remove any bacteria from the ear canal. If you choose to use ear powder, do it cautiously as ear powder can build up in an ear and cause problems for the dog. Many people apply the powder to their fingers instead of into the canal. Use your fingers to pull when possible instead of a pair of hemostats, and remove a few hairs at a time. If there is ANY irritation, redness, discharge or smell, refer the pet to their vet. Plucking irritated ears will make an existing problem even worse. The pet will thank you for it and so will the owner.
**Breed/Illustrated standard/Anatomy**

**Teeth**

- Large, clean and white; scissors or level bite.
- **Major Fault** — Undershot or overshot.

**Some common problems**

Incorrect — misaligned lower teeth, nose too small, poor pigment.

**Base Narrow Canines** is the most common orthodontic abnormality seen in dogs. In this condition the lower canine teeth are angled straight upward, instead of tipping outward. Some dogs may display only mild contact of the affected canines with the upper gums, requiring minimal intervention. Others may show direct traumatic contact with the tissue of the upper hard palate and secondary deep defects can occur. These contact points are painful, and require correction as soon as possible, even if overt signs of pain have not been noted. Another cause for the base narrow positioning is jaw length discrepancy.

**What is Malocclusion of Teeth?** Misalignment occurs when the puppy’s baby teeth set incorrectly and when the adult teeth follow and worsen the problem due to size and a hereditary link. When a dog’s teeth do not properly align, misaligned teeth (malocclusion) could result in Overbites, Underbites, Level bites, Open bites, Anterior crossbites, Posterior crossbites, Wry mouths, or bite Base narrow canines.

**More About Dentition**

Wheatens have twenty-eight deciduous (primary or baby) teeth, and forty-two adult teeth. There are four types of teeth: 12 Incisors are the smaller front teeth used for grasping food and help keep the tongue within the mouth. 4 Canines, located on the sides of the incisors are also used to grasp food. 16 Premolars (bicuspids) located behind the canines are for shearing or cutting food. The 10 molars (including carnassials) are the last teeth in the back of the mouth. They are used for grinding nourishment for entry into the esophagus.

**Occlusion**

The way teeth align with each other is termed occlusion. Normal occlusion consists of the upper (maxillary) incisors just overlapping the lower (mandibular) incisors (scissor bite). The lower canine should be located equidistant between the last (lateral) incisor and the upper canine tooth. **Premolar tips of the lower jaw should point between the spaces of the upper jaw teeth like a saw-tooth.**

**Malocclusion**

Malocclusion refers to abnormal tooth alignment.

**Delayed Eruption** refers to a condition in which teeth don’t appear on schedule. This can occur with the late appearance of baby (deciduous) teeth or adult (permanent) teeth. A delay in tooth appearance should be differentiated from tooth absence (Missing Teeth or Unerupted Teeth). In some cases, like in Wheatens, a temporary delay in the eruption of teeth does not cause a problem. However, if a predisposing condition is present or the tooth eruption delay is excessive, serious problems can develop like tooth impaction or dentigerous cyst formation. Often the delayed appearance of teeth coincides with abnormally thickened gum tissue (Fibromatous gingivae). This is a treatable condition; however, the prognosis is better with earlier intervention.
Recently several Wheaten breeders have begun to test their breedable dogs for Degenerative Myelopathy (DM). I am one of those breeders who has tested multiple dogs, and I want to reach out to everyone breeding to encourage you to take advantage of the easy genetic test for this debilitating disease. In the following articles, you can read further about the symptoms of DM as well as how to genetically test your dog. You will also read the heart-breaking story of Martha, a dog who suffered from DM.

Since 2009, the University of Missouri has supplied SCWTCA, Inc. with annual reports that have been published in *Wavelengths* concerning DM and Wheaten Terriers. While the incidence of DM in Wheatens is not as high as that of PLN, there is strong evidence showing the disease does occur in our breed. Much like PLN, DM is governed by autosomal recessive genes. The results for the gene test are the same as that for PLN: N/N indicates a dog with no markers for the mutation, (two normal copies), N/A indicates a dog that is a carrier with one normal copy and one mutated, and those dogs with A/A are at risk to get the disease. Because DM is a late-onset one (age range 8-14 years), dogs who are affected may well die of another cause before they express DM. As with PLN, there are dogs with both markers who live to 60+ age without showing symptoms of DM. This genetic mystery is unsolved though researchers are still looking for an explanation.

Please read the following articles and please test your dogs. Yes, it is daunting to think of incorporating more genetic tests results into your breeding decisions. Yes, it is for the good of the breed. Yes, the disease may not show up until your dog is older, and yes, it is a terrible disease that moves swiftly and will completely debilitate your dog, robbing it of all its dignity.

Last year Judith Martin, longtime Wheaten owner and breeder, wrote about the terrible news she received about a litter of puppies now 12 years old. Two of five dogs in the litter were victims of DM – and she had not heard from two of the other three dog owners. Judith writes:

*Every breeder owes it to their owners to do the simple DM gene test.*

**Watching a dog slowly fall apart over a year is most heart-wrenching. DM starts as a foot slowness, works its way up to the spine and progresses forward. To see these proud and grand dogs simply lose everything a bit at a time just needs to be eliminated. It isn’t like having your six-year-old die of kidney failure, but there is no excuse letting a mature dog and their family suffer this way, for such a small cost. Testing isn’t about eliminating good dogs from a breeding program, it is about making educated decisions.**

A significant number of well-known breeders have begun to test their breeding stock. It is vital when you submit tests to OFA that you check the box indicating that all results can be listed on the OFA website; otherwise only the information that the test is done will be listed. As with other testing on the OFA website, this information helps all breeders do their due diligence. It is a wonder that we have the technology to share our health testing, so please remember that important step.

**Latest OFA statistics for our breed (December 2016)**

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Martha’s Story

CH Geragold Maximum Joy NA NAJ AXP AJP

By Ron Bedford and Fran Roushar

Martha was always a vigorous, energetic Wheaten bitch. With help from friends and her breeders, we were able to finish her ourselves. She also competed in agility and dabbled in obedience, herding, and tracking. She loved to run off-leash and to play with her best friend, Sorcha, six years her junior. Martha would chase Sorcha in the backyard, or they would wrestle until they were exhausted. In spring of 2015, when she was around 10 1/2 years old, we...
started to notice a occasional, slight stumble, slip, or loss of balance for no apparent reason. It was the of thing that would make us think, “I wonder what that was about.” It was very subtle. At first we thought it might have been advancing age, but that didn’t explain everything we were seeing. We made an appointment to see the vet who handles orthopedic issues at the clinic we use. By that time I was suspicious about DM because a dog a few generations behind Martha had had it. Dr. Steen recommended waiting to see Martha until results of the genetic test were back because that was as close to a diagnostic as was available. His physical & neurologic exam were confirmed by the “at risk” or “affected” status, revealed by her gene test.

We had about 14 months from the time of Martha’s “diagnosis” until she indicated to us that her life was not enjoyable any longer. Early on the signs seemed to plateau periodically, but the plateaus became shorter and less frequent as the disease progressed. The classic toe dragging associated with DM did not show up at first. Sometime, maybe a few months after being diagnosed, we began to hear her drag her toenails occasionally. Eventually it became more obvious and frequent. Martha continued to enjoy walking, but the walks became slower and shorter. For quite some time, others didn’t notice Martha’s condition, but eventually it became obvious. Once, a neighbor commented that it looked like she had had a few too many drinks. That was after the disease had progressed for over a year and was not long before we euthanized Martha three weeks short of her 12th birthday.

Steadily Martha’s left hind leg became weaker and less coordinated. She would still run short distances occasionally. In fact, she surprised us with how well she could run, right up until the last few weeks. It was probably like riding a bike. It’s easier to stay upright going fast. Turning or stopping were another story. Martha’s right hind leg deteriorated also, but the left was worse throughout. Her gait became unsteady. She had increasing difficulty walking in a straight line or up an incline. Occasionally Martha’s left hind leg would collapse and she would fall to that side. It was heart-breaking to see this proud, athletic dog fall or run into things because the nerves controlling her back legs were failing.

The only merciful thing about DM is that the dog experiences no pain from the disease. While the myelin sheath that covers the nerves deteriorates, the axons or nerve cells, also die. Martha remained mentally alert through all of this. One of the most difficult things about DM is that the mental decline that usually accompanies terminal illness was absent. Martha would go outside and just lie down, not able to move. She would look off as if she wanted to go on one of the long walks she so loved, but she could only make it a short way. The return trip was always a struggle for her, slipping and dragging her left hind foot. Possibly the worst thing about Martha’s decline was that she became unable to maintain her social status. We had adolescent dogs in the house. When they would pester her, she couldn’t defend herself, which caused them to pester her more. Keeping her safe became our priority.

Eventually, Martha had difficulty getting up from her bed and standing steadily. Stairs got harder for her. As her rear legs weakened, it grew more difficult for her to lift her front legs. We built a ramp and used a small riser step to help Martha get in and out of the house. Her right hind leg increasingly supported her weight when standing. It became difficult for her to eat and drink from her bowls on the floor. As Martha’s rear assembly weakened, her front had to support more of her weight and it became harder for her to lean forward and bend down. A raised platform made it easier for her to eat and drink.

Martha had a history of chronic urinary tract infections, so we spayed her after she failed to conceive the second time. She was on diethylstilbestrol for urinary incontinence. This became a little worse and toward, the end we put plastic crate pans under her beds. She never developed bowel incontinence. We had agreed early on that we probably weren’t interested in getting “wheels” for Martha, and it never got to that point. We also agreed on no “heroics” or extreme measures to hold off the inevitable. She always faced things head-on, and we wanted to preserve as much of her dignity as possible. Martha’s appetite deteriorated, but a switch to canned food without kibble kept her eating for a few weeks. Eventually it became too difficult for Martha to get herself up from bed to go outside, she stopped eating canned food, and we could tell that she had had enough. We did the last kind thing we could for Martha and let her go.
Degenerative Myelopathy - Disease Basics

What is Degenerative Myelopathy?
Degenerative myelopathy is a progressive disease of the spinal cord in older dogs. The disease has an insidious onset typically between 8 and 14 years of age. It begins with a loss of coordination (ataxia) in the hind limbs. The affected dog will wobble when walking, knuckle over or drag the feet. This can first occur in one hind limb and then affect the other. As the disease progresses, the limbs become weak and the dog begins to buckle and has difficulty standing. The weakness gets progressively worse until the dog is unable to walk. The clinical course can range from 6 months to 1 year before dogs become paraplegic. If signs progress for a longer period of time, loss of urinary and fecal continence may occur and eventually weakness will develop in the front limbs. Another key feature of DM is that it is not a painful disease.

What causes Degenerative Myelopathy?
Degenerative myelopathy begins with the spinal cord in the thoracic (chest) region. If we look under the microscope at that area of the cord from a dog that has died from DM, we see degeneration of the white matter of the spinal cord. The white matter contains fibers that transmit movement commands from the brain to the limbs and sensory information from the limbs to the brain. This degeneration consists of both demyelination (stripping away the insulation of these fibers) and axonal loss (loss of the actual fibers), and interferes with the communication between the brain and limbs. Recent research has identified a mutation in a gene that confers a greatly increased risk of developing the disease.

How is Degenerative Myelopathy clinically diagnosed?
Degenerative myelopathy is a diagnosis of elimination. We look for other causes of the weakness using diagnostic tests like myelography and MRI. When we have ruled them out, we end up with a presumptive diagnosis of DM. The only way to confirm the diagnosis is to examine the spinal cord under the microscope when a necropsy (autopsy) is performed. There are degenerative changes in the spinal cord characteristic for DM and not typical for some other spinal cord disease.

What else can look like Degenerative Myelopathy?
Any disease that affects the dog’s spinal cord can cause similar signs of loss of coordination and weakness. Since many of these diseases can be treated effectively, it is important to pursue the necessary tests to be sure that the dog doesn’t have one of these diseases. The most common cause of hind limb weakness is herniated intervertebral disks. The disks are shock absorbers between the vertebrae in the back. When herniated, they can cause pressure on the spinal cord and weakness or paralysis. Short-legged, long back dogs are prone to slipped disks. A herniated disk can usually be detected with X-rays of the spine and myelogram or by using more advanced imaging such as CT scan or MRI. Other diseases we should consider include tumors, cysts, infections, injuries and stroke. Similar diagnostic procedures will help to diagnose most of these diseases. If necessary, your veterinarian can refer you to a board certified neurologist who can aid in diagnosing degenerative myelopathy. A directory to a neurologist near you can be found at American College of Veterinary Internal Medicine website under the "Find a Specialist Near You" link.
How do we treat Degenerative Myelopathy?

There are no treatments that have been clearly shown to stop or slow progression of DM. Although there are a number of approaches that have been tried or recommended on the internet, no scientific evidence exists that they work. The outlook for a dog with DM is still grave. The discovery of a gene that identifies dogs at risk for developing degenerative myelopathy could pave the way for therapeutic trials to prevent the disease from developing. Meanwhile, the quality of life of an affected dog can be improved by measures such as good nursing care, physical rehabilitation, pressure sore prevention, monitoring for urinary infections, and ways to increase mobility through use of harnesses and carts.

DNA Testing for ALL Dogs

Any dog of any breed, with or without clinical signs of DM can be DNA tested by ordering the test through a partnership with the OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals). Please CLICK HERE to go to the OFA online store to order test kits. In theory, dogs of any age can be tested, but experience with 2+ years of testing suggests that it can be difficult to get a sufficient sample from very young puppies - we recommend waiting until pups are 4 weeks old or older to collect samples for testing.

When the order is placed through the OFA secure online store, the person ordering the test will receive a kit consisting of a cheek swab and specially treated, barcoded card to collect the DNA sample, instructions, and a mailing label. After the sample has been collected it is sent to the AMGL, scanned, and tested. Order status can be viewed at any time through the OFA website, using the order confirmation code issued when the test order is placed. Results can be viewed by the owner online as soon as they are available. OFA will issue a report and certificate, and include normal results in an online searchable public database (carrier and affected results require the owner to “opt in” for public reporting). The all-inclusive fee is $65, payable by credit card securely online when the order is placed.

Customer service representatives at OFA can help with any ordering or reporting questions by phoning 573-442-0418 during business hours, or by emailing OFA@OFFA.org.

Another lab to use for DM testing is gensoldx.com. This is an OFA-approved lab, which means that for a nominal fee, OFA will list the results on its website. Gen Sol offers a group rate: $30 per test if you order five or more tests at the same time. A postage-paid envelope is included to return your swabs. Swabs are $40 per dog if ordering fewer than five kits. The procedure for testing is similar; instructions are included with the swabs. Like OFA, the results will be emailed to you but the turnaround is quicker: 24-28 hours. There are other labs that conduct the DM genetic test; just be sure that it is an OFA-approved lab so you can post results on its website.

Explanation of DM DNA Test Results

Normal (N/N)
This dog is homozygous N/N for the mutation that is the most common cause of DM, with two normal copies of the gene. Among the hundreds of dogs studied so far at the University of Missouri, only two dogs with test results of N/N (Normal) have been confirmed to have DM. The N/N (Normal) dog can only transmit the normal counterpart of the common mutation to its offspring, and it is unlikely that this dog or its offspring will ever develop DM.

Carrier (A/N)
This dog is heterozygous A/N, with one mutated copy of the gene and one normal copy of the gene, and is classified as a carrier. Carriers are far less likely to develop DM, but we have confirmed DM in a few carrier dogs. They may be used carefully in breeding programs to keep their good qualities while reducing risk of DM in future generations.

At-Risk (A/A)
This dog is homozygous A/A, with two mutated copies of the gene, and is at risk for developing Degenerative Myelopathy (DM). Although almost all dogs in the research study with confirmed DM have had A/A DNA test results, recent evidence suggest that there are other causes of DM in some breeds. In addition, not all dogs testing as A/A have shown clinical signs of DM. DM is typically a late onset disease, and dogs testing as A/A that are clinically normal may still begin to show signs of the disease as they age. Some dogs testing A/A did not begin to show clinical signs of DM until they were 15 years of age. Research is ongoing to estimate what percentage of dogs testing as A/A will develop DM within their lifespan. At this point, the mutation can only be interpreted as being at risk of developing DM within the animal’s life. For dogs showing clinical signs with a presumptive diagnosis of DM,
affected (A/A) test results can be used as an additional tool to aid in the diagnosis of DM. Dogs testing At-Risk (A/A) can only pass the mutated gene on to their offspring.

Equivocal
An Equivocal test result indicates that the test results were inconclusive. This is typically the result of poor sample collection. When the test yields an equivocal result, a second punch will be taken from the FTA card and the test rerun. If the second test is still equivocal, the owner will be contacted and asked to submit a new sample.

Guidelines for Breeding dogs who are Carrier or At Risk for DM

Owners with dogs testing as Carriers (A/N), or At-Risk (A/A) are strongly encouraged to share these results with their attending veterinarian and seek genetic counseling when making breeding decisions.

The “A” (mutated) allele appears to be very common in some breeds. In these breeds, an overly aggressive breeding program to eliminate dogs testing A/A or A/N might be devastating to the breed as a whole because it would eliminate a large fraction of the high quality dogs that would otherwise contribute desirable qualities to the breed. Nonetheless, DM should be taken seriously. It is a fatal disease with devastating consequences for the dog, and can be a trying experience for the owners that care for them. A realistic approach when considering which dogs to select for breeding would be to treat the test results as one would treat any other undesirable trait or fault. Dogs testing At-Risk (A/A) should be considered to have a more serious fault than those testing as Carriers (A/N). Incorporating this information into their selection criteria, breeders can then proceed as conscientious breeders have always done: make their breeding selections based on all the dog’s strengths and all the dog’s faults. Using this approach and factoring the DM test results into the breeding decisions should reduce the prevalence of DM in the subsequent generations while continuing to maintain and improve upon positive, sought after traits.

We recommend that breeders take into consideration the DM test results as they plan their breeding programs; however, they should not over-emphasize the test results. Instead, the test result should be one factor among many in a balanced breeding program.

Additional information on the disease can be found on the University of Missouri CVM website: http://www.caninegeneticdiseases.net/DM/mainDM.htm

SCWTCA Makes significant Donation to AKC-CHF

The Board of the SCWTCA, Inc. approved a donation of $2,500 to the AKC-CHF-sponsored Tick Borne Disease Initiative. Because the donation was made in 2016, the funds were matched dollar-for-dollar, bringing the Club’s donation to $5,000. Because of the donation level, the Club will receive timely research updates. Following is the description from AKC-CHF.

The AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to prevent, treat and cure diseases in all dogs, is pleased to announce ongoing progress through its Tick-Borne Disease Initiative.

Launched in February 2016, this comprehensive Initiative addresses important health concerns that include Lyme disease, bartonellosis, and ehrlichiosis, through much-needed research in diagnostics, disease pathogenesis and prevalence. Tick-borne diseases are an important group of emerging infectious diseases that impact both dogs and their people. As the geographic range of ticks continues to expand, all dogs can be affected by these diseases, year-round.

Through a $100,000 leadership gift from Kiki Courtelis, a longtime friend to animal health, and a combined $50,000 gift from the English Springer Spaniel Foundation and English Springer Spaniel Field Trial Association, as well as generous gifts from many individuals, dog clubs, and foundations, the donations raised toward the Initiative, and matched by the American Kennel Club, are driving further progress in this important research for dogs.

To date, donations to the Initiative have resulted in the Foundation awarding a first round of five grants to improve diagnostics and enhance practical understanding of tick-borne diseases, including effects of these infections on blood cells, the canine blood donor population, disease prevalence in dogs, and treatment recommendations.

Additionally, the most recent update to Dr. Nabity’s work on Grant #02152 was received. The title of her research is Translation of MicroRNA into an Early Diagnostic Test for Chronic Kidney Disease. The main goal of this study is to identify miRNAs in serum and urine of dogs that are specific for the three major causes of glomerular disease in dogs. Dr. Nabity anticipates starting sample analysis for this objective in the first part of 2017.
AKC National Dog Show
Dec. 18, 2016 Orlando, FL
Judge: Mr. Frank Kane

Best of Breed: GCHS CH Ainle Something To Talk About
Best of Opposite Sex: GCH CH Greentree Sage’s Magical Enchantress
Select Dog: GCHS CH Lismore McCormack’s Dragon Song
Select Bitch: GCH CH Ainle Gift Of The Gab
Best Bred By in Breed/Variety: GCH CH Ainle Gift Of The Gab
Best of Winners: Wheatenbrook’s Ready To Go
Winners Dog: Ainle Once In A Blue Moon
Winners Bitch: Wheatenbrook’s Ready To Go
1st Award of Excellence: CH Whindancer’s Fireworks At Westwind
2nd Award of Excellence: GCH CH Banrions Bibbidi Bobbidi Boo
3rd Award of Excellence: CH Marquee’s It Ain’T No Trick
4th Award of Excellence: CH Sundance’s Lucky Rover

Krista Makes Waves as First Wheaten
Competing at AKC Dock Diving Nationals

Krista learned to retrieve at 12 weeks
as part of a competition puppy class and was introduced to swimming at nine months. We
competed at the regional trials on Long Island in May, competing against traditional water
dogs, some three times her size! She clinched the Novice class earning both a Novice and
Junior title and an invitation to the AKC Nationals. A month prior to competing she pulled a
tendon in her right rear leg. Dr. Robert Gillette, noted veterinary sports medicine specialist,
immobilized the leg in a cast and did intensive cold laser treatments, and she was ready. She had not had a chance to
be in the water at all between the time of the injury and her debut Wednesday when she won a first place ribbon
during warm-up trials. She went on to compete in the main event, missing the top 10 in her class by less than an inch.
Dorice Stancher, MBA, CPDT-KA, CTDI

Westminster KC Dog Show
Feb. 14, 2017, New York, NY
Judge: Mr. Bruce Schwartz

Best of Breed: GCH CH Keepsake Timtara I’m A Rockstar
Best of Opposite Sex: GCHP CH Bryr Rose Matisse
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Select Bitch: GCHB CH Serendipity’s Urban Legend
Award of Merit: GCH CH Bryr Rose Phoenix Rising
Award of Merit: GCH CH Lil’Town Fiddler’s Lullaby Of Ardnacassa

Official publication of the SCWTCA, Inc, volume 45, number 1, March 2017
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Ad closing date for June issue: May 1

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