

MCKC National Specialties – Think Tank?

This year's Montgomery weekend has passed, and it leaves many memories, thoughts and ideas. The show is a specialty for our breed. It brings together people from all over this country and overseas. This year was no different. It is the host show for many other terriers' national clubs shows. Something that is not replicated anywhere else in the world.

I have said before that it has been referred to as the "international congress of Terriers". This year perhaps it was also evolving to serve another purpose, a "think tank" for the preservation and protection of our breeds, breeders and our sport.

This year Bruce Schwartz, president of Montgomery County KC. Hosted a meeting of the national clubs. An idea that I am proud to say was suggested to him by our own club president Lori Kelly. A group of over a dozen breed club officials met on Saturday afternoon. Included in this gathering was Guy Fisher, representing club outreach for the AKC. Discussion was focused on what all are doing and trying to increase participation at all levels of interest in their breeds. From increasing participation in Meet the Breed programs, offering mentoring to all who own one of their breeds, internet presence such as websites and Facebook, to sharing what the STCA did with their study group, "Where have all the Scotties gone." The participants took away some great ideas including the hope to continue this dialog and an even greater sharing of information and ideas to boost our numbers.

A phrase that is becoming more used among many Terrier enthusiast is "preservation" or "heritage" breeders. It is clever, and it was heard more frequently on this weekend. What we can hope is that the more we work together to see how different groups are tackling the same issues our club is the more successful we may all be. Different perspectives will bring more variety of ideas and possible solutions. Because of the success of that gathering of the minds I would encourage all of us to reach out to our friends in other breeds. As what their thoughts are, what they are doing, what they have tried. While we are concerned about where the Scotties have gone the issue is not unique to our breed.

I don't think there is another event that could inspire this sort of group conversation at the level that Montgomery can. We can look to our own club and see just in our own breed how we are striving to involve as many Scotties lovers as we can.

Continuing the call to action the STCA hosted and sponsored various events around this weekend which included performance events as well as conformation. Seminars (including a performance learning experience on Saturday), discussion groups, a silent auction and social activities. The presentation from the study group of findings on what we can do to encourage more growth of our breed numbers was informative and a call to action. Some of which the STCA was already in the formulation stages, such as the new One to One Mentoring program that will be available to anyone who has a Scottie. There was even a heartwarming tribute to those wonderful service dogs in our breed as a tribute to Sargent MacGregor and his service with our troops.

Ultimately Montgomery Weekend with our STCA events is always an event that many of us in Terrier wait all year for. What was a great addition this is was the reaching across the borders so to speak of some of the various clubs and activities that call this weekend their National Specialty. I for one think this was the start of something special. Why not a "think tank", we certainly are in need of any and all

ideas we can to preserver and protect the breed(s) we love and the activities we enjoy sharing with them.

Kathleen J. Ferris

kajalene@gmail.com

215-357-3563