

herding Addressing Disability Issues

What happens if because of an accident, injury, illness, or challenge associated with aging, you can no longer participate in the canine activities you love? This is an issue for not only individual dog lovers to consider, but clubs as well.

One club has decided to do something about it. *"The Mayflower Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club seeks to provide a welcoming, safe, and comfortable environment for all members, participants, and guests, including those with temporary and permanent disabilities."* This tagline is for Mayflower's new Disability Issues committee, which was proposed in 2013 after several years of discussion among many members and was enthusiastically approved by the club's board of directors.

Whether or not we ourselves are permanently or temporarily disabled (as a result of injury or surgery, for example) or experience physical difficulties associated with aging, we all know someone who is or will become disabled. No one is immune; it happens to the best of us. However, disability doesn't have to stop us from fully participating in life with our dogs.

As one Mayflower committee member commented, "We're not asking for special treatment, just the same access as everyone else." For some people, though, that access may not always be equal or adequate "as is." For example, a show site may not have sufficient accessible parking spots for people with mobility issues, or hotel rooms may be assigned without taking into consideration the need for a closed-caption TV or a refrigerator for storing medications.

The committee has agreed on the following statement of purpose and function: "The Disability Issues Committee is the official Mayflower committee for disability issues, including but not limited to ADA compliance; show, trial, and event accessibility; show, trial, and event sound and visual conditions; designated accessible parking spots; disability-related hotel needs and room assignment; and disability-related safety concerns. Its goal is to

help all people feel welcome, comfortable, and able to participate in all Club events at the levels they prefer. The committee serves as the communications nexus on behalf of people with permanent or temporary disabilities (whether club members or non-member participants, spectators, or guests at club events) and will assist in facilitating solutions for disability issues."

Mayflower's new committee will provide show, trial, and event chairs with contact information to be included in announcements and premiums, be a conduit for receiving disability-related requests, and work to co-create solutions with other committees, as well as determine what new club structures might be needed. It is in the process of compiling and will make available in electronic format all AKC rules, regulations, and guidelines regarding ADA compliance and disability issues, and is reaching out to explain the goals and working process of the committee at membership meetings and in Mayflower communications, including the website and the club newsletter, the *Corgi Cryer*.

In time, the Mayflower Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club hopes to become a model for other clubs who want to create new solutions to disability issues for their own clubs. Our vision is for everyone to be able to continue being active with the dogs we love for as long as possible. But first, there is a lot of work to do! —N.B.

Thank you, Nancy!

—Lynda McKee,

TifflynLDM@aol.com

Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America website: pwcca.org

Pulik The Versatile Puli

Pulik are recognized as being independent thinkers and hard workers as well as being agile and powerful, yet light on their feet. They are able and willing to participate in a wide variety of activities with their humans, including conformation, herding, agility, obedience, rally

obedience, therapy dog, tracking, Frisbee, flyball, and canine freestyle. While every Puli and owner may not be suited for nor interested in every activity, there are many fulfilling activities from which to choose.

Since 2000, the Puli Club of America (PCA) has presented Versatile Puli Awards to those Pulik who have excelled in a variety of performance disciplines, thereby celebrating the beauty, brains, and heart of the breed. The PCA Versatile Puli discipline areas are Conformation, Herding, Obedience, Tracking, Agility, Rally Obedience, Temperament/Therapy, and High in Trial/Best in Show.

The Versatile Puli award is designed so that the average Puli and owner, with some effort, can earn one. As a Puli earns more advanced titles in a discipline, the number of versatility points awarded increases.

There are three levels of the Versatile Puli Award. Versatile Puli (VP) is for those dogs successfully participating in at least three discipline areas and earning between seven and 13 versatility points. As a conformation title is not required for the VP, the VP is open to the pet as well as those conformation Pulik having at least a two-point win, but not completing the requirements for the Champion title.

Versatility Puli Advanced (VPA) requires successful participation in at least three discipline areas and earning between 14 and 19 versatility points (including at least one versatility point in both Herding and Conformation). Versatility Puli Excellent (VPX) is for those dogs successfully participating in at least four discipline areas (including at least one versatility point in both Herding and Conformation) and earning at least 20 versatility points.

A total of 100 Versatile Puli awards have been awarded by PCA (with some Pulik awarded the VP having gone on to earn the VPA/VPX). The vast majority (82) of titles earned were the VP, with 15 for VPA, and three for the VPX. Some of these awards are posthumously awarded to Pulik by PCA members

who submit the appropriate paperwork for their dogs. Slightly more male Pulik (58) have earned Versatile Puli awards.

Eighty-eight of the Versatile Puli awards include Pulik who were major pointed or champions at the time. Fifty-six of the awards included versatility points from the Herding category. The Obedience category includes Canine Good Citizen®, and 89 of the Versatile Puli Awards draw from this category. No Versatile Puli awards have yet included the Tracking category. Fifty-eight of the Versatile Puli awards reflect our membership's participation in agility events. Rally obedience is reflected in 28 of the awarded Versatile Puli titles. Twenty-four of the awarded Versatile Puli titles derived points from the Temperament/Therapy Dog category. And last, but certainly not least, 17 of Versatile Puli titles reflect excellence in the form of High in Trial/Best in Show.

A Puli who earns a VP/VPA/VPX possesses both breed type and working ability, representing the union of form and function. These titles (and associated accomplishments to earn them) represent a considerable commitment from dog and owner.

An award certificate is presented to each Versatile Puli awardee, and the owners get to have a short write-up and their Puli's photo printed in the June issue of *Puli News* (the PCA newsletter) at no charge.

It is my hope that all PCA members will recognize the value of trying new disciplines and stretching their Pulik and themselves to attain these recognitions. To apply for a Versatile Puli Award, PCA members can find the application form on the PCA website.

—Dagmar Fertl, dfertl@gmail.com

Puli Club of America website: puli-club.org

Pyrenean Shepherds What Are They Like to Live With?

What are they like to live with? That's one of the questions that people interested in the breed ask most often.

They can see that the little dogs are cute, fast-moving, and responsive, but what are they like at home? Is all that activity hard to cope with, day to day?

Following are a couple of opinions from people who have lived with the breed for differing lengths of time.

The first story comes from Kay Johnson, who shares her Washington home with Pyr Sheps Eli and Rubi and their Malinois housemates. The smaller herders always make her smile, she said. One day in particular, young Rubi propelled her owner from a bad mood into outright laughter.

Most of us who have the breed are well aware of their ravenous appetites; they're always ready to eat. Kay was preparing to head back to work after a weekend at home with the dogs. As a special treat for them to ease her departure, she had set out raw bones to thaw.

"Of course, Rubi knew this, because every time she would go past the kitchen sink, she would stand up and sniff them, so she couldn't wait for her treat," Kay said. She put all the dogs outdoors as she finished getting ready for work, and they waited on the porch near the door, where she keeps a large bucket of fresh water.

As Kay walked out the door to head for the kennels, bones in hand, little Rubi expressed her enthusiasm by jumping three feet in the air—backwards, of course, so she could keep her eye on the bones.

"Well, she jumped backwards three feet in the air and landed in the bucket," Kay said. "She gave a yelp of surprise and jumped out—still backwards—faster than she went in, bawling me out like it was my fault, but she never took her eyes off the bones!" Persistence, indeed.

Mary Dixon, who lives with young Pyr Shep Mowan and a pack of other dogs in Michigan, said she daydreamed before she got Mowan that her new pup would be her little art-studio friend, lying nearby and keeping her company as she worked on her jewelry and tile designs.

"Amazingly, she started doing that

very thing the first day she was here!" Mary said. "I never had a dog who would do that during the entire time I did Australian Cattle Dog rescue (we lived with 300-plus dogs)."

Mowan loves her cat family and has had lessons in play from Mary's Border Terriers and in boldness from her Cattle Dogs. She's taught herself to herd chickens, Mary said, and shows real talent for the task. She loves to help with farm chores.

While Mowan isn't thrilled by crowds, hates dog shows, and prefers car trips that end at home, she makes a wonderful homebody.

"She's a perfect citizen in the home, and I sometimes forget she's a dog," Mary said. "For someone who is a professional movie-animal trainer, this is quite a feat for any animal to accomplish with me. ... She's all I could ever want in a dog—beauty, brains, and a perfect blonde mop my hairdresser tries to duplicate on me!"

—Kathleen Monje,
cognitivedog@epud.net

Pyrenean Shepherd Club of America
website: pyrshepclub.com

Shetland Sheepdogs Remembering That First National

As always, this year's national specialty will bring new experiences for many participants, such as showing that first Bred-by entry, making the cut for the first time, or having that first class placement or win.

For some participants, however, the event will represent the ultimate "first"—their very first national ever. With that in mind, I asked some current Sheltie fanciers to tell me about their first national experiences and offer advice for this year's first-timers.

In 1995, when Bev Llewellyn decided to start showing dogs, she bought the AKC's *The Complete Dog Book*, chose Shelties as her breed, and called well-known breeder Tom Coen for advice on how to get started. Coen told her to go to the national to "meet breeders, go over dogs, and ask ques-

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* Links to AKC Parent Clubs appear following Secretary's Pages *

BREED COLUMNS SCHEDULE

Sporting and Working
January, April, July, and October

Hound and Terrier
February, May, August, and November

Toy, Non-Sporting, and Herding
March, June, September,
and December