

still don't realize that a Pembroke is in the "professional" ranks in that regard. I mention the need for a quality puppy-obedience class and the benefits of attending one with this breed that likes to be in charge of things.

I often put inquirers in touch with their closest Pembroke club, especially those who are interested in a rescued Pembroke. Some times a "just a pet" family will show up at a fun day or agility introduction with their beloved Pembroke. These people take pride in their corgis, and while most do not get involved in the club, others do and go on to become good club workers. My local club offers a Parade of Loved Ones with its matches. Inevitably, that class has the largest entry, and a good time is had by all. Clubs need to be sure to offer a variety of activities that pet owners can attend and be comfortable in doing so, as well as getting the word out about these events.

Only a small percentage of any litter goes on to a career in any arena. Even fewer go on to the conformation rings. The majority go on to become "just a pet" and take on the enormous responsibility of becoming ambassadors for our breed. They are the dogs who meet and greet people at parks and playgrounds and vets' offices. They are the ones who elicit the question, "What kind of dog is that?"

Some people will go on and get a Pembroke because of the personality of an ambassador they met in such a setting. The pet owners and their Pembrokes can do much for public education in these settings. We need to be sure that they have received a good education when they get their new family member as "just a pet." —Lynda McKee, TifflynLDM@aol.com; Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America website: pembrokecorgi.org

Polish Lowland Sheepdogs

APONC's 25th Anniversary

In the fall of this year, The American Polski Owczarek Nizinny Club will celebrate its 25th anniversary. Those of

us not blessed with a triple-jointed Slavic tongue know the club by its acronym, APONC, and call the breed Polish Lowland Sheepdogs, or PONs.

Although the PON is an old breed much regarded for its outstanding working ability in its native country and reputed to be important in the development of the Bearded Collie in Scotland, it gained little attention from dog fanciers until the turn of the last century.

At that time, Poles became interested in their native pure breeds of livestock. During the 1920s and '30s, PONs were bred and exhibited, and the breed was mentioned prominently in a research paper published by the Working Dogs Society. World War II ended the progress, however, and few dogs survived the devastation.

By 1948 the Polish Kennel Club was founded and there were efforts to re-establish the breed. It took until well into the 1950s before a Polish kennel officially registered a litter of PONs, and there was not an accepted standard until 1959—the same year that FCI granted the breed recognition.

The American connection was another 20 years away, coming by way of a prominent Bearded Collie breeder who imported a pair of dogs in 1979. Three years later, Betty and Kaz Augustowski purchased their first PON from her. They devoted great energy to their chosen breed. More dogs were imported, litters were born in the U.S., and others took up the cause.

By 1987, the Augustowskis and six of those friends started the APONC. A year later, the club's official publication, *The Herder*, printed a roster of 58 members and 10 breeders from all parts of the country. Carrying breed standards with them, these intrepid fanciers logged many miles going to rare-breed shows.

The APONC gained recognition by the Polish Kennel Club, the States Kennel Club, and then the AKC. PONs entered the AKC's Miscellaneous Class in 1999, and the breed competed for the first time for championship points

in August, 2001.

For a 500-year-old breed, that's a lot of recent history.

In the last quarter-century, our American dogs have participated in performance as well as conformation events. They have won the highest recognition in both U.S. and international competition—even returning to their native Poland to do so.

Our national specialty will be held in Florida this coming November. It should be a great party! —Louise Cohen, cachetpons@comcast.net; American Polish Lowland Sheepdog Club website: aponc.org

Pulik

Helping the New Puli Owner

Recently I was involved in a conversation with an experienced breeder as she was mentoring a newcomer to her breed (not Pulis). She was throwing out ideas for the "newbie" that would help her become a knowledgeable dog fancier. That made me realize that it would be great to have a list of such ideas to hand out to my puppy buyers in addition to the usual training, grooming, and feeding handouts I usually give them. That realization evolved into the following list.

Learn all you can about Pulis. There are chat lists on the Internet that offer lots of free help and ideas. There are very few books on the breed still in print, but there are some occasionally to be found on Amazon.com or Ebay.

Learn all you can about other breeds. The more you learn about dogs in general, the better you will understand your own breed.

Ask lots of questions. You will get conflicting opinions—that's good! Sort through them and decide what makes sense in relation to the breed standard.

Study your breed standard with your Puli in front of you. When the standard talks about proportions, get out the ruler. Where it mentions shoulder angle, feel your dog's shoulder blade.

Ask a breeder or judge to show you how to examine your dog's conformation. What

are the judges feeling for when they “go over” your dog on the table? How do they determine angles and proportions under all that coat?

Watch your dog and other Pulis performing in herding events. After thoroughly studying the standard, watch the dogs in motion, and see why they have to have that structure to allow them to make those quick, tight turns and be able to gallop or trot efficiently when necessary.

Join the Puli Club of America. Where else will you find fellow Puli enthusiasts?

Attend the national specialty show, sign up for the members’ education seminar, and ask if you can sit in on the judges’ education seminar. Listen and learn.

Join a regional Puli club if there is one in your area.

Join your local all-breed club and/or obedience club. Other experienced dog people offer a wealth of information and support, as well as camaraderie. You will discover new friends with common interests.

The best advice, though, is to establish and maintain a good working relationship with your dog’s breeder. A responsible breeder will be there for you throughout your dog’s life and be willing to answer all your questions.

Puppy buyers should feel like they can contact their breeder at any time if they have any problems or concerns. Experienced breeders need to be there to mentor newcomers and help them through the early stages of dog ownership. The future of our sport rests on the shoulders of these newcomers, and we must do all we can to encourage them. —Sherry Gibson, gibsons@blommand.net; Puli Club of America website: pulichub.org

Pyrenean Shepherds A Little Herder Takes on a Predator

Out in Montana, not too far from Yellowstone National Park, one Pyrenean Shepherd owner had a heart-stopping experience last spring.

When Maggie and her husband

returned home from dinner out one evening, she took Josie, the Pyr Shep, and her Border Collie housemate for their routine trip outdoors. The Border Collie headed through the door first and immediately burst into frantic *this-is-big-trouble* alarm barking.

As Maggie stepped out the door, this is what she saw: Less than 15 feet away, a huge wolf had pinned a desperate, very pregnant elk against the side of the house.

“I looked at the wolf, and the wolf looked at me,” Maggie said.

And at just that point, 24-pound Josie dashed from behind her owner and ran at the wolf, barking furiously.

Horrified, Maggie—who always goes outside with her dogs precisely to protect them from coyotes and the area’s wolf pack—watched as her little dog chased the wolf for about 75 yards.

“She was running as fast as she could go, a flat-out Pyr Shep gallop, and he was just loping along,” she said.

The 120-elk herd that the cow belonged to had been watching the struggle from a couple of hundred yards away, standing on either side of a pasture fence. When the wolf reached the fence and started up the fenceline, the elk herd converged on him from both sides and finished chasing him off, Maggie said.

She’s certain her presence was a deciding factor in the wolf’s choice to abandon his prey and leave without snapping up Josie as a consolation prize. Fortunately, too, the wolf was alone, without the rest of the dozen-member pack that travels the region.

The elk cow’s sides were heaving, but she was otherwise very healthy and looked about two weeks away from calving, Maggie said. The couple found blood in the yard the next day, but a thorough search turned up no elk carcass, so they think the injured cow must have survived the attack.

In the mountains of the Pyrenees Range where Pyr Sheps originated, the small French shepherd dogs and their flocks are protected by very large Great Pyrenees guardian dogs, originally bred

to protect sheep and their herders from wolves and brown bears the size of North American grizzlies.

When danger approaches, the little herding dogs might well sound the alarm, but then the giant white dogs go to work.

With no Great Pyrenees available, brave, serious Josie just took matters into her own paws. The 5-year-old dog is very fit, as she frequently accompanies her people on long horseback rides and gets daily swims as well. She gets to have fun with agility and herding, too.

“She’s a trouper; she’ll do anything to be around me,” Maggie said. Pyr Sheps can be suspicious of strangers, but Josie likes everybody, especially if they have treats, she said. “She’s a lovely dog.”

Kathleen Monje lives in Oregon with Pyrenean Shepherd and Great Pyrenees dogs. She can be reached at cognitivedog@epud.net. —Kathleen Monje, cognitivedog@epud.net; Pyrenean Shepherd Club of America website: pyrshepclub.com

Swedish Vallhunds Coat

Regarding the Swedish Vallhund’s coat, the breed’s AKC standard says:

Medium length hair, harsh; topcoat close and tight. Undercoat is soft and dense. Hair is short on the head and the foreparts of the legs and slightly longer on neck, chest and back parts of the hind legs. Dogs are to be shown in an untrimmed, natural state. Faults include woolly, curly, or open coats. Fluffy coats (longer hair on body and furnishings, with ear fringes) are a serious fault.

This is a double-coated breed, which means that a correct coat contains two distinct types of hair: the topcoat, which is made up of longer, hard, harsh hairs; and the undercoat, which is soft with a slight wave (this characteristic gives it loft, which is what allows the coat to trap air and insulate the dog’s skin).

A correct Vallhund coat cannot easily be “fluffed” with a blow dryer, as a general rule; the topcoat should be hard

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BREED COLUMNS SCHEDULE

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Hound and Terrier
February, May, August,
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Toy, Non-Sporting,
and Herding
March, June, September,
and December