

Radiological Sciences.

Dr. Verstraete was kind enough to discuss the issue of missing premolar teeth in a telephone interview. His comments can be condensed into two main points:

1. "Missing premolar teeth would not impact the dog's working ability or appearance and are not likely to lead to changes in the structure of the jaw."\*

2. "However, missing premolar teeth are a marker that indicates excessive inbreeding. Thus, if there are missing teeth there may well be other health issues that are not immediately obvious."\*

In conclusion, anyone considering dogs for a breeding program would do well to check dentition. Fortunately, one does not have to count teeth personally. The Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) has now initiated a full dentition registry, mainly at the urging of the Rottweiler people, for whom this is a big deal. To check on a particular dog, simply go to the OFA website and click on Old English Sheepdogs and then the dentition registry. Be sure to check for VPI, which means the veterinarian doing the dental examination verified the dog's permanent identification. To enter your dog in the registry, go to the OFA website, print the form, and have your veterinarian fill it out.

\*Dr. Verstraete has reviewed and approved these statements.

—Joe Schlitt, [wylecotajs@earthlink.net](mailto:wylecotajs@earthlink.net)  
Old English Sheepdog Club of America website: [oldenglishsheepdogclubofamerica.org](http://oldenglishsheepdogclubofamerica.org)

## Pembroke Welsh Corgis

Long ago I read an article in a dog magazine that said you could tell a dog's breed simply by his ears and ear-set. I took the quiz and found the assertion to be true!

The ears of the two corgi breeds are *not* the same. The ears of both are large and erect, but the Pembroke has a more pointed ear, whereas the Cardigan has a rounded ear-tip.

Some pups need help in getting their ears up. Longtime corgi breeder Gayle Garvin provides some information on her method.

## What Works: Taping Ears

Some years ago, while visiting a Cardigan kennel, I watched the breeder do an ear-taping on a puppy. It was different than any taping technique I had seen to date on my Pembrokes. Cardigans in general have a very large base to their ear, and the ear-leather is thicker and heavier than found in Pembrokes.

The breeder proceeded to cut four squares approximately the same size of standard silver duct tape, two inches wide. The squares you cut should be the width of the puppy's ear, plus approximately one inch. (You will not need to use moleskin.) Do not over-cup or pinch the ear together, as is traditionally done.

Place the tape at the base of the inside of the ear—as in the old method, trying to keep the ear in a natural standing position. Fit the tape inside the ear and allow it to affix to the pup's ear. There will be an edge of tape sticking over the outside of the ear-rim; it is the extra inch on the square. Then take the other square, and fit and stick it to the back of the ear. Next, attach it to the tape rim from the front piece. Take your hands and mold the ear to a natural standing shape. This method results in the tape becoming a "cast" for the ear. I very seldom need to add a strip of tape across the head and between the ears to hold the ears erect (a "bridge.")

With this method the puppies seemed to use their ears more. Surprisingly enough, the duct tape was no harder to remove than masking tape and was much easier to remove than pulling the moleskin off the inside of the baby's ear.

Be sure to leave the tape on for a week or longer. You can get duct tape in several colors.

I have found that the littermates don't chew on black tape as they will on masking or silver duct tape. [To eas-

ily remove tape of any kind, use a very small amount of nail-polish remover on a cotton ball, or saturate the tape area with cooking oil, and gently peel away the tape. —L.M.]

More recently, I have begun using medical-appliance glue combined with moleskin for reluctant ears. For this method, clean the inside of the ear first and let it dry. Use the glue to apply the moleskin to the ear. Leave the moleskin on the ears for a period of a week or more before taking it off. Medical-appliance glue remover is used to take off the moleskin. I've had great success with this method as well. —G.G.

Thanks, Gayle!

Our national specialty will be held September 21–28 at the Purina Events Center. Check the club website for complete information.

—Lynda McKee,  
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Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America website: [pwcca.org](http://pwcca.org)

## Pulik Corded-Coat Basics

Until your puppy is 8 to 10 months old, you will have no grooming to do except for regular bathing, cleaning eyes and ears, and grinding toenails.

If you plan to let the coat cord, do not brush your puppy. Brushing frizzes the coat and hides the separations that help you locate the cords.

When the undercoat begins to come in, the coat will begin to feel thick and matted to your fingers. Your fingers are your most important tools; with them you will begin to feel natural separations in the coat where the hair seems to clump together close to the skin. This is the beginning of a cord. At this time, separate these soft clumps from each other by pulling them apart with your fingers. Cords are simply "organized mats" that have tightened up with time.

Bathing will also help you cord your puppy. A damp coat is easier to work with, as the moisture defines the separations between the cords and water tends to tighten them.

At first, you will think you are getting nowhere, as the coat will appear to be going right back together where you just separated it. Don't panic! This is where patience pays off. You may want to wet it down routinely with a spray-bottle filled with diluted coat conditioner before separating the cords.

This process will be repeated over a period of time. Each time the cords will be easier to find, until they don't seem to get lost again in the frizz and you can actually begin to see them distinctly. Don't make it difficult. Remember, this takes time and patience more than anything else. A beautiful corded coat doesn't happen overnight.

In the beginning, don't make the cords too small; you can always split them later if they are too big. They will tighten up with age and bathing, and if they are too small to start with, you end up with little "strings" that are fragile and may break off at the skin. A good size for a cord is about the diameter of a kindergarten pencil.

The ends of the cords should be tapered, with a few long strands of hair reaching out toward the ground. If the ends get balled up or "closed," the cord grows back into itself so that it looks stumpy on the end. To prevent this, use a small slicker brush on the ends of the cords, but *do not brush* the entire cord—only the clumped-up end. Another remedy is to scissor the end at an angle to make it tapered. You can then brush out this angled end to make it more natural looking, and in a few days you won't even be able to tell it was cut.

Once the coat has distinct cords, all you do is bathe the dog when needed and separate the cords while you are watching TV and need something to do with your hands.

If the coat gets away from you and gets really matted, call your breeder or a groomer experienced with corded coats before you do something drastic like cutting it off. The only coat that can't be corrected is one that isn't there!

—Sherry Gibson, [gibsons@blomand.net](mailto:gibsons@blomand.net)  
Puli Club of America website: [puli-club.org](http://puli-club.org)

## Pyrenean Shepherds Watch Out! Pyrenean Shepherds Can Be Addictive

**B**e prepared: If you open your heart to a Pyrenean Shepherd, you're apt to end up with more than one of these engaging, very bright herding dogs, especially if you're interested in dog sports.

Their busy, devoted natures, which lead them to enjoy hanging out with their humans and sticking their helpful noses into whatever's going on, often cause hapless owners to accumulate one little French herder after another.

They tend to be physically fearless and sure-footed, thanks to their heritage of herding in rough, mountainous terrain, and they are extremely quick both physically and mentally. Those characteristics make them a natural choice for dog-sport enthusiasts.

Agility aficionados are particularly drawn to the breed, in large part because of the Pyrenean Shepherd's success in agility rings around the country and overseas. Californian Ashley Deacon's notable Luka is both a national and international agility star. Not only did multiple U.S. national-champion Luka and Deacon win the Medium Dog category at the 2011 World Agility championships in France, but Pyr Sheps swept all four top placements. Their final scores, as a group, were separated by less than a second. Such spectacular success means the breed continues to grow in popularity for agility. Deacon also competes with Luka's up-and-coming housemate, Dash, his second Pyr Shep.

Kay Johnson, who lives in Shelton, Washington, and has three Pyr Sheps, finds her dogs so intelligent that it can be scary. She said that their quickness to learn sometimes is accompanied by strong opinions that their way of accomplishing a task is better. They like to figure things out, and if they're not sure what to do next in training or performing, they'll quickly take what they think should be the next logical step, such as going over an off-course jump.

The breed's intelligence and prob-

lem-solving skills also appeal to Kelly Maier, who lives in Monroe, Washington, and concentrates on agility and conformation with her dogs. Maier, who competes in agility at the national level, also appreciates their athleticism and attentiveness.

Like many Pyr Shep owners who enjoy their dogs' responsiveness, Maier has found that some can be very sensitive to their environments. That trait, most likely a natural offshoot of the breed's long history of working with large flocks of sheep and just one shepherd in the Pyrenees Mountains of France, can include wariness or shyness with strangers. Puppies and young adults require thoughtful and ongoing socialization to help them be comfortable in complex environments.

Whatever their jobs may be, these speedy and serious little workers are willing to put their hearts and souls into it. They excel at herding, tracking and obedience as well as agility. Puck and Valentine, who run agility and track with this columnist, both earned Tracking Dog Excellent titles at very young ages. Valentine was just six days past his first birthday when he completed the advanced AKC tracking title.

The breed's late obedience star, UDX8 Chica, who died in November 2010, enjoyed obedience so much that she took her owner and handler, Marilyn Abbett, to the AKC Obedience Invitational five times and qualified to go more often than that. As they continued to compete at the highest levels, Abbett expected Chica to start goofing off in the ring, but she never did. Instead, she just kept getting better.

And, of course, Abbett has a second Pyr Shep. Lucy joined her household while Chica was still alive, making Abbett yet another fancier who couldn't stop at just one.

Don't say you weren't warned ...

*Columnist Kathleen Monje lives with three Pyrenean Shepherds in the Oregon countryside.*

—Kathleen Monje,  
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### 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