

**AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB**  
**Delegates Meeting**  
**March 11, 2025**

Dennis B. Sprung, President in the Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. ET.  
(National Anthem played.)

Delegates were reminded to check in at the reception desk for attendance purposes. When Staff prints the yellow-colored badge, the Delegate is automatically marked as present.

The Chair introduced the persons seated on the dais: Chairman, Dr. Thomas Davies; Vice Chairman, Dominic Palleschi Carota; Joan Corbisiero, Professional Registered Parliamentarian; Gina DiNardo, Executive Secretary; Shari Cathey the Court Reporter.

Condolences were offered in the recent passing of members of the Delegate Body:

Dr. Suzanne Hampton on February 1, 2025. She was the Delegate for the California Airedale Terrier Club from March 1989 to March 2005, and Kennel Club of Northern New Jersey from February 2006 to February 2025.

Robert "Bud" Hidlay on December 18, 2024. He was the Delegate for the Kennesaw Kennel Club from February 2016 to December 2024.

Margaret "Maggie" Kudirka on December 27, 2024. She was the Delegate for Dog Owners' Training Club of Maryland from January 2024 to December 2024.

The Chair announced that this meeting was the annual election of the Directors.

The Executive Secretary read the report of the Nominating Committee.

Ms. DiNardo: Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 2, of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club*, the NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- Karolynne McAteer, Chair – Irish Setter Club of America
- Joellen Gregory – Otterhound Club of America
- Don Hanson – American Lhasa Apso Club
- Maggi Strouse – National Shiba Club of America
- Mary Lou Olszewski – American Bloodhound Club

Alternate:

- Marjorie Tuff – American Shetland Sheepdog Association

appointed by the Board of Directors at its July 2024 meeting have nominated the following Delegates as candidates for such vacancies on the Board of Directors to be filled at the next Annual Meeting of the Club on March 11, 2025. There are 4 vacancies for the Class of 2029.

Nominees for the Class of 2029 are:

- Dr. Thomas M. Davies – Springfield Kennel Club, Inc.
- Dr. Kenneth H. Levison – Tucson Kennel Club
- Sylvia A. Thomas – Kennel Club of Riverside
- Harvey M. Wooding – San Mateo Kennel Club, Inc.

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 4, of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club*, the following Delegates have been endorsed in writing by the required number of Delegates as a candidate for the vacancies on the Board of Directors for the Class of 2029, to be filled at the next Annual Meeting of the Club on March 11, 2025:

- Carl C. Ashby III – United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club, Inc.
- Patricia M. Cruz – Heart of the Plains Kennel Club
- Eduardo T. Fugiwara – Two Cities Kennel Club
- Laurie Maulucci – South Windsor Kennel Club
- Robin Stansell – French Bull Dog Club of America

Mr. Sprung reported that the Bylaws state that nominations may not be made from the floor. Nominations, therefore, closed on November 15, 2024. Delegates were reminded that elections, in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, require a majority vote to elect.

The election procedure is overseen by the accounting firm of KPMG. The ballots are scanned and tabulated electronically. All candidates were offered the opportunity to observe the election procedures.

(Recess for voting.)

(Session resumed.)

The Executive Secretary read the names of Delegates seated since the last meeting:

**Sylvia Arrowwood**, Moncks Corner, SC, to represent Clarksville Kennel Club  
**Krista Beal**, Boyds, MA, to represent Labrador Retriever Club  
**Cathy Eke**, Knightstown, IN, to represent Chicago Bulldog Club  
**Vicki L. Gray**, La Habra, CA, to represent Havanese Club of America  
**Marilyn Jacobs**, Travis AFB, CA, to represent Norwich Terrier Club of America  
**Andrew Kalmanash**, Stamford, CT, to represent Big Apple Working Group Club  
**Lawrence A. Letsche, DVM**, Ann Arbor, MI, to represent Detroit Kennel Club  
**Cheryl Maass**, Goodyear, AZ, to represent Scottsdale Dog Fanciers Association  
**Teresa R. Marley**, Indian Wells, CA, to represent Sir Francis Drake Kennel Club  
**Sylvie McGee**, Olympia, WA, to represent Nisqually Kennel Club  
**Anita R. O'Berg**, Goleta, CA, to represent Santa Barbara Kennel Club  
**Georgeann Reeve**, Leesburg, VA, to represent Bernese Mountain Dog Club of America  
**Virginia T. Rowland**, Templeton, MA, to represent Wachusett Kennel Club  
**Mark Walsh**, Santee, CA, to represent Del Sur Kennel Club

The following Delegates, who were attending their first meeting since being officially seated, were introduced from the floor:

**Sylvia Arrowwood**, to represent Clarksville Kennel Club

**Krista Beal**, to represent Labrador Retriever Club

**Cathy Eke**, to represent Chicago Bulldog Club

**Marilyn Jacobs**, to represent Norwich Terrier Club of America

**Andrew Kalmanash**, to represent Big Apple Working Group Club

**Lawrence A. Letsche, DVM**, to represent Detroit Kennel Club

**Cheryl Maass**, to represent Scottsdale Dog Fanciers Association

**Teresa R. Marley**, to represent Sir Francis Drake Kennel Club

**Sylvie McGee**, to represent Nisqually Kennel Club

**Anita R. O'Berg**, to represent Santa Barbara Kennel Club

**Karen L. Smith**, to represent Great Western Terrier Association of Southern California

**Mark Walsh**, to represent Del Sur Kennel Club

The minutes of the December 13, 2024 Delegate Meeting were published in the January 2025 issue of the online *AKC Gazette*. The complete transcript was posted on the Delegate Portal on AKC's website. There were no corrections, and the minutes were adopted as published.

The **Cheyenne Kennel Club** was duly elected as a member of The American Kennel Club.

The Chairman requested that the President's Report precede the Chairman's Report for this meeting.

Mr. Sprung delivered the President's Report as follows:

For 44 of the previous 45 years, I have been alongside you at these meetings, privileged to be the Bronx County Kennel Club Delegate for almost 10 years, stepping aside to become an Executive Field Representative. Promoted within one year to Director of the Field Staff, I returned to these meetings. The experience of being a Delegate gave me the ability to listen and understand your feelings. Along the way I also was an exhibitor, breeder, All-Breed Club President, Cluster Chair and Judge. Even a Trial Board member before my employment.

Fortunately, starting in the sport at age 18 and experiencing the second golden era of dog shows; the Afghan Hound Parent Clubs specials class had more than 100 Champions. My last judging assignment in 1989 was the Greyhound Club of America National Specialty with over 50 entries. As a youngster listening to discussions - Nigel, Bill, Ed, Luc, Alva, Jimmy, Anna K, Dr. Jo, Mr. Kendrick and then being mentored by Sunny. Large kennels still existed and the ability to learn by evaluating generation after generation at the same time was invaluable.

The world changes but steadfastly I tried to serve you and your clubs in the best way, not saying "yes" every time but caring and appreciating each concern. The first weekend of my Field Rep training I was taught "you can step on peoples' shoes, but you can't ever scuff their shine." I practiced providing that dignity to each fancier. My positions at AKC were many –

Field Rep to Director of the Field Staff, VP Dog Events to COO and then President & CEO. One end result is I worked with amazing leadership, true powerbrokers in the sport with business acumen, each of course a Delegate; beginning when Lou was Chair; following him in that position there were others. My respect for Jim, David, Alan, Ron – who moved mountains for AKC, Bill and Tom. The presidency was less memorable; in my first six years there were five Presidents. No one likes instability, but we survived. Next being transferred to Raleigh as the new Senior Vice President & COO tasked to fix the horrendous registration meltdown of 2003 within 18 months; collaborating with Staff, we did it in nine months. I was immediately brought back to New York becoming President & CEO and serving you for the last two plus decades.

We had many successes and some missteps; my preference is to give Staff the credit for each triumph, and I'll shoulder the blame for everything else. At times I'll ask an employee to try certain ideas of mine; if they work it is to their credit, if they don't, Dennis had me try. My practice is to protect those who work with me and as you know my belief is that today's Staff is by far the best we have ever had. There are 12 Vice Presidents; I proudly promoted 11 of them to those positions from within and some good hires along the way - Gina DiNardo, Daphna Straus, Pattie Proctor, Carol Hollands and I inherited Mary Donnelly from my predecessor, she is a godsend to our organization. Lucky AKC. I must state profoundly that for each achievement at AKC credit must be shared with amazing exhibitors, breeders, professional and owner handlers, stewards, judges, this entire Delegate Body and club volunteers in Conformation, Companion and Performance. My greatest appreciation to every one of them.

It was not easy each day but indeed rewarding 24/7; perhaps that is why I work close to 24/7. It was good for dogs, for you and for me. I soon learned the first seven days of the week are the hardest. Certainly, challenges existed. Collectively, we learned to cure them. I tell each new employee, "If you speak to yourself, it will be repeated," and "There is a major in politics." There were perks – the ability to originate the 25-year Medallion Program for Delegates, Judges and Show Chairs, and establish the Lifetime Achievement Awards and the Visionary Awards – as my belief is to honor our own. It was my recommendation to begin the Purebred Preservation Bank, establish the Marketing and the Licensing/Sponsorship departments, and I had the privilege of creating the Humane Fund, AKC Meet the Breeds®, the Affinity Credit Card Program, AKC Marketplace® and DOGNY. The latter was special, I delivered an Xray machine and supplies to Ground Zero for dogs hurt in the rubble of the Twin Towers; less than 48 hours after our nation was attacked. It brought AKC the attention we deserved on a worldwide scale. During the 9/11 DOGNY project I was taught another lesson in leadership; just before the press conference started in New York's City Hall. A younger Dennis, not yet your President, was given advice by Mayor Michael Bloomberg; he told me "Remember when you make your first decision 20% of the people will not like you and after your fifth decision you are not sure about your own mother."

It was empowering to go to dog events for 57 years. Traveling America to celebrate your events; another amazing opportunity, being invited to Windsor Castle four times to be introduced and speak with Her Majesty the Queen about AKC and dogs as she was Patron of

The Royal Kennel Club. Annual lunches with Prince Michael of Kent, their Club President, representing AKC at Crufts for 30 years, building strong personal and business relationships with sponsors and kennel clubs worldwide and chairing our National Championship for 13 years, trying to match the unmatched talents of Ron.

Perhaps it's time to recalibrate reality. In 2004 I began providing the Board of Directors with a detailed succession plan and have done so on ten occasions. My plans of 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2024 called for Gina to succeed me in 2028. The last two reports fortuitously suggested Sheila as AKC's Executive Secretary. I am pleased that both deserving recommendations will be implemented. The Board bestowed the title of President Emeritus on me which I am grateful to receive. These changes are effective April 1, 2025.

I want to thank the fancy here and internationally, this devoted Delegate Body, plus AKC's superior Staff for their outpouring of friendship, as I adore them. Dear Delegates, if you need me, call me. I will be there for you and your club members. Thank you.

(Four-minute standing ovation.)

Mr. Sprung: Three words. I love AKC.

Dr. Thomas Davies delivered the Chairman's Report as follows:

As I left the house, my wife patted me on the shoulder and said, "Good luck, you whiny half Irishman." I'm going to make a few remarks about Dennis Sprung that you've all heard, but it's personal for me and hopefully for you.

Dennis will complete his remarkable career at the American Kennel Club on March 31, 2025. He has been the President and Chief Executive Officer since 2003, and prior to that held multiple important positions including AKC Delegate and Judge, Executive Field Representative, Vice Presidencies, Chief Operating Officer, and Show Chairman of AKC National Championship. After decades of exceptional leadership and unwavering dedication to the world of purebred dogs, his departure marks the end of an era.

Throughout his tenure, Dennis has been a steadfast champion of responsible dog ownership, canine health and welfare, and the promotion of purebred dogs. Under his leadership, the AKC has achieved tremendous growth with expanding sports and events, enhanced educational outreach, and the steadfast commitment to advocacy and philanthropy. He has made the AKC the premier dog registry in the world.

He successfully led AKC through numerous challenges with persistence and innovation. He is the visionary behind the AKC Meet the Breeds® event and is renowned for AKC's DOGNY project celebrating the search and rescue dogs involved in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center Towers.

Under his leadership, the AKC has flourished, expanding our events, broadening our educational outreach, and strengthening our commitment to advocacy and philanthropy. His vision and forward-thinking leadership helped the AKC evolve into a modern, dynamic organization caring for all dogs and their owners, while remaining true to its core mission of promoting and protecting the integrity of purebred dogs.

Beyond his professional achievements, Dennis has been a mentor, a friend, and an inspiration to many. His passion for dogs, his deep respect for the AKC community, and his tireless efforts to uphold the values of our organization have left an indelible mark.

His influence and impact will continue to guide us for years to come. He leaves behind a legacy that will be deeply missed by all who have had the privilege of working alongside him. With profound gratitude we thank him for his decades of service and the countless contributions he has made to the AKC.

As we bid farewell to Dennis in his official capacity, The AKC Board of Directors is proud to bestow upon him the title of *President Emeritus*. We do so with profound gratitude for his decades of service and the countless contributions he has made to the AKC and his unwavering dedication to the world of purebred dogs. Thank you, Dennis.

I'll continue now to the easier part of my report. The American Kennel Club Board of Directors is pleased to announce the appointment of Gina DiNardo as AKC President and CEO, effective April 1, 2025. Gina will step into this leadership role following Dennis, ensuring a seamless transition as the organization continues its mission to advocate for purebred dogs and responsible dog ownership.

We also announce the appointment of Sheila Goffe, VP of Government Relations, to the position of Executive Secretary, effective April 1, 2025. She will continue to lead the AKC's public policy efforts, focusing on protecting and advocating for the rights of all dog owners, promoting responsible dog ownership, and advancing appreciation for purebred dog ownership.

The qualifications that these two folks bring to their new positions are indisputable. We are confident that they will provide steady leadership and uphold the values that have made the AKC, the trusted authority on all things dog.

I ask you, and thank you, please do not read anything into the commencement date for these two appointments. Thank you.

Ted Phillips, CFO, delivered the Financial Report as follows:

Good morning. As always, thank you for attending today's meeting. We appreciate your time and support. My presentation today reports the preliminary, unaudited financial results of operations for the year ended December 31, 2024, with comparison to 2023.

The next slide will display the annual financial results of AKC standalone. The first column provides the row description. The next columns report operating revenue, expenses, and the net loss or income from operations. The slide also reports investment income separately, since that result is generated from investment assets and not operations. The first column to the right of the descriptions is the year-to-date total for 2024, and the next column, moving to the right, is the year-to-date total for 2023. This presentation design is consistent for all revenues and expenses that will follow the first slide.

For 2024, AKC reports total operating revenues of \$92,179,000, as compared to the 2023 total operating revenues of \$101,096,000. This negative variance of \$8.9 million, or 8.8 percent, is primarily related to lower revenue from registration and registration-related lines of business. By comparison, please note that these revenue totals reflect the multi-year business transformation we are experiencing, following the high mark of revenue in 2022, when AKC's revenues reached \$106 million. Total operating expenses in 2024 are \$97 million, which is 1.5 percent higher than 2023. As a result of the lower revenue levels in 2024, AKC reports a loss from operations of \$4.284 million, as compared to income from operations in 2023, of \$5.378 million. Below the net operating loss and income line, we report the total of investment income earned in 2024 and 2023. These totals are \$4.9 million and \$3.7 million, respectively. Therefore, the net result, including investment income for 2024, is \$651,000, or 0.7 percent of revenue, as compared to \$5.4 million, or 5.3 percent of revenue in 2023.

This slide shows the primary sources of operating revenues. Registration and events revenue in 2024, totals \$62.3 million, as compared to \$69.3 million in 2023, which is \$7 million, or 10 percent lower. The two other primary revenue sources are reported in the following groups. They are advertising, sponsorships, royalties, and product and service sales. Together, these three primary groups of revenue comprise 95 percent of total revenues. So now let's take a deeper dive into two of these areas to provide additional clarity and review 88 percent of our operating revenues. Dog registration has decreased by \$3.3 million, or 13 percent, to \$22.5 million on 522,160 registrations, from \$25.8 million on 608,990 registrations. Litter registration revenue decreased by \$2 million, or 17 percent, to \$10 million on 246,643 registrations from \$12 million on 294,932 registrations.

Moving on to events, we'll look at the total revenues of the major sport categories, Conformation, Companion, and Performance. Conformation Events revenue in 2024 was lower by \$53,000, or less than one percent of \$5.9 million. Companion Events revenue in 2024 totaled \$6.1 million and was \$454,000, or 8 percent higher than 2023. Performance events revenue in 2024, totaled \$3.8 million and was \$247,000, or 7 percent higher than 2023.

Sponsorships, advertising, and royalties now represent 20 percent of total revenue at AKC. The largest revenue source in this group are sponsorship revenues, which total \$10.1 million. This area has grown significantly in the past few years and contributes significantly to overall revenue. This total has been consistent for 2024 and 2023, despite a 5.6 percent reduction due to increasing demands of sponsoring organizations.

Let's move on to a review of our operating expenses for the year. Total expenses for the year for operations were \$97 million, which is 1.5 percent higher than 2023. As reported here and consistent with most service-based organizations, Staff expense is 50 percent of total operating expenses. The cost of Staff has increased in 2024, over the prior year by 6 percent, which represents the cost of maintaining the Staff complement due to the impacts of inflation and retention. Professional fees and fulfillment costs comprise 30 percent of total expenses. In 2024, management has closely monitored these expenses, which include information technology costs, and we have managed them to a comparable level, seeking efficiencies where possible. Insurance, rent depreciation comprise 11 percent of total expenses and are consistent with 2023. AKC continues to support our charitable affiliates, the Museum of the Dog and the Canine Health Foundation, totaling \$5.1 million of cash and in-kind support. In 2024, total donations equal 5.6 percent of operating revenues. As per the AKC Bylaws, Article VII, Section 11, the 2024 cost for the Board of Directors expenses was \$405,982.

This slide is our financial position at the end of December 31, 2024. Again, AKC standalone – this is not a consolidated balance sheet. Assets total \$266 million, which include investments of \$180 million and property and equipment of \$56 million. The investment strategy for these investments is long-term growth to support the retirement plan obligations and maintenance and development of information technology, which are the backbone of AKC. As of December 31, 2024, investment performance was positive at 11 percent for the year. The liability section is primarily comprised of retirement plan and lease obligations, which totaled \$78 million. The net asset section was Board-designated in 2009, for the protection of retirement plan assets and obligations to affiliates.

In closing, please note that the slide presentation you'll see on the Delegate Portal in a few days has an appendix which displays non-financial statistics of registrations in total for each year. Thank you for your time today, and I'm available to answer any questions at your convenience.

The first vote was an amendment to **Chapter 11, Section 8-A**, of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dogs Affecting Eligibility*, which inserts text to establish the administrative disqualification of a dog that if on three occasions an Event Committee report determined the dog attacked a person or dog at an AKC event, presents a hazard to persons or other dogs, but no injury resulted. It also inserts text for greater clarity concerning the impact of any awards received at a show where a dog was disqualified under this section, and the ineligibility of a dog disqualified by a judge, the Event Committee, or administratively by the AKC for aggression to compete at AKC events or be on the grounds until its eligibility has been reinstated by the AKC. The amendment was proposed by the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee, supported by the Companion Events, Field Trial and Hunting Test Events, and Herding, Earthdog, Coursing and Scent Work Events Committees, and brought forward with approval from the AKC Board of Directors.

Upon approval corresponding revisions will be made to the following Performance Events rulebooks:

- *Basset Hound Field Trial Rules – Chapter 7, Section 14*
- *Beagle Field Trial Rules for Brace, Small Pack and Small Pack Option – Chapter 7, Section 14*
- *Beagle Field Trial Rules for Large Pack Field Trials – Chapter 7, Section 14*
- *Dachshund Field Trial Rules – Chapter 7, Section 14*
- *Pointing Breed Field Trial Rules – Chapter 8, Section 13*
- *Retriever Field Trial Rules – Chapter 6, Section 5*
- *Spaniel Field Trial Rules – Chapter 10*

The Chair recognized Norine Noonan, Delegate from the Basset Hound Club of America, who spoke as follows:

Our club is going to vote against this amendment. Our reasons are that we believe that the language is simply not clear as to what constitutes a hazard, aggression, or a hazard to persons or other dogs. We also believe that this will create a lot of work for event committees that are already dealing with many, many issues at their shows, and we just don't see that this is an issue that requires further attention. No one likes aggression – an injury is a clear criterion. Are we now going to have to deal with exhibitors whose dogs snark at one another, or simply a dog barks in its crate? Is that aggression if another dog walks by? I don't know, but I know that there are certainly people out there who might consider that aggression. We feel that this is simply not clear enough in its intent, and to administratively disqualify a dog, even with a three strikes rule, we feel is punitive and unwarranted. Thank you.

There was no further discussion.

There was less than two-thirds vote in the affirmative, and the amendment was not adopted.

The Chair called on Ernest Obubah, KPMG, for the Teller's Report.

Mr. Obubah: Good morning, Ernest Obubah, KPMG, with the Teller's Report. Total number of ballots cast, 343. Invalid ballots, 0. Majority vote needed for election, 172. Results: Carl Ashby III, 128; Patricia Cruz, 106; Dr. Thomas Davies, 126; Eduardo Fujiwara, 145; Dr. Kenneth Levison, 119; Laurie Maulucci, 101; Robin Stansell, 149; Sylvia Thomas, 134; Harvey Wooding, 127.

Mr. Sprung announced that as no candidate received a majority vote, there would be a second ballot to elect four candidates for the Class of 2029.

(Recess for voting.)

(Session resumed.)

Mr. Sprung informed the Delegates that the proposed rule changes to **Chapter 11, Section 8** and **Chapter 6, Section 2** of the Rules Applying to Dog Shows would be voted as one amendment. Delegates were given the opportunity to discuss each rule change.

The amendment to **Chapter 11, Section 8** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dogs Affecting Eligibility*, allows dogs that have been neutered or spayed to compete in Brace and/or Teams classes at independent specialties or all-breed dog shows that do not offer competition beyond Best of Breed. The amendment was proposed by the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee and brought forward with approval by the AKC Board of Directors.

There were no questions or discussion.

The amendment to **Chapter 6, Section 2** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* inserts verbiage specifying that it must be stated in the premium list if neutered or spayed entrants are permitted to compete in the Brace and/or Team classes. The amendment was proposed by the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee and brought forward with approval by the AKC Board of Directors.

There were no questions or discussion.

There was a two-thirds vote in the affirmative and the amendments were adopted.

The Chair called on the Executive Secretary to read the proposed amendment to **Article XI, Section 9** of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club*.

Ms. DiNardo: This amendment is to **Article XI, Section 9**, of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club*, adds verbiage to indicate the requirement of the President to obtain the advice and the consent of the Board of Directors prior to appointing an Executive Vice President, Vice President or Assistant Vice President.

This amendment was requested by the AKC Board of Directors, endorsed by the Delegate Bylaws Committee and brought forward with the approval of the AKC Board of Directors.

It will be published in two issues of the *AKC Gazette* and you will be asked to vote on it at the June 2025 meeting. The full text is on the worksheet previously emailed.

The Chair recognized Bob Eisele, Delegate from the Suffolk County Kennel Club who spoke as follows:

I think the word should be the President "will." I know that someone said it's in context with the rest of the sentence, but if someone reads this quickly, it could mean "may or may not" – and it could be done alone. I think it should be "will."

The Chair recognized Dr. Charles Garvin, Delegate from the Dalmatian Club of America who spoke as follows:

We would hope no one reads this quickly if they're going to take it into action, and the reason it says "may" instead of "will" is because it does not force the Chief Executive to appoint someone. There are times when they will appoint. Most times they'll go for months or years and not appoint anyone. The wording "may" as it has been for many, many years, is the correct meaning for this section of the Bylaws.

The Chair called on Ashley Jacot, Director of Education, for a presentation on AKC Canine College, who spoke as follows:

Today I'm looking forward to introducing to you the latest updates in Canine College where we're continually evolving to provide top-tier education for judges, groomers, breeders, trainers, and the general dog-owning public.

AKC Canine College stands as a premier online educational destination for the diverse dog community, offering accessible, high-quality, resources tailored to every role from dog owners and breeders to trainers, handlers, and judges. By harnessing the latest technological advancements, AKC Canine College has developed courses optimized for a whole range of mobile devices, ensuring inclusivity and ease of access. This innovative approach not only enhances user experience, but also streamlines content updates, positioning the organization to quickly adopt new advancements and stay at the forefront of education and the dog fancy.

Along with these new programs I'll be discussing today, AKC Canine College has made valuable contributions to several other key areas of the AKC, including over 80 breed-specific courses, over 25 Breeder Education Courses, Obedience Judges' Education Program, Confident Puppy for Government Relations, Conformation for Beginners for Sports & Events, Safe Grooming and Master Grooming Programs, and much more.

The first program I'll discuss today is Puppy Preparation and Puppy Training, which is now available on AKC Canine College and the online AKC Shop. AKC Canine College, with its dedicated and dynamic team, is uniquely positioned to help fulfill AKC's mission. By reaching audiences regardless of their location, prior exposure to the organization, or abilities, we aim to diversify, expand, and elevate our educational resources to bring the AKC to everyone and every dog. We now have two distinctive programs designed to meet the growing demand for accessible, expert-backed puppy education. Puppy Preparation is designed for prospective dog owners to make informed decisions. Puppy Training is a step-by-step guide to raising a confident and well-behaved dog. Both programs were written, filmed, and produced by AKC Canine College Staff and reviewed by AKC Staff. The Puppy Preparation course is a virtual guide with videos tailored to a wide range of users, whether they're first-time puppy owners or seasoned dog lovers expanding their family. We emphasize the importance of selecting responsible breeders. We provide tools to navigate the AKC marketplace, prepare for breeder interactions, and understand what makes a breeder reputable. This initiative reflects our broader mission of empowering prospective dog owners to make thoughtful, informed decisions while reinforcing AKC's position as a leader in canine education. The AKC Puppy

Training Series is a flexible, home-based online course ideal for new puppy owners. It covers everything from potty training to basic commands through 50 interactive video lessons focusing on positive reinforcement and playful learning methods. It's the perfect start for puppies and adaptable to their owner's schedule. Our online Puppy Training Series can help set the stage for future in-person training in the AKC Star Puppy Program, which we strongly encourage to ensure these puppies are socializing with other dogs. We also cross-promote other key AKC programs like Good Dog Helpline and AKC Pet Insurance. Learners in the online course have the flexibility to either enroll in individual courses or to take the whole course itself to meet their specific needs. This allows participants to focus on key areas of interest while also offering the option for a full, structured learning experience. Here, I'll give you a sneak peek of puppy training.

(Video played.)

Ms. Jacot: The AKC Canine College team, with the assistance of the Marketing Department, launched the AKC Puppy Training Series and AKC Puppy Preparation on the AKC Shop. Throughout 2024, we developed marketing materials as a part of a larger campaign, set out to roll on akc.org and other channels this year. We've also prepared a robust and ambitious marketing plan through this year and next year as well. Coming in 2025, is the Canine and Child Preparation Program, a valuable online course series designed to help families prepare their dogs for the arrival of a new baby and throughout those early years. Many families struggle with this transition and without proper guidance, it can lead to stress, behavioral issues, or even safety concerns. This program provides structured, expert-led education to ensure a smooth, safe, and positive interaction between babies and dogs. The statistics are clear. Many families own dogs, but few receive proper training on how to integrate them safely with babies and young children. Dog-related injuries and behavioral issues are preventable with education and preparation. Our courses bridge this gap, providing parents with essential knowledge to create a safe and loving environment. This course is divided into five key modules, covering every stage from pregnancy through early childhood. The *Pregnancy* stage focuses on preparing the home, desensitization to baby sounds and smells, and reinforcing training. The *Newborn* stage focuses on safe introductions, managing excitement and anxiety, and adjusting daily routines. The *Infant to Toddler* stage focuses on navigating crawling and walking, preventing resource guarding, and creating safe spaces. *Dog Body Language and Behavior* focuses on recognizing stress signals and managing overstimulation. Finally, *Neurodivergent Children and Dogs* focuses on strategies for children with sensory sensitivities and fostering calm interactions. These modules contain practical, research-backed strategies to ensure dogs and children coexist safely. Parents often feel overwhelmed when introducing a baby to their dog. Our course alleviates these concerns by offering expert advice and structured lessons. The program not only prevents potential issues, but also fosters a strong, loving bond between the child and the dog. The course is designed to be accessible and engaging, with interactive learning tools to keep parents actively involved. It includes real-world demonstrations, expert interviews, and hands-on training exercises. The online modules offer self-paced videos. It also features interactive elements, such as quizzes, downloadable checklists, and live Q & A sessions. Finally, it's accessible and mobile-friendly, flexible, and an

affordable option for parents. Our program provides essential guidance for families to prepare their dogs for a baby, ensuring a safe, stress-free transition while preventing behavioral issues and fostering strong family bonds.

I do have a few exciting developments to share from AKC Education. We're excited to announce the launch of the AKC Canine College app. This app brings the AKC Canine College experience directly to your mobile device. From the app, you can explore a wide range of courses and resources designed to enhance your knowledge and skills. This app is user-friendly, allowing users to navigate easily through the courses and resources with a simple, intuitive interface. Users can track their progress, staying organized and motivated with progress tracking for completed courses. The app is already available in iOS and will be available for Android this month.

We recently launched the *Getting Started* webinar series, an exciting new way to introduce dog lovers to AKC Sports. These webinars are specifically designed for newcomers, making it easy for anyone to get involved. Each webinar provides a step-by-step introduction to a specific dog sport. We break down the fundamentals, rules, and how to get started with your dog. The response has been overwhelming, with more than 10,000 registrants for just the first two webinars, which were *Getting Started Agility* and *Getting Started Rally*. We've received very positive feedback on these webinars. The average rating is 4.85 out of 5. You can see here some of the survey comments that we received about our most recent webinar, *Getting Started Agility*. We'll continue to host these *Getting Started* webinars and will soon feature the second series in the *Getting Started*, which leads participants to the next steps of getting involved in the sport.

I previously talked about the AKC Pup Pals Program, which sends uplifting letters written by our enrolled dogs to people in need of encouragement. We're now collaborating with the nonprofit Cake4Kids. Cake4Kids provides birthday cakes to at-risk and underserved children. Many of these children are in foster care, group homes, homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, or experiencing some other challenging situation. Now, in addition to a birthday cake from Cake4Kids, children will receive an AKC Pup Pal card, adding an extra element of love and encouragement. I am very proud of all that my team accomplishes on a daily basis, and we appreciate your support. Thank you.

The Chair called on Bob Rynkiewicz, Delegate from the Eastern German Shorthaired Pointer Club, to provide an update on AKC PAC, who spoke as follows:

As Dennis just mentioned the PAC – we are going through a very tough time in legislation. Legislation in all of your states is affecting us every day. The PAC needs your support. That is our key way to meeting legislators, your senators, whether on a federal, state, local level, getting face time with them, discussing with them. Each day, the legislator is contacted on 15, 20, or maybe even more topics. They glance over it. They rely on their staff to update them. With the help of the PAC, the AKC can then go and talk to these legislators, set up additional meetings with them, discuss and clarify how rules and regulations can impact folks, whether it's on the purebred dog side, or it's the puppy folks that just want a nice house pet. Each one

of us is being impacted daily. It also helps us out securing and keeping areas, grounds for our events. Continually, we hear from the show side, we're losing event sites. They're shrinking. Myself, I do a lot of field events. Every time we turn around, we're losing grounds. Places are being sold for apartments, for housing and development. Eventually, we'll have no place to go. We can't afford to lose those things. This is our passion. Please consider joining the PAC. Whether you're a one-time contributor, a monthly contributor, help us out. Your money goes to good causes. It supports the face time that we need with those legislators. Thank you.

The Chair informed the Delegates that the Tuesday, June 10, 2025 Delegate Meeting will be held at the Doubletree Newark Airport Hotel. More information will be emailed as soon as it becomes available.

The Chair reminded the Board of Directors to reconvene in the Salem/Warren Room at the conclusion of the meeting.

Delegates were not required to return their badges. New badges will be printed at each meeting. Delegates were given the option to recycle the badge holder and lanyard in the box provided.

The following Delegates spoke during New Business:

Patricia Cruz, Delegate for the Heart of the Plains Kennel Club, extended appreciation to Mr. Sprung, on behalf of the officers and members of her club, for his dedicated service to dogs and the tradition of the American Kennel Club. She wished him a future path as rewarding as the one he will be leaving behind.

Sue Goldberg, Delegate for the Lewiston-Auburn Kennel Club commented on the February 26, 2025, email from AKC to the Delegate Body in which it was communicated that the Board of Directors voted to postpone the implementation of an event service fee adjustment for Board and Staff reevaluation of financial implications. She explained that the statement brought attention to the disconnect between the Board and the Delegates, who feel their voices and concerns are being unheard in the financial decisions that directly impact their clubs, especially given past experiences with failed initiatives that were not disclosed properly. She recommended appointing an Advisory Committee comprised of Delegates who would provide honest feedback to the Board. When asked, the 300+ Delegates in attendance indicated that they favored a moratorium on any fee increase until further input is gathered from club-based Delegate Committees.

Connie Butherus, Delegate for the Afghan Hound Club of America, expressed gratitude to Dennis for his contributions to the sport of dogs and the American Kennel Club, while congratulating Gina on her new position. She noted that Dennis was awarded lifetime membership in the Afghan Hound Club of America based on his support of the breed and all dogs. She also recognized the authority of the Board of Directors in appointing officers of the

AKC, however she urged them to be mindful of the consequences of unclear or lacking information.

Marge Calltharp, Delegate from the Chinese Shar-Pei Club of America, gave her endorsement of the AKC Board for their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. She emphasized that their hard work in approving events not only helped keep the AKC afloat but also made it profitable, which may have been overlooked in recent discussions.

Margaret Pough, Delegate from the Finger Lakes Kennel Club, highlighted the importance of increasing dog registrations by promoting local matches. She mentioned that her club recently hosted a match at a Special Education school gym in her area and that Onondaga Kennel Association and Kanadasaga Kennel Club are also having matches in their towns. She encouraged other clubs to organize and advertise their local matches to engage the community and showcase purebred dogs.

The Chair called on Ernest Obubah, KPMG, for the second Teller's Report.

Mr. Obubah: Total number of ballots cast, 343. Invalid ballots, 0. Majority vote needed for election, 172. Results: Carl Ashby III, 121; Patricia Cruz, 87; Dr. Thomas Davies, 138; Eduardo Fugiwara, 159; Dr. Kenneth Levison, 109; Laurie Maulucci, 77; Robin Stansell, 153; Sylvia Thomas, 139; Harvey Wooding, 116.

Mr. Sprung announced that as no candidate received a majority vote, there would be a third ballot to elect four candidates for the Class of 2029.

Patricia Cruz, Delegate for the Heart of the Plains Kennel Club withdrew her name from the ballot.

(Recess for voting.)

(Session resumed.)

The following Delegates spoke during the continuation of New Business:

Norine Noonan, Delegate for the Basset Hound Club of America, stated the importance of involving internal and external stakeholders in the Board's strategic planning process mentioned at the General Caucus. She further advised the Board to engage the Delegates and clubs for a strong, successful outcome.

Don Hanson, Delegate for the American Lhasa Apso Club, who spoke as a member of the Parent Clubs Committee, announced the three recipients of the Pat Luran's Difference Maker Award for the quarter. The honorees were Damara Bolte, Karen Mays and Sheila Goffe.

Tim Ufkes, Delegate for the Olympic Kennel Club, who spoke as a member of the All-Breed Clubs Committee and Chair of the Strategic Planning Task Force, proposed that the incoming Board consider forming a committee of Delegates to provide input during the strategic planning process for AKC and its Member Clubs. He shared that his club initially surveyed its members to gather feedback on what works and what changes are needed.

Sue Goldberg, Delegate for the Lewiston Auburn Kennel Club, gave a personal example of how AKC Reunite plays a critical role in pet disaster relief and deserves more publicity and recognition. Her son, whose family home in Malibu was lost after the recent fires, brought several animals to Pierce College in Woodland Hill, CA, the designated emergency evacuation center. After learning about the situation, AKC Reunite quickly donated \$5000 to the school. She applauded the organization and Tom Sharp, President and CEO.

The meeting recessed for lunch.

(Recess for lunch 11:20 a.m. to 12:17 p.m.)

(Session Resumed.)

The Chair called on Ernest Obubah, KPMG, for the third Teller's Report.

Mr. Obubah: Total number of ballots cast, 336. Invalid ballots, 0. Majority vote needed for election, 169. Results: Carl Ashby III, 119; Dr. Thomas Davies, 154; Eduardo Fugiwara, 186. Dr. Kenneth Levison, 94; Laurie Maulucci, 49; Robin Stansell, 168, Sylvia Thomas, 159; and Harvey Wooding, 107.

The Chair declared that Eduardo Fugiwara was duly elected as a member of the Board of Directors Class of 2029.

Mr. Sprung announced that there would be a fourth ballot to fill the three remaining vacancies for the Class of 2029.

Dr. Kenneth Levison, Delegate for the Tucson Kennel Club withdrew his name from the ballot.

(Recess for voting.)

(Session resumed.)

Mr. Sprung advised the Delegates that the meeting would recess while the votes were being counted for the fourth ballot.

(Recess 12:28 p.m. to 12:55 p.m.)

(Session resumed.)

The Chair called on Ernest Obubah, KPMG, for the fourth Teller's Report.

Mr. Obubah: Total number of ballots cast, 307. Invalid ballots, 0. Majority vote needed for election, 154. Results: Carl Ashby III, 107; Dr. Thomas Davies, 143; Laurie Maulucci, 30; Robin Stansell, 168. Sylvia Thomas, 176; Harvey Wooding, 83.

The Chair declared that Robin Stansell and Sylvia Thomas were duly elected as members of the Board of Directors Class of 2029.

Mr. Sprung announced that there would be a fifth ballot to fill the one remaining vacancy for the Class of 2029.

(Recess for voting.)

(Session resumed.)

Mr. Sprung advised the Delegates that the meeting would recess while the votes were being counted for the fifth ballot.

(Recess 1:06 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.)

(Session resumed.)

The Chair called on Ernest Obubah, KPMG, for the fifth Teller's Report.

Mr. Obubah: Total number of ballots cast, 288. Invalid votes, 0. Majority vote needed for election, 145. Results: Carl Ashby III, 84; Dr. Thomas Davies, 141; Laurie Maulucci, 6; Harvey Wooding, 55.

Mr. Sprung announced that as no candidate received a majority vote on the fifth ballot, there would be a sixth ballot to fill the one remaining vacancy for the Class of 2029.

Laurie Maulucci, Delegate for the South Windsor Kennel Club withdrew her name from the ballot.

Harvey Wooding, Delegate for the San Mateo Kennel Club withdrew his name from the ballot.

(Recess for voting.)

(Session resumed.)

Mr. Sprung advised the Delegates that the meeting would recess while the votes were being counted for the sixth ballot.

(Recess 1:40 p.m. to 1:58 p.m.)

(Session resumed.)

The Chair called on Ernest Obubah, KPMG, for the sixth Teller's Report.

Mr. Obubah: Total number of ballots, 249. Majority vote needed for election, 125. Results: Carl Ashby III, 99; Dr. Thomas Davies, 149.

The Chair declared that Dr. Thomas M. Davies was duly elected to the Class of 2029.

Board members were instructed to go to the Salem/Warren room.

Hearing no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

*(One sharp rap of the gavel.)*

(Proceedings concluded at 1:59 p.m. ET.)

***The opinions expressed by the speakers may not necessarily reflect those of The American Kennel Club.***