

In This Issue

- 2 Westminster 2026**
Two Lundies in NYC
- 3 Making a Splash**
Diving in to a new sport
- 4–8 Committee Reports**
Updates from Chairs, Co-Chairs
- 9 Wags & Brags**
NLAA members and their dogs

President's Message

Happy Spring Everyone,

The NLAA hit the ground running this Spring with the devoted Lundehund crew on the East Coast. Karon Plasha and Kristina Maze organized a booth set up at The Viking Experience in Oxford, North Carolina March 21–22 and March 28–29. They received support from local Lundie lovers and others who put in some travel miles to get there. I cannot wait for more photos of these events, which were a lot of prep work and also a lot of fun.

As we are inching through 2026, work is being laid down for our National Specialty in December in Orlando, Florida. Kim Bond is our Show Chair and if anyone would like to help with the show by volunteering to be on the show committee, please reach out. If you are not able to make it to the show, it is a great way to still support it.

Speaking of support, we recently had membership renewals and I am very grateful every single one of you chose to continue to support the NLAA. David Rachford, our Membership Chair, set a goal of 10 new members and in a very short campaign we received 6 applications that were all approved at our March 19 Board meeting. We would like to thank the new members for joining the NLAA, Inc.

Read on for some great articles from our members and to see some awesome recent achievements. If you would like to contribute to this newsletter, we would love to hear from you.

We are a small but growing group and I am grateful for you all.

Kristina Leach-Knubel
President, NLAA, Inc.





Westminster 2026

By Rebecca Lyngmo-Zoellick

This year we had the opportunity to attend the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show in New York City, one of the world’s most historic and respected dog shows. The event brings together exhibitors and breeders from across the globe, all united by a shared dedication to purebred dogs and responsible breeding.

Attending Westminster is always a special experience, not only because of the competition itself, but also for the opportunity to reconnect with friends and meet fellow enthusiasts who share a passion for preservation and breed heritage. Conversations throughout the show highlighted the importance of cooperation, education, and continued commitment to the health and future of our breeds.

For those involved with rare breeds such as the Norwegian Lundehund, events like Westminster provide valuable visibility and a chance to introduce the breed to a wider audience. We returned home feeling inspired by the atmosphere, grateful for the friendships renewed, and proud to be part of a global community working together to preserve our breeds for future generations.



Above, GCH CH Solkanata's Teal the Show (Tovah) is examined by AKC Judge Eugene Blake as proud owner-handler Rebecca Lyngmo-Zoellick looks on at the 150th Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show at Madison Square Garden, NYC, February 2, 2026. Below, left to right, Patricia Palicka, Giitu, Rebecca, and Tovah.

We hope the breed ring will be bustling with more than just two Lundehunds next year!



Rebecca and her Lundehunds in a February 2026 *Showsight* magazine advertisement.



Photos courtesy Rebecca Lyngmo-Zoellick.



Feature

Making a Splash

By Jennifer Hankee

I have always been envious of those with amazing dock diving dogs and even considered adding a breed more compatible with water to my household. When my friend, Bethany, invited me along to help film her golden retrievers diving practice and suggested I bring along my 9-month-old Norwegian Lundehund, Frigg, I thought, “Why not? They may traditionally avoid water but what is the harm in trying?”

So began our adventures in the pool. Our local practice pool, The Doggie Paddle, requires one initial assisted swim lesson and that was all it took. We started training weekly for 30-minute sessions with someone throwing the toy and someone at the end of the pool encouraging her. After a few weeks we spaced it out to every two weeks as by then she was going in to “rescue” the toy with both people on dock. After just six sessions, she was willingly wanting and waiting to go retrieve a toy!

She continues to enjoy being a rescue swimmer with or without a life jacket even with the distraction of friends and a human in the pool. We are starting to work on tossing from the dock versus the ramp at this time. It is a 2-foot jump and as Frigg is still young (16 months old), we are giving her the options to still go to the ramp.

This coming summer, we’ll use Country Paws Canine Athletic Center’s outdoor pool that has different dock heights—we can start lower, if needed. Competitions start as early as May here in Wisconsin through North American Diving Dogs, the dock diving association recognized by AKC for titling. Frigg is registered in NADD’s lap dog class (dogs under 16” at the withers at adult height). The dogs may jump 1 inch to 4 feet 11 inches for a total of five qualifying jumps to receive their novice title. To move up, they must jump 5 feet and beyond.

While we hope she will jump one day and be a titled dock diving dog, just having a Norwegian Lundehund that actually loves the water is quite the feat! Her videos have been shared overseas as many are surprised she willingly and happily retrieves in the water.

The one problem with a water loving Lundehund? She will jump right in the shower with you!



CH Bolsoey’s Queen Frigg of Asgaard doggy paddling photo by Jennifer Hankee.



Committee Report

Health & Genetics

Committee Chair Kim Dingman Bond

On January 24, 2026, Lundehund owners from America, Canada, and Norway participated in a webinar to discuss the rare breed's genetic health and future.

Organized by the Norwegian Lundehund Association of America's Health and Genetic Committee Chair Kim Dingman Bond, the Zoom meeting's guest speaker was Ingvild Espelien. Ingvild is a Norwegian biologist who led the Norway Kennel Klub's (NKK) Health and Breeding Committee and serves on the Norwegian Lundehund Club's (NLC) Breeding Council.

The crossbreeding project began in 2013 with the goal of introducing genetic diversity in Norwegian Lundehunds because "the inbreeding degree is 94 percent DNA homozygosity," Ingvild stated. (Homozygosity is a genetic term referring to inheriting identical versions of a genomic marker from each biological parent.) After six decades of breeding from a foundation stock of six surviving Lundehunds, any one pureblood Lundehund now "could be identical twins," Ingvild explained. Common inbreeding issues include small litters, cryptorchidism (undescended testicle(s)), and intestinal lymphangiectasia (IL), a rare protein-losing digestive disorder.

Any further inbreeding "will pose a big problem" for Lundehunds, Ingvild warned.

In the crossbreeding project, three Nordic spitz breeds—the Icelandic Sheepdog, Norwegian Buhund, and the Swedish Norrbottenspets—were selected for their health, size, and available populations. These dogs, and their crossbred Lundehund litters, are bred back to pureblood Norwegian Lundehunds.

Using Buhund sires as an example, DNA tests found the first generation had a "quite high genetic variation," Ingvild said. When crossbred back to the Norwegian Lundehund, the genetic variation, as expected, decreased. "This is not a quick fix," Ingvild said. "It will take time to increase the variation in the whole breed."

In 2023, crossbreeding efforts increased the genetic variation of 30 percent of puppies born, or 12 percent of the world's Norwegian Lundehund population. Data show these small, incremental steps are having big impacts on what is now the fifth generation of crossbred Lundehunds:

- Litter size averages 3.75 puppies, compared to 2.88 puppies in purebred Lundehunds. Crossbred puppies are "much more vital" because newborns have no problems nursing and quickly gain weight, Ingvild said. The NKK requested one crossbred Lundehund litter to be produced annually. It's "a continuous plan for crossbreeding in years to come. It's exciting but also a lot of work," Ingvild added.
- Cryptorchidism averages 4 percent, compared to 20 percent in purebred males.
- In 12 years, not a single crossbred Lundehund has had IL.

Regarding IL, "there is no genetic markers" to identify it, Ingvild explained. However, Norway is conducting ultrasounds on Buhunds and crossbred Lundehunds to identify any changes in the intestines. A report is expected later this year detailing the study's findings. Additionally, the NLC is updating its Gastro Guide and will upload an English version on its website in Spring 2026. The current guide is used by veterinarians in Norway treating Lundehunds with IL.



Committee Report

More than once during her presentation, Ingvild showed a 1929 photograph of Norwegian Lundehunds with a “visible genetic variation in color, constitution, and coat quality.” New colors and changes to weight and height resulting from crossbreeding Lundehunds with other spitz breeds are being evaluated by the NKK.

For North American Lundehund owners and breeders, Ingvild said the Norwegian clubs “would be very grateful if you could report litters and puppies to us” by entering information into <https://database.lundehund.no/>. Established in the 1940s, the database “is a very important breeding tool and historical overview,” Ingvild explained. It also serves to determine inbreeding coefficients when importing dogs from Europe to North America. “It’s very important to check that the dogs you import...are not closely related to each other so we don’t get problems in the future,” Ingvild said. (In Norway, the inbreeding coefficient must be 3.125 or less and a male is limited to siring 20 puppies in his lifetime.) “All dogs must be clinically healthy when used in breeding,” she said. Males must be clear of IL treatments and medications at least 1 year before breeding; females, at least two heat cycles. For the latter, Ingvild cautioned breeders to consider how stress and hormonal changes during a female’s mating, pregnancy, and nursing can trigger the sickness again.

Fourth generation crossbred Lundehunds are recognized by the Fédération Cynologique Internationale as purebred. In the United States, these dogs can be registered as purebred Lundehunds with the American Kennel Club and shown in conformation.

Ingvild answered questions posed by those attending the Zoom webinar on topics such as the correlation between tooth and gum health and stomach health; stress and IL; supplements; the importance of testing for giardia when a dog has stomach issues; and if Lundehunds are considered a primitive or ancient breed in Norway. (Answer: Yes.)

When asked what she would like her legacy to be regarding her scientific contributions of introducing genetic diversity in the crossbreeding project, Ingvild reflected on how the dogs have existed for millennia and “I’m here only a limited time.” Her hope, she said, is “we can continue having this wonderful breed for the next thousand years [and] that this crossbreeding will be a contribution to...the good health of the dog in the future.”

Kristina Maze contributed to this report.



This 1929 photograph shows Mastad villagers and their dogs. Originally black and white, the image is colorized here to show what the dogs’ various coat colors may have hypothetically looked like. It is one of several photographs Carl Dons took on the island of Vaeroy that are now part of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology’s University Library digital archive.



Committee Report

Public Education

Committee Chair Kristina Maze

Meet the Breeds

The Norwegian Lundehund was one of 140 breeds participating at the American Kennel Club's Meet the Breeds event in New York February 7–8.



Photo by Kristina Maze.

Attending the event were NLAA Secretary Cindy Stansell, Public Education Committee Chair Kristina Maze, members Karon Plasha and Matthew Barton, and Lundehunds Loki, Baldur, Patches, Dagny, Anja, and Haldis. According to AKC President and Chief Executive Officer Gina M. DiNardo, this year's Meet the Breeds welcomed over 38,000 spectators, making it "our largest turnout to date."

At their Viking-themed booth, the Lundehund contingency spoke to thousands of individuals curious about the rare breed. In the span of two days, they gave away more than 2,000 Lundehund collectors cards and hundreds of stickers. A multitude of spectators, young and old, posed for photos, most opting to wear horned helmets or hold plastic axes.

Once Meet the Breeds concluded, the Committee Chair and Secretary collaborated on a Public Education Guide. The Guide lists best practices, tips, and answers to frequently asked questions. The document was submitted to and approved by the Board in March.

Events Calendar

A 2026 calendar listing public education opportunities across the United States was sent to NLAA members in February and was added as an appendix to the Public Education Guide. Each listing includes the event's name, date(s), sponsor or coordinator, location, hours, and a link for more information.

Those interested in volunteering to attend any of the events listed may contact NLAA President Kristina Leach Knubel and the club's Public Education Committee Chair Kristina Maze a minimum of 2–3 months in advance. Once Lundehund owners and enthusiasts commit to attend, the event will be publicized on NLAA's website and Instagram account.

Lundehunds debuted at The Viking Experience this year, thanks to the work of Public Education Committee Co-Chair Karon Plasha. On March 21 and 22, she and half a dozen volunteers greeted hundreds of festival goers, answered their questions, and gave out information about Lundehunds and NLAA. Karon said she received positive feedback from the event organizer who looked forward to seeing her and the dogs again.

NLAA Public Education Committee Co-Chair Karon Plasha (pictured right in both photos) showcases Norwegian Lundehunds at AKC's 2026 Meet the Breeds in New York City (above) and, with NLAA Members Taylor Orne (left) and Kristine Mun (center), at The Viking Experience in North Carolina.



Photo courtesy Karon Plasha.



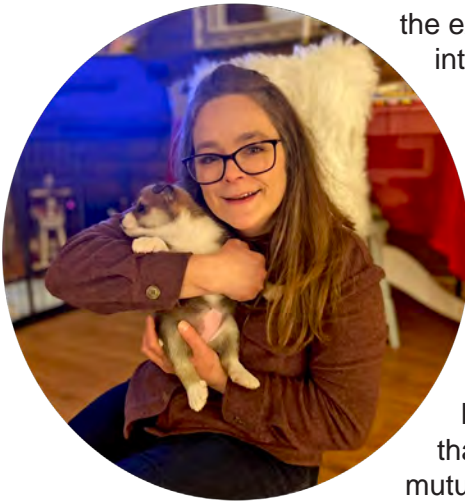
Committee Report

Norsk Kennel Klub Liaison

Committee Co-Chair Rebecca Lyngmo-Zoellick

During our Christmas vacation, a visit home to Norway to spend time with family also gave us the opportunity to reconnect with a dear friend and dedicated Norwegian Lundehund breeder, Gunn Laila Johansen of Kennel Lundelabben. Gunn welcomed us and my sister and nephew who live in Norway for a visit that quickly became one of the highlights of the trip.

Meeting her newest litter of Norwegian Lundehund puppies was both a joyful and meaningful experience. Observing the puppies in their early weeks—curious, confident, and already showing the characteristic traits of the breed—served as a wonderful reminder of how special and unique the Lundehund truly is. Sharing this moment with family made the experience even more memorable, especially seeing the next generation introduced to the breed and its traditions.



Equally valuable was the time spent talking together about breeding, health, and the continued responsibility we share in preserving this rare Norwegian breed. Informal visits like these play an important role in strengthening cooperation and friendship between breeders and owners, both within Norway and internationally.

Maintaining these personal connections helps support the ongoing work of Norsk Lundehund Klubb and reinforces the sense of community that surrounds the breed. We returned home feeling grateful for the warm hospitality and inspired by the dedication shown. The visit reminded us that the future of the Norwegian Lundehund depends on shared knowledge, mutual support, and lasting friendships.

In Norway, Rebecca spent quality time with her friend and some very precious puppies.
Photos courtesy Rebecca Lyngmo-Zoellick.

Breeder Referral

Committee Chair Marianne Klinkowski

NLAA's Board approved adding two Norwegian Lundehund breeders to the NLAA website's Recommended Breeder page: Heartland Kennel LLC (NLAA Member Jennifer Hankee) and Bolsoey Kennel (NLAA Members Rebecca Lyngmo-Zoellick and Garrett Zollick).

These two kennels join Lundeeggss Kennel (NLAA Member Karon Plasha) and Threshing Oar Kennel (NLAA Member Kristina Maze). All four kennels are located in the United States.

To be considered listed as a Recommended Breeder, the kennel owner(s) must be a Lundehund breeder and NLAA member in good standing with the club. Both American and foreign NLAA members are eligible and may submit their request via the website's **Let's Make Contact** form. Include in the Message field, "Attn: Breeder Referral Committee Chair Marianne Klinkowski" and your kennel name.



Committee Report

Breeder Education

Committee Chair Karon Plasha

To increase the number of Lundehunds in the United States, the Breeder Education Committee identified ways to assist those interested in joining the dog breeding community. This includes providing information and guidance about breeding and whelping Lundehunds and matching individuals with an experienced breeder who serves as a mentor.

After a mentor helps their mentee(s) determine if their home and lifestyle are a good fit to begin breeding, they will commit to supporting them through the entire journey. Breeding isn't a decision to be taken lightly as it's a significant commitment requiring time, resources, and money. Yet it is also incredibly rewarding to bring new life into the Lundehund world. There is nothing like the first touch of a newborn Lundehund's tiny little six-toed paws.

To assist the new generation of Lundehund preservation breeders, the Committee identified the following essentials:

- 1) A list of standard whelping equipment and supplies needed prior to the first litter's arrival
- 2) Information and guidance charts
- 3) A "nice to have" list of equipment and supplies to make the process easier and more manageable
- 4) Information on what to do in an emergency
- 5) A Lundehund Interest Questionnaire template used by new breeders to match their precious puppies to suitable forever homes
- 6) An Adoption Contract template



Photo by Karon Plasha.

If you

- are an experienced breeder interested in volunteering to mentor one or more individuals,
- can provide documents on breeding and whelping,
- have additional ideas of ways NLAA can assist new breeders,
- are considering starting on the journey of becoming a Lundehund preservation breeder, or
- are an NLAA member interested in volunteering on the Breeder Education Committee,

please complete the [Let's Make Contact](#) form on NLAA's website and in the Message field, write, "Attn: Breeder Education Committee Chair Karon Plasha."

Special thanks to NLAA member Jennifer Hankee, owner of Heartland Kennel LLC, for volunteering to assist this Committee.

Membership

Committee Chair David Rachford

The Norwegian Lundehund Association of America, Inc.'s Board of Directors approved six new members.

Welcome, Allie, Annette, Ashelee, Ashley, Judith, and Tracey!



Wags & Brags

Talented Trio

Three junior handlers showed Norwegian Lundehunds at February's Renaissance Cluster Dog Show in Madison, WI.

Three juniors at one time is kind of a big deal!

Jennifer Hankee's son, TJ, handled Frigg to BOS for her first grand major February 21 and the next day to SB for a couple more points.

Junior Handlers TJ (left, with Frigg), Xasha (center, with Tovah), and Brooklyn (right, with Minnie). *Photos by Ann Muller.*

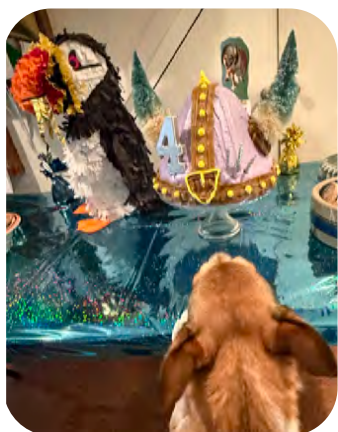


Photo by Kristina Maze.

Liking the Viking Theme

Dagny's birthday wish was to be just a tiny bit taller so she could reach the Viking helmet cake and the treat-filled puffin piñata.

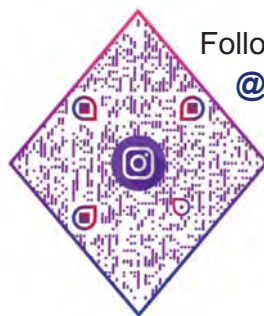


New Champion

Bolsoey's Queen Frigg of Asgaard, handled by Garrett Zoellick, took Best of Breed January 11 and became a champion on her Gotcha Day!

Photo courtesy Jennifer Hankee.

NLAA's on Instagram



Follow or tag us
@nlaalundehunds



The Viking Experience, Week 1 of 2



Photo by Karon Plasha.

Kristine Mun (left), Courtney Robertson (center), and Ann Robertson share a laugh while attending the North Carolina festival's first weekend.

Fast and Furious

Haldis (top, with owner Kristina Maze) earned her B-CAT title and Anja her F-CAT 5 title March 6.

Photos courtesy Kristina Maze.