

Building Better Breeders

The vast majority of “dog people” start out just wanting to own a nice pet. You find the right breed, you get a puppy, and along the way you get involved in the sport of dogs. Initial involvement may be enrolling in an obedience class, trying some field work, or entering a dog show. Whichever path you take, you’ve crossed the line and become an enthusiast. As things progress, your involvement grows, and eventually you may consider breeding your dog. If you’re lucky, you have a mentor who guides your actions, gives advice, and helps with all the decisions that must be made for you to become a responsible breeder.

Yes, that is the ideal situation, but as we know, there’s usually a gap between the ideal and reality. The Weimaraner Club of America recognized the need for a forum for breeders, where good, solid information on breeding could be shared. To these ends, the WCA Breeders’ Education Committee (BEC) was formed in 2006 and launched by the hard work of co-chairs Amy Anderson and Bonnie Lane. They formed the Committee, established its mission, and organized a wealth of information.

The goals of the BEC are to assist in the education of all WCA members in the importance of careful, selective breeding, and to preserve and enhance the Weimaraner as it is described in the AKC approved Breed standard. Additionally, the BEC strives to disseminate information about breeding to those WCA members who make the decision to breed their dogs.

The one means of communication used by the BEC, and the one that most of us are very familiar with, is the “Breeders Briefcase” column in the “Weimaraner Magazine.” Each month we see a new column that covers diverse subjects that enhance the knowledge of responsible Weimaraner breeders. No matter how experienced you are as a breeder, there’s often something new to be found in this column.

While we’re well aware of the BEC magazine column, there are other, lesser known but invaluable resources to be found on the WCA website, wwwweimaranerclubofamerica.org. On the menu bar at the top of site’s homepage, click on “Breed Advocacy and Education,” then on “Breeders’ Education,” then “Presentations.” Under “Presentations,” you’ll find three gems that should be viewed and studied by any breeder or anyone considering breeding.

The first “Presentation” is an in-depth analysis of the breed standard. Here you’ll get a guided tour of the Weimaraner standard, and it is accompanied with photos that illustrate the words of the standard. If you’re thinking of breeding, this “Presentation” shows the ultimate goal of producing a better Weimaraner. (Incidentally, this presentation is what is used for Judges’ Education – so here is an opportunity to see what the judges learn about our breed.)

The second “Presentation” is entitled “The Art and Science of Breeding” It is a “crash course” on genetics, selection of breeding stock, pedigree analysis, and a myriad of subjects that are near and dear to anyone who recognizes the skill and thoughtfulness that goes into a good breeding program.

The third “Presentation” is titled “Whelp Help.” The nuts and bolts, from A to Z about whelping a litter can be found here. If you’re a first-time breeder it gives you a succinct outline of what to expect. Haven’t bred for a while? What a timely refresher this “Presentation” can be.

Recently, the founders of the BEC handed over the Chairmanship to Cindy Long. Her lifelong involvement with the breed, extensive knowledge and experience, promises a bright future for the work of the WCA’s Breeders Education Committee.

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