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“I Wanna Weimerangger”

My telephone rings a lot, and since I do breeder referral for my local Weimaraner club, the call is frequently from a person looking for a puppy. While I enjoy the job of getting people in touch with reputable breeders, there's one little thing about the job that just drives me crazy. It's something that should just be a minor annoyance, a tiny blip, a “no big deal,” but for me it's the finger nail, slowly screeching across the blackboard....

I answer the phone and a pleasant enough voice makes an introduction and explains how they got my phone number. I know its coming and I brace myself for the assault. “I'm looking for a puppy and I've always wanted a Weimerangger.” Or sometimes it's a “Weimeringer”, a “Weimmer”, a “Weimeran”, or some such mangled pronunciation of Weimaraner. Occasionally, they don't even try to say the word and attempt to talk around it but then, with a tone of embarrassment and frustration, confess that they can't say it.

OK, these are new people, ones who haven't been immersed in the world of dogs and our breed specifically. I can cut them some slack. They're new, they don't know any better, they can easily learn.

However, the last straw was wielded like a sledge hammer at a recent Weimaraner specialty. The steward was lady who is a very experienced in setter field trials. She's known me for years and she motions me to come over to her. From the annoyed look on her face I know she is unhappy about something. Skipping any greeting, she blurts out, “I wish you would teach your people how to say Weimaraner!” She further explains that she's been giving armband numbers out to handler after handler who did disservice to the pronunciation of our breed's name, and it's making the hair on the back of her

neck do a little tap dance. When a person outside our breed complains about the people within our breed, it's time to take some action.

Weimaraner fanciers, we need to stamp out this pronunciation problem. After all, this breed is our passion and it's a disservice to have the public uncomfortable with its name. There was a time when the general population considered "Volkswagen" an exotic, foreign word and they got over that. So, let's all do our part and educate the masses about the name of our breed.

Luckily it's a problem that's simple to remedy. Here's an easy way to nip this problem in the bud and one that's so simple that people are simultaneously amused and educated in the blink of an eye.

First, tell the person you're going to teach them a trick to saying "Weimaraner." Put them at ease by asking if they can say the word "honor" because that's the hardest part of saying the word. Ask them to say "y" and "mar," and then have them unscramble the three words into "y- mar- honor". You won't believe the look of, "Is that really all there is to it?" You'll know if you've totally succeeded when they successfully pronounce "Weimaraner" in the ensuing conversation. Most folks will give their shiny new word a try and succeed.

OK, by doing this we're not finding the cure for the common cold or achieving world peace, but it's a tiny step to improving our breed's image and stamping out one really annoying pronunciation blunder.

My "y-mar-honors" and I wish you good luck in this quest.

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