

## More on Dalmatians

### **More DCA members express mounting frustration.**

Dear Ms. McDonald,

As the breeder and owner of the Dalmatian pictured in the article "Dalmatians at a Crossroads" (DR 2009 Annual p. 298) I want to thank you for running that article. It could be said that the entire purebred dog fancy is at a crossroads. Many people feel purebred dog breeders have lost their way in the single-minded pursuit of blue ribbons.

The purpose of a parent club is to preserve and improve the breed. But we are now seeing longtime, knowledgeable breeders being forced out of clubs because they dare to question the status quo. How is it that those who point out ways to reduce genetic health problems are marginalized and said to be in league with extremist Animal Rights groups? When did wanting to improve the health of your dogs become "controversial"?

I began showing Dalmatians in conformation in 1988 and raised my first litter in 1990. For 17 years I enjoyed showing and breeding AKC Dalmatians. I was proud of the dogs I produced – not just the many that ended up with a "Ch." in front of their names but the others, with no titles, whose families told me they were the best dogs they had ever had.

I decided in 2005 that I owed it to the breed I love to try to do even better. That is when I came to my own crossroads and chose the path that had been laid out over 30 years ago by Bob Schaible, with the Pointer cross. My only regret is that I did not do it sooner.

Denise Powell  
Aberdeen Dalmatians

Dear DR,

In regard to "Dalmatians at a Crossroads": How wonderful that a geneticist had the curiosity and knowledge to breed a Dalmatian to a single champion Pointer to acquire the normal uric acid gene. How exciting to live in a time of DNA testing.

The Pointer/Dalmatian breeding occurred over 30 years ago at about the time I became involved in breeding and showing Dalmatians. I look forward to the day when the AKC lifts the hold that has been placed on the descendants of the fourth-generation backcross bitch which was originally accepted for registration by the AKC. Breeders would like the opportunity to acquire the normal uric acid gene in their breeding stock and eliminate stone disease. By blocking the AKC registration of the 10-plus generation backcross dogs, opponents deny interested breeders the chance to improve the health of their bloodlines. What does that accomplish? Any breeder that doesn't want the gene does not have to breed to those dogs that carry it. If they don't like the "type" they would not breed to the dog anyway.

The spotting issue is inconsequential. All the normal uric acid Dalmatians I examined at the National Specialty show exhibited spotting well within the standard. Much of the spotting appeared similar to top winners of just a few years ago. My observation is that the opposition is more about politics than science, and that is unfortunate. Perhaps it's time the AKC developed a single policy and procedure to incorporate backcross and native stock into the registry and take the politics of the parent club out of it. With the pedigreed dog in the limelight, and at a critical time at that, it is in the AKC's best interest to be proactive in registration cases instead of waiting for members of a breed club to agree.

Sincerely,  
Lizabeth Hancock  
Thidwick Dalmatians  
Member Dalmatian Club of America  
Member Dalmatians of North America

- More about Dalmatians at a Crossroads -