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ATLANTA KENNEL CLUB DIGEST

MARCH 2012

MARCH MEETING

WEDNESDAY

MARCH 14TH

MARCH MENU

WHOLE GRAIN MUSTARD CRUSTED PORK LOIN WITH
HONEY DIJON DEMI-GLAZE, SERVED WITH POTATO GRATIN
AND GREEN BEANS AND SWEET PEPPERS

Praline Mousse Cake with Chocolate Sauce, Chocolate Cigarette, and Fresh Berries

All Meals are served with Salad, Fresh Bread, Whipped Butter, Olive Tapenade,
Freshly Brewed Coffee, Herbal Teas and Unsweetened Iced Tea

Children's Menu Available:

MARCH 14, 2012 MEETING PROGRAM:

Guest Speaker: Meredith Minkin, CPDT-KA, ANWI
NFulton County Animal Control Hearing Board
Board of Directors, Jack Russell Terrier Club
CGC and STAR Puppy Evaluator
Owner and Director of Canine PhD

*Meredith will discuss how breeders can influence the
temperament of pet dogs and, in turn, affect the entire community.*

LOCATION: Villa Christina Restaurant (404) 303-0133
www.villachristina.com

4000 Summit Boulevard, Atlanta, GA 30319
(Less than 1/2 mile from I-285 & Ashford Dunwoody Rd.)

Time:

6:45 p.m. - Salads Served

7:15-8:00 p.m. - Dinner

8:00 p.m. (Sharp) - Program begins

8:45-9:15 p.m. - Adjourn

Directions: I-285 Exit 29, Go South (Inside the Perimeter) on Ashford Dunwoody Rd. Turn Right at first street, Lake Hearn Dr. (3/10ths mile), Turn Left at Parkside Place NE, then take next Right on Perimeter Summit Blvd. **Go to Stop Sign & Turn Left** (Watch for Signs for Villa Christina). Note Perimeter Summit Blvd. Turns Left & Becomes Summit Blvd. The Restaurant is a Free-Standing Bldg & is the Last Bldg on Left - Look for Signs. Complimentary Valet Parking **and Self-Parking Past the Bldg & Turn Left**. Meeting Room Location is Upstairs on the 2nd Floor (Stairs or Elevator Access). A Map is available on the Villa Christina Website with a Link to Mapquest.

RSVP: DINNER RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED If you plan to eat with us! You are not required to have dinner however. Join us for drinks or come shortly before 8 for the program only and short business meeting following. Please be sure to call ahead for your reservations if you plan to join us for Dinner as the Restaurant has a cut off for reservations and cancellations. Contact our **Kellie Holbrook - 770-664-5756** or email her at holbrookcc@mindspring.com **NO LATER than Sunday night (March 11th)** prior to the meeting on the following Wednesday. If you are on the standing reservation list and do not attend you will be billed for your meal. Price \$20 adults \$5 for children under 12. If you have special menu needs please mention this to the Hospitality Chair when you make your reservations. If you decide later to attend you can order food "to go" in the restaurant & bring it upstairs to eat with us.
Let us know if you can & a place will be held at a table.

Birthdays



March Birthdays:

Melody Van Norden 3/11

Kimberly Benkiser 3/15

Mary Johnson 3/15

Ann Wallin 3/16

Carol Wilson 3/19

Toni Boorstein 3/20

Connie Brittain 3/22

Bart Susany 3/27

April Birthdays:

Susan Adams 4/1

Kylie Soafer 4/2

Joan Dudman 4/12

Greg Benkiser 4/13

Marie Cordell 4/13

Shannon Soafer 4/13

Anniversaries



George & Alice Carnahan 3/21

Gilda & Donald Mallik 3/21

Jane Faass-Nichols 4/1

Anyone Missing?

**Please let us know so we can
get our lists up to date!!**

Contact: Ginger Aldrich

snofire@aol.com

MEMBERSHIP:

MEMBERSHIP:

VICKI ALLENBRAND - BLACKJACKDOGS@EARTHLINK.NET - 678-429-4609



NEW MEMBERS:

NO NEW MEMBERS

NEW APPLICANTS:

2ND READING

LINSEY TOBEY

1233 Long Meadow Drive, Kennesaw, GA 30144

Phone: 770-218-3634

Email: l.tobey@yahoo.com

SIBERIAN HUSKIES

Sponsored by Liz Demartino and Diane Spendle



.....
PENNY LITES... 2204 Pond Road, Duluth, GA 30096 404-409-8504 Email: pennylites@gmail.com

MEMBERS OF THE MONTH:

March Member of the Month: SUSAN CATLIN

April Member of the Month: CANDY WRIGHT



DIGEST COORDINATOR:

GINGER ALDRICH - SNOFIRE@AOL.COM - 770-380-9404

Send any brags or articles of interest to Ginger. Mail Address: P.O. Box 242, Murrayville, GA 30564.



CARDS AND FLOWERS:

MARY SECHLER, CHAIRPERSON



If you know of someone needing a little extra cheer, contact Mary at 770-446-8889 (Home) or 678-371-9226 (Cell).

TOM GREER MEMORIAL SERVICE

Here is information I received today and thought a number of you would be interested ~ Helen

Tom's memorial service will be held in connection with the ORKC dog show the weekend of May 5, 2012. If you have any memories, antidotes, feelings, and/or stories concerning Tom, please e-mail to: Sharleen Anderson or Bob Anderson at cardiweiler@hotmail.com (706-401-1518/Sharleen or 706-401-1517/Bob Anderson or to Rusty Morton at booker@badbooker.com). Be sure to give your name, email, and/or phone number so you can receive exact information on the upcoming memorial service for Tom.

ATLANTA KENNEL CLUB DIGEST

BRAGS:

Please send any brags to Ginger Aldrich for the Digest – Snofire@aol.com, 770-380-9404, P.O. Box 242, Murrayville, GA 30564



WEBMASTER:

JIM MACKE - ATLANTAKC@COMCAST.NET *OR*

MARY ELLEN MACKE - MARYELLEN.MACKE@HARRYNORMAN.COM

404-310-5933. Call or email either Mary Ellen or Jim for website questions or help.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

• **PEACH BLOSSOM CLUSTER - APRIL 12 - 15, 2012**

Closing reminder is Wednesday, March 28th.

If you are coming to the shows and have a few hours that you can help out please call us before the shows or come to the PBC Cluster office in the Roquemore Building at the show Cluster Chair: Mary Ellen Macke 404-310-5933.

maryellen.macke@harrynorman.com

WE ALWAYS NEED HELP! “POSSIBLE AREAS TO HELP”

SET UP DAY / WEDNESDAY

- Placing signs around the show site
 - Hospitality set up in Roquemore
 - Trophy table set up and skirting tables in other bldgs.
 - Grooming building setup (call CJ Favre - www.caninespecialist@bellsouth.net)
- Spaces are marked on Tuesday
- Agility set up - see Jim Macke in Reaves
 - Vendor set up - call Carl Vitner 404-291-0123
 - Set chairs in the rings for judges and stewards
 - Motor Home Parking - contact Jason Griner - jlgriner@gmail.com

THURSDAY - SATURDAY

- Hospitality - set up coffee and breakfast - see Angela Stillwell in Roquemore
- Help with ringside hospitality for judges
- Catalog table sales in front of Roquemore
- Man Information tables in McGill & MMH
- Man Clinic ticket sales desk in Roquemore lobby
- Helper for Eye Clinic
- Trophy table on Saturday - Contact Carol cmsdals@bellsouth.net
- Set up chairs at group ring

SUNDAY AFTERNOON BEGINNING AROUND 3 PM

- Take down signs in and around buildings
- Ck buildings for ring decorations & coolers left and bring back to Roquemore
- Load and return equipment to storage shed
- Pack up Trophy table area
- Pack up hospitality
- Agility Pack up



Responsible Dog Ownership – Everyone’s Goal

The Georgia Canine Coalition (GCC) and its members support reasonable and enforceable animal laws and ordinances that hold accountable those irresponsible owners whose dogs aggressively attack and injure without provocation.

Preventing dog attacks should be everyone’s first goal and a vital step in preventing attacks is an educational program that teaches dog owners how to have well behaved dogs, why it is important to keep their dogs confined to their property or on a leash, and why it is important to always supervise the interaction of children and dogs. Children and dogs together are a natural, but an adult always needs to be present when a dog and a child are together. For many years, the kennel clubs in the state of Georgia have presented the American Kennel Club’s Safety Around Dogs Program, which is for Children of all ages. The GCC can assist anyone wanting to offer this program to children’s groups.

Georgia law must, however, strike a reasonable balance that allows responsible Georgians to enjoy their ownership of dogs while affording protection to those who might be placed at risk. Current Georgia law strikes that balance by classifying potentially dangerous dogs, dangerous dogs and vicious dogs and placing restrictions on how owners must confine and handle dogs in each classification. Local law enforcement officers are responsible for ensuring compliance with these restrictions.

The Georgia House of Representatives is currently considering **House Bill 685** sponsored by Representative Gene Maddox to better define dangerous and vicious dogs and eliminate the classification of potentially dangerous dogs. New laws should be carefully drawn so as to avoid unintended consequences for the responsible owner. Dogs are animals and we, as their owners, are responsible for their training and care. A responsible dog owner contains their dog either on their property or when off their property on a leash.

HB 685 seeks to identify those dogs that have caused an injury that is less than serious and also to identify those dogs that have aggressively attacked a person or injured a domestic animal on another’s land. When a dog is classified as either dangerous or vicious, an animal control officer may act to protect the public while affording the owner the opportunity to comply with restrictions imposed by the law.

In crafting this bill, Representative Gene Maddox and his co-signers recognize reasonable exceptions for dogs engaged in training as hunting, herding, and predator control dogs as well as those used in law enforcement, military work and dogs that injure a person when that person is committing a criminal offense. We commend these legislators for realizing that not every dog that bites is a dangerous dog.

The provisions of HB 685 more clearly identify dangerous and vicious dogs so that law enforcement officers can recognize dangers to the public and act accordingly. In the twelve years I have served on the Gwinnett Animal Advisory Council, and also worked with other counties and cities around the state to develop animal control ordinances, the ones that work best are those that are reasonable and enforceable. While our primary goal should be the prevention of aggressive dog attacks by teaching Responsible Dog Ownership, we should have enforceable, reasonable, and effective dangerous dog laws to deal with irresponsible dog owners.

Gail LaBerge
President
Georgia Canine Coalition, Inc.

Submitted by Mary Ellen Macke from a Weimaraner Club Breeder

Well worth the reading Re: **Purebreds VS Mixed Breeds – Hybrid Vigor Myth!**

Veterinarian Speaks Out on PETA and Westminster by Libbye Miller; DVM

"Adorable mixed breeds" get cancer, epilepsy, allergies, heart disease, and orthopedic problems just like purebreds. I see it every day in my veterinary practice but mixed breed dogs aren't tracked like the purebreds so they have a reputation as "healthier" that is actually undeserved in many cases. "It is so sad that a lot of folks, including young veterinarians these days, buy into the "hybrid vigor" baloney. The vet schools have been infiltrated by the Animal Rights Extremists, who are teaching them this junk science in order to push their agenda. All animals have a certain amount of genetic load, which is to say there is absolutely no animal without some genetic problem of some sort of another.

- Know anyone who wears glasses?
- Has allergies? Thyroid problems?
- Weak knees?
- Flat feet?
- A skin condition?
- Arthritis?
- A gap between their front teeth?

These are all genetic imperfections. No human is genetically "clean." Neither is any individual of any species on earth. So this idea that dogs should not be bred because they might have a genetic problem, and that breeders are somehow "evil" for breeding them, is ridiculous. Every single individual of every single species has at least a few genetic conditions. To use PETA's logic, all breeding of all kinds (including having human babies) should halt immediately. And to be honest, Ingrid Newkirk (the woman who founded PETA) does believe exactly that. She thinks that humans should become extinct, along with dogs, cats, etc. This ridiculous scenario is precisely what she would like to see happen. So folks, if that is what you want...if you agree with Ingrid Newkirk's whacky views, send your hard earned money to PeTA. They will help to ensure you are not able to own a dog or cat or hamster or any other pet in the future. They will see to it that you can't eat meat or fish or eggs or any type of animal-based nutrition. They will work to shut down places like Sea World, the zoos, etc. so you cannot observe the many wonderful animals on the Earth. Eventually, once they accomplish these things, they may turn their efforts to making it illegal for humans to procreate. If you don't agree with their extremist views, wise up and start supporting those who truly do love, care for and enjoy interaction with other species here on our little blue planet. The fanciers of the breeds, those you see exhibiting their dogs at Westminster and other dog shows, work very hard to eliminate serious genetic conditions. They screen their breeding stock with every available test. They research pedigrees before breeding into other lines, to check for similar clearances in those animals. They contribute money to research organizations to further the work being done to track down genetic problems. They contribute blood, cell samples, etc. from their own animals to help with DNA and genome studies. They have made great progress so far, and they continue to work hard at it.

Are there unethical breeders? Certainly, there are. Just as in any group of humans, you will find the good and the bad. United States VP Elect Joe Biden, for example, managed to find a not so good one when he got his new German Shepherd puppy. I don't know who did his research for him, but they obviously didn't do their homework if they were looking for a responsible breeder. Joe has the right to get his dog from whomever he wishes, but if he was trying to set an example of purchasing from a responsible hobby breeder he went off the track this time. That's too bad, but it was his choice. Unfortunately, breeders like that may be a lot easier to find because of their high volume and high profile. If you are looking for a nice family pet from a breeder who will be there for you forever, you need to do due diligence. You won't get that from a pet store. You won't get that from the guy selling dogs out of his pickup truck in the Wal-Mart parking lot. You won't get that support from a high-volume breeder, either. Yes, it takes a little more time and effort to find someone who really cares and does all the work to breed the healthiest, happiest puppies possible and then stands behind those puppies. This is a living being that will be part of your family, hopefully, for many years. Isn't it worth a bit of effort to find a breeder who will be there for you and that puppy forever? And guess what? Shows like Westminster are a very valuable resource for finding breeders who do care and who use the best possible practices, as well as for learning more about the various breeds. Bravo to USA Network for broadcasting the Westminster Kennel Club show all these years. May they enjoy continued success through the ongoing inclusion of such programs? I will be eagerly watching this year's show!"

Submitted by Weimaraner Breeder Cheryl Lent

12:25pm Feb 10

I just "lifted" this from Jeffrey Hanlin's page. He is an awesome dog photographer as well as a Sporting Dog enthusiast. TJ introduced me to him. ...A young man, but oh so gifted and smart in the ways of our dog world.

Jeffrey Hanlin wrote:

If your dogs do not win as much as you think they should - you have two choices:

- a. You can concentrate on improving your dogs, or - if you find this too hard, you can
- b. Look for excuses why they don't win enough - which is by far the easy way out.

If you choose the latter option, you will also learn how to become a bad loser, step by step:

1. The most important rule to remember is never to ...congratulate the winner of the class. If you ever feel that you have to, do not try to produce a smile. Unless you have practiced at home, it's not going to look real. The best thing to do, is just to walk out of the ring, with an "Oh my God" expression on your face, before anyone - including the ring steward - get a chance to see your placement.
2. As there is only one winner, and many losers, you will find yourself in good company as soon as you get out of the ring. These will make wonderful listeners, so take this opportunity to convince them, and yourself, that the judge was probably a friend of the winner's. In other words, the decision was corrupt. The word corrupt is willingly adopted by people who are looking for excuses.
3. If the dogs of the same people beat your dogs again and again, it's time to slightly change the excuses. Now, tell yourself and the other losers that they win only because they are famous. Ignore the fact that they may have become famous for a reason, for instance for having the best dogs.
4. Another good excuse for constantly losing, is to let people know that you find health and temperament more important than exterior, when breeding. In other words, you are a more serious breeder than the winner. Serious is another good word. It creates a lot of credibility.
5. The more the dogs of your competitors win - the better reason you have to be suspicious. Tell people that the top winner has most probably been dyed, is wearing switches, is drugged or has had several tooth and testicle implants. Choose one, not all.
6. If you feel that the above arguments are fading, you can always move on to the more hidden faults. If you think carefully, surely you will have heard rumors that the top-winner has left a problem in at least one of his offspring. You have a wide range to choose from: try PRA, HD, patella, and epilepsy or leg-perches disease. Once the rumor is out and about, the damage is done.
7. To change the subject slightly, you can excuse your loss by blaming the owner of the winner for walking his dog too close to yours and thereby disturbing it. This will win you a great deal of sympathy.
8. Another good excuse is that the winning dog is "made-up" by the groomer and the handler. Whether or not you have touched the dog, just tell people that underneath that fantastic coat and behind that flashy picture seen in the ring - hides a total wreck.
9. If everything should fail, you have a final devastating card on your hands: the private lives of those who win. If you try hard enough you can probably dig up something which makes a story. Look for a divorce, and affair - hopefully including a person within the breed, or some financial problem. If you really can't find anything, start to watch their eating and drinking habits. Then when you add some of your own spice to the story, you will find that most people will eat the dish with great appetite.
10. When and if you do win a class, make sure you win in the style you lose. Tell everybody that finally there was an honest judge, who looked at the dog - not the handler.

I think the above folks could be included in the proverbial "sub-culture of losers" made famous by our friend, member and Seminar speaker Dr. Carmen Battaglia!

From Petside online magazine:

Westminster Tradition Once Cancelled – Now Saved!

By Sara Bogush

After the tradition of dining at Sardi's after winning Best in Show at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show was briefly called off for next year, it was quickly reinstated.

It didn't take long for the **Westminster** tradition of dining at Sardi's that was currently thought to be canceled to quickly be reinstated.

According to a report by the New York Times, the comments made by New York health commissioner Dr. Thomas A. Farley prompted Mayor Bloomberg to sit him down for a quick chat. While Bloomberg agreed with **the commissioner's** decision on keeping animals out of restaurants in general, he did say that an exception should be made for the winner of the **Westminster show** in order to continue the tradition.

That prompted the health department to find a loophole. Each year, the winner of Westminster would receive an exemption, a waiver from the commissioner of the health department, which allows them to dine at Sardi's upon winning Best in Show.

All associated with the Westminster **Kennel Club** show, including the show's voice and spokesman David Frei, were pleased with the reinstatement of the tradition.

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AKC'S NEW 174TH BREED

Treeing Walker Coonhound Joins AKC Family

The Treeing Walker Coonhound became the AKC's 174th registered breed on January 1. The sixth coonhound to **gain full AKC recognition**, the Treeing Walker was bred to assist in the hunting of raccoons. Coonhounds "tree" their quarry and announce their success with their loud, distinctive barks.

Called "the people's choice" of the coonhound breeds, the energetic Treeing Walker is perfectly suited for the task for which it was bred - tracking and treeing wild raccoons. The breed's competitive spirit makes it an ideal choice for competitive coonhound events. The breed's coat is short and glossy, yet dense enough for protection. The ideal coat should be tri-colored - white, black and tan. White may be the predominant color with black marking and tan trim; or black may be the predominant color with white marking and tan trim, such as a saddle back or blanket back. White with tan spots or white with black spots may be accepted.

The Treeing Walker Coonhound was developed from the Walker Foxhound, which evolved from the Virginia Hounds that descended from the earliest English Foxhounds brought to America. Originally classified as an English Coonhound, its breeders broke away from the English version in 1945 and bred to retain the qualities they desired. The Treeing Walker is a fast, sensible hunter that locates its quarry quickly and has superb endurance and treeing ability.

Right Breed for You?

Alert and active, with extreme endurance and the desire to perform, the Treeing Walker Coonhound needs regular exercise and activity to stay in peak shape, although his short coat requires minimal upkeep. The breed is intelligent, confident and sociable with family and friends.

FEBRUARY ISSUE - NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE OR NGA.COM FEBRUARY 2012

Article: *The ABC's of DNA* page 34

Everyone may have an interest in reading this:

Project CanMap, a collaboration among Cornell University, UCLA, and the National Institutes of Health.

Researchers gathered DNA from more than 900 dogs representing 80 breeds as well as wild canids such as gray wolves and coyotes.

Read the story on results defining the number of genes that determining characteristics such as type of coat, ear set etc.

It is interesting to see only one gene separates some physical differences. Very worthwhile article that is full of information.

SUMMITTED BY: PAULA MOORE



State Dogs

In 2010, as the result of a political campaign all dog lovers could support, the Alaskan Malamute became the official state dog of Alaska. It was only the 11th dog to be so honored. The majority of the breeds chosen as state dogs originated in their respective states, having been bred with particular traits carefully selected to serve the needs of their environment. The Malamute, for example, is uniquely suited for sled pulling; the Chesapeake Bay Retriever was bred to hunt waterfowl in the rough waters of the Maryland coastline. Here are all eleven state dogs:

Alaska: [Alaskan Malamute](#)

Pennsylvania: [Great Dane](#)

Louisiana: [Catahoula Leopard Dog](#)

South Carolina: [Boykin Spaniel](#)

Maryland: [Chesapeake Bay Retriever](#)

Texas: Blue Lacy

Massachussets: [Boston Terrier](#)

Virginia: [American Foxhound](#)

New Hampshire: [Chinook](#)

Wisconsin: [American Water Spaniel](#)

North Carolina: [Plott](#)

Show Dog Handler



What my friends think I do



What my spouse/parents think I do



What I think I do



What my family/neighbors think I do



What society thinks I do



What I really do

ATLANTA KENNEL CLUB DIGEST

By MARK DERR



Chauvet Cave in southern France houses the oldest representational paintings ever discovered. Created some 32,000 years ago, the 400-plus images of large grazing animals and the predators who hunted them form a multi-chambered Paleolithic bestiary. Many scholars believe that these paintings mark the emergence of a recognizably modern human consciousness. We feel that we know their creators, even though they are from a time and place as alien as another planet. What most intrigues many people about the cave, however, is not the artwork but a set of markings at once more human and more mysterious: the bare footprints of an 8- to 10-year-old torch-bearing boy left in the mud of a back chamber some 26,000 years ago—and, alongside one of them, the paw print of his traveling companion, variously identified as a wolf or a large dog.

Attributing that paw print to a dog or even to a socialized wolf has been controversial since it was first proposed a decade ago. It would push back by some 12,000 years the oldest dog on record. More than that: Along with a cascade of other new scientific findings, it could totally rewrite the story of man and dog and what they mean to each other.

For decades, the story told by science has been that today's dogs are the offspring of scavenger wolves who wandered into the villages established by early humans at the end of the last ice age, about 15,000 years ago. This view emphasizes simple biological drive—to feed on human garbage, the scavenging wolf had to behave in a docile fashion toward humans. And—being human—we responded in kind, seeking out dogs for their obsequiousness and unconditional devotion. As the story goes, these tame wolves bred with other tame wolves and became juvenilized. Think of them as wolves-lite, diminished in strength, stamina and brains. They resembled young wolves, with piebald coats, floppy ears and shorter, weaker jaws. Pleading whiners, they drowned their human marks in slavish devotion and unconditional love. Along the way, they lost their ability to kill and consume their prey.

But it was never clear, in this old account, just how we got from the scavenging wolf to the remarkable spectrum of dogs who have existed over time, from fell beasts trained to terrorize and kill people to creatures so timid that they flee their own shadows. The standard explanation was that once the dump-diver became a dog, humans took charge of its evolution through selective breeding, choosing those with desired traits and culling those who came up short



Getty Images - German Shepherd

This account is now falling apart in the face of new genetic analyses and recently discovered fossils. The emerging story sees humans and proto-dogs evolving together: We chose them, to be sure, but they chose us too, and our shared characteristics may well account for our seemingly unshakable mutual intimacy.

Dogs and humans are social beings who depend on cooperation for their survival and have an uncanny ability to understand each other in order to work together. Both wolves and humans brought unique, complementary talents to a relationship that was based not on subservience and intimidation but on mutual respect. It seems that wolves and humans met on the trail of the large grazing animals that they both hunted, and the most social members of both species gravitated toward each other. Several scholars have even suggested that humans learned to hunt from wolves. At the least, camps with wolf sentinels had a competitive advantage over those without. And people whose socialized wolves would carry packs had an even greater advantage, since they could transport more supplies. Wolves benefited as well by gaining some relief from pup rearing, protection for themselves and their offspring, and a steadier food supply.

The relationship between dogs and humans has been so mutually beneficial and enduring that some scholars have suggested that we—dog and human—
influenced each other's evolution.

The Chauvet Cave "dogwolf"—the term I use for a doglike, or highly socialized, wolf who kept company with humans—is controversial, but it cannot easily be dismissed. Over the past three years, it has been grouped convincingly with a number of similar animals that have been identified in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and the Altai Mountains in Southern Siberia, dating from 33,000 to 16,000 years ago.

Identification of these early dogs, combined with recent genetic evidence and a growing understanding of animals not as stimulus-response machines but as sentient beings, has broken the consensus model of dog domestication—leaving intact little more than the recognition of the grey wolf, *Canis lupus*, as progenitor of the dog. Everything else, it seems, is up for grabs.



Getty Images Border Collie

According to the old view, the dog arose around 15,000 years ago in the Middle East. (Or in China, south of the Yangtze River, an alternate possible origin point added in the last decade in an attempt to reconcile archaeological evidence with emerging DNA evidence.)

The first major challenge to the consensus came in 1997, when an international team of biologists published a paper in the journal *Science* placing the origin of the dog as early as 135,000 years ago. Their date was based on analysis of mitochondrial DNA, which is passed on to offspring through females and is believed to change little from generation to generation; it allows scientists to calculate the time when populations or species separated genetically. This analysis suggested that wolves could have become dogs wherever in Eurasia they associated closely with early humans, and that even after the split was made, dogs and wolves continued to interbreed.

In short, because of their natural affinities, wherever and whenever wolves and humans met on the trail, some of them began to keep company. Often, when socialized wolves died, there were no others immediately available to replace them. But sometimes several socialized wolves would mate or a socialized female would mate with a "wild" wolf and then have her litter near the human camp. The pups would stay or go, according to their natures. This kind of arrangement could have continued for a considerable period. Any number of them could ultimately have produced dogwolves or dogs. Most of those lines would have vanished over time.

The DNA evidence remained controversial for years, even as most major studies placed the genetic separation of wolf and dog at earlier dates than those favored by archaeologists. Hard proof was slow to appear. The Chauvet Cave paw print once provided the only physical evidence for the existence of dogs before 15,000 years ago—and it was, at best, an indirect piece of support.

Then in 2008, Mietje Germonpré, a paleontologist at the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Science and the leader of an international team of scientists, re-examined fossil material excavated from Goyet Cave in Belgium in the late 19th century and announced the identification of a 31,700-year-old dog, a large and powerful animal who ate reindeer, musk oxen and horses. The dogwolf from Goyet Cave was a creature of the Aurignacian culture that had produced the art in Chauvet Cave.

Last July, another international team identified the remains of a 33,000-year-old "incipient dog" from the Altai Mountains in southern Siberia. This month, Ms. Germonpré confirmed another find, this one in the Czech Republic, of the remains of a 26,000- to 27,000-year-old dog that had been buried with a bone in its mouth—perhaps to fuel it as it accompanied its human companion to the afterlife.

While the old consensus model held that the first dogs were small, these and other recently identified early dogs are large animals, often with shorter noses and broader faces than today's wolves. These early dogs appear in the camps of hunters of horses, reindeer, mammoths and other big game. From all appearances, they were pack animals, guards, hunters and companions. They are perhaps best viewed as the offspring of highly socialized wolves who had begun breeding in or near human camps.

Our view of domestication as a process has also begun to change, with recent research showing that, in dogs, alterations in only a small number of genes can have large effects in terms of size, shape and behavior. Far from being a product of the process of domestication, the mutations that separated early dogs from wolves may have arisen naturally in one or more small populations; the mutations were then perpetuated by humans through directed breeding. Geneticists have identified, for instance, a mutation in a single gene that appears to be responsible for smallness in dogs, and they have shown that the gene itself probably came from Middle Eastern wolves.

All of this suggests that it was common for highly socialized wolves and people to form alliances. It also leads logically to the conclusion that the first dogs were born on the move with bands of hunter-gatherers—not around semi-permanent pre-agricultural settlements. This may explain why it has proven so difficult to identify a time and place of domestication.

Taken together, these recent discoveries have led some scientists to conclude that the dog became an evolutionary inevitability as soon as humans met wolves. Highly social wolves and highly social humans started walking, playing and hunting together and never stopped. The dog is literally the wolf who stayed, who traded wolf society for human society.

Humans did wield a significant influence over dogs, of course, by using breeding to perpetuate mutations affecting their shape, size and physical abilities. Recent studies suggest that the dog has unique abilities among animals to follow human directions and that its capacity for understanding words can approach that of a two-year-old child. To various degrees, humans appear to have concentrated those and other characteristics and traits through selective breeding. Since the advent of scientific breeding in the late 18th century, humans have altered the look and temperament of the dog more than they had over thousands of preceding years. A team of gene-sequencers at the Broad Institute of Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology estimated that the dog lost 4% of its genetic diversity during its initial separation from the wolf. Much greater losses have occurred as a result of modern breed formation, one result of which is the more than 400 inheritable diseases to which purebreds are uniquely vulnerable.

Recent genetic evidence has confirmed that certain basic types—pariah dogs, sight hounds, mastiffs, spitz-type dogs and small dogs—arose very early in the transformation of wolf to dog. These dogs adapted to their homelands and often had special talents as hunters, guards and eventually herders. These characteristics were often perpetuated over time.

Scientific breeders believed they could improve on nature by consolidating several similar types into one breed or isolating a few prize specimens from a larger population. In both cases, they relied on inbreeding to create and perpetuate the look and talents they wanted. With the advent of kennel clubs in the mid-19th century, the pace of breed creation picked up.

Breeders began to create dogs to fit the needs of the wealthy—from sporting dogs that could point and retrieve fowl, to little puppy-like lap dogs. The dog proved to be a wonderful animal for testing the skill of breeders, since it could be stretched in size from two to 200 pounds. Purebred dogs were expensive commodities until after World War II, when they became symbols of arrival in the middle class. Increased demand led to increased breeding, often in puppy mills. The resulting dogs had health and behavior problems from bad breeding and the poor care of pregnant females and newborn puppies.

In some cases, the traits that breeders desire are inherited along with unwanted, debilitating conditions—such as when blindness and epilepsy accompany particular coat styles and eye colors. In many regards, the original, naturally occurring breeds were healthier and better at their appointed tasks than their purebred heirs.

But this is just the most recent chapter of a long tale. The tableau in the mud of Chauvet Cave is a stark reminder that dogs and humans have traveled together for tens of thousands of years, from ancient hunting camps to farms, ranches cities and suburbs—from the tropics to the poles. The relationship has endured not because dogs are juvenilized wolves but because they are dogs—our faithful companions.

—Mr. Derr's most recent book is "How the Dog Became the Dog: From Wolves to Our Best Friends."