

From the Desk of the President

For those of you that don't know me - I have been in purebred dogs for over 35 years, and Bouvier des Flandres for 30 years. My love for the breed started when I first saw them at an AKC show. I told myself that someday I would own one of those gorgeous dogs. The rest has been history. My first Bouvier was American Canadian Champion as an owner handled dog that went group 1 and High in Trial at the same show. I was hooked. I joined ABdFC and became very active with the club. I was National Show Chair in 2005, have been Versatility Chair, By-Laws Chair, Vice President, President and Chairman of the Board in the past. I have actively shown and put on titles in Conformation, Obedience, Rally, Agility and dabbled a bit in herding. I have taught obedience classes to the public for 20 years. I was a 4H dog project leader and started a 4H Therapy Dog program. I have had several therapy dogs myself and was a certified evaluator for Delta Society the national therapy dog organization. So my love for the Bouviers runs deep, as they are such a versatile breed.

Meet me at the Ranch Complex in Loveland CO for the American des Flandres Bouvier National Specialty October 3rd through October 10th. Whether it is your first time to attend a national or your 50th time – national specialties are always a lot of fun.

It is a time to meet new friends and get reacquainted with old friends. It is a time to enjoy the diversity of our breed. The week starts out with herding. For those that have not been to a herding trial – it is well worth your time. After all the nature of our breed is that of working dog able to perform tirelessly, herding and guarding cattle and even pulling cargo carts, thanks to its strength and temperament, and to withstand the local weather conditions due to its thick coat. Let's hope for good weather for all of our outdoor events.

The week continues on Monday with carting and agility. Owners and handlers go to a lot of work to train their dogs. So come cheer on your favorite dogs and handlers as they compete in these events.

Tuesday we continue with agility and carting. But then we start with some of the conformation events that showcase our breeders, and owners. Futurity is a Stake of a breeders' classic for Bouviers, and is comparable to the Kentucky Derby for breeders of top running horses. Who wouldn't be thrilled to say, "I bred the winner of the Futurity." And, who wouldn't be delighted to

be the owner of a winner in the futurity.

The Bouvier originated as a Herding Breed, for the purpose of herding cattle. Why then, should there be so much concern about good conformation? A Herding Dog needs more than just intelligence to herd cattle. He must also have the stamina and rhythm of movement, to travel easily over all types of terrain, for long periods of time, without tiring, if he is able to fulfill his role as a herding dog. Good "conformation" is therefore extremely important.

Proper Conformation for a Herding Dog is the basis for the Bouvier Standard. This Standard describes the perfect Bouvier.

So after Futurity is judged we move into Sweepstakes on Tuesday. A non-regular class, which are specifically designed to recognize outstanding young dogs and puppies. Winners of Best in Sweeps, Best Opposite Sex in Sweeps, and often all of the class placement winners, receive a portion of the entry fees as prizes for their placement. Sweepstakes are the only classes where money prizes are normally awarded.

Wednesday we move on to Rally and Obedience. Both of the events requires teamwork between dog and handler along with performance skills that can make your dog a better family member. Wednesday evening we celebrate the Top Twenty. This event will provide a special recognition to those Bouvier des Flandres with the most outstanding competitive records, as well as their breeders, owners, and handlers. It should also provide incentive to strive for a Bouvier des Flandres that embodies excellence in structure, intelligence, temperament, type, and soundness according to the Breed Standard.

Thursday the regular classes are judged in conformation, and we finish up on Friday with Best of Breed and the Awards Banquet that evening. And wait there is the Rocky Mountain Bouvier des Flandres Club regional specialty on Saturday.

So I hope you all can come and enjoy an action packed week of Bouvier activities. Please take the time to introduce yourself to the new people in the breed and encourage the young people that are participating.

After all, it is for the love of the Bouvier!

Dennis Craig

American Bouvier Des Flanders Club - President