
PROMOTING YOUR CLUB AND ITS EVENTS

PUBLISHED BY THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB



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chapter one

CREATE A BUZZ

create a **BUZZ FOR YOUR CLUB**

Having a smart approach to publicity is a really good starting place for creating that buzz and promoting your club. Using local and other media can be a really rewarding and cost effective way to get the word out about an upcoming club cause, product, service or event.

This e-book focuses on how to work with various media outlets and how to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with them.

WHAT IS ADVERTISING?

Advertising is a paid form of communication, and therefore differs greatly from PR. When you pay to have your message presented—you control the look, tone and content completely.

On the other hand, when working with the editorial side of a media outlet you have less control over the message, but gain more credibility with the consumer, via the implied support of the reporter.

how can **PR HELP YOUR CLUB?**

Looking to increase/decrease interest in a breed or communicate some of its unique attributes? Trying to prevent restrictive dog legislation from affecting your breed? Want to publicize a new class being offered or new community program? Hoping to gain new club members or an audience at an event? If you answered “Yes” to any of these questions, then you should be working with your local media.

The media is a great vehicle for reaching out to the public with your messages. A strong relationship with them will help ensure that your club has the opportunity to play a leadership role in securing the continued approval of dog-related activities and the rights of dog owners.

getting **STARTED**

Before you begin, establish a goal and if you are working on behalf of a club or group, make sure everyone agrees on that goal. Decide what the best way to accomplish that is and determine who's doing what. Who has the time, the desire and the skills best suited for various tasks, such as writing, public speaking, graphic design, and the ability to relate to a specific audience (pet owners/general public/exhibitors)?



getting

THE WORD OUT



getting THE WORD OUT

POWER OF A PRESS RELEASE:

For an announcement requiring detail and background on a potential story, a press release is usually the best format. This should provide the most important information a reporter needs to know and should be limited to two pages.

The key to a successful press release is presenting the information objectively, highlighting only what's relevant, and keeping the most important facts up top. The lead paragraph should contain only the "who, what, when, where and why" of the story.

If the headline and first few paragraphs don't grab the reporter, they won't keep reading.

getting THE WORD OUT

WHAT IS A MEDIA ALERT?

A media alert is used when you wish to make a brief announcement of an event, date, time and location.

Media alerts work well for events that are virtually self-explanatory and offer good visuals that will appeal to photographers and TV camera crews.

Don't forget to include a contact number, including a "day-of" event number, such as cell phone. Send the alert a day or two before the event to get short-lead media (TV, wire services and daily newspapers) to put it on their assignment schedule.

You can also send a media alert weeks in advance to submit a "calendar listing" about your event. These entertainment or weekend calendar sections are often compiled much earlier than the rest of the newspaper and include a listing of upcoming events.

getting **THE WORD OUT**

PITCH LETTER

If you have a pitch – an idea about a specific topic you want the media to cover – use a pitch letter.

This is a one-page letter outlining a story idea and why it's relevant to your target media outlets' audience.

A pitch letter is a less formal way to seek coverage and is an ideal alternative to a press release for ongoing topics not tied to specific events (such as therapy dogs, how puppy buyers can find a responsible breeder, etc).

This is a really great way to approach media outlets that have a longer preparation time than daily or weekly schedules.

getting THE WORD OUT

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Writing a letter to the editor of your local paper is a quick and easy way to give your club some visibility. You can write in response to any article you see in the paper (whether you agree or disagree) or just to express a viewpoint on a public issue, such as how people should find a responsible breeder (suggest going to your club's upcoming dog show).

Always sign your name with your club affiliation, especially if you are an officer.

The length requirements and how to submit letters are usually outlined on the "letters" page or on the paper's web site.



Who's who?

MEDIA LISTS

who's who?

MEDIA LIST

OTHER TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING REPORTERS OR ASSIGNMENT EDITORS

- Reference past coverage – search for your breed or club’s name on Google.com’s News Search feature.
- Use Yellow Pages online or resource sites such as www.newspapers.com and www.radio-locator.com.
- Call the main number or “news desk” number and ask who would be the most appropriate contact for the information you have (identify specific names, titles and contact information)
- You may need multiple contacts at one outlet depending on the angle of the story (Lifestyle, Calendar/Events, Pets, Education, Business editors, etc.). Once you have developed your “media list” save it and periodically update it as reporters change jobs or “beats” often.

who's who?

MEDIA LIST

MORE MEDIA TIPS

- Don't forget your local cable TV stations as they are especially interested in community events.
- There are lots of websites and online guides that specialize in things to do with families or kids. Make sure these are on your contact list.
- If you can't find the information you need, AKC's Communications Department can help. Please email (communications@akc.org) or call (212-696-8228) and we will be happy to help out.



getting their attention

TALKING POINTS

getting their attention

TALKING POINTS

We encourage you to tailor these sample talking points below to relate specifically to your club and/or event.

YOUR CLUB

- Your event or program builds greater public awareness about _____ (i.e. training, breeding, responsible dog ownership, etc.)
- Your kennel club has been part of the community for _____ years, has over _____ members (name any prominent community members such as politicians, clergy, etc.) and hosts _____ events annually.
- The annual event provides a fun, safe community activity for local families and is good for the local economy. Based on 2012 data, two days of shows with 2,000 participants generates nearly \$1 Million.
- Dogs provide many services to the community including therapy and assistance programs.
- Your kennel club is a member of (or licensed by) the AKC.

getting their attention

TALKING POINTS

AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

Following are some general messages and talking points about the AKC and the sport. We encourage you to use these as well as reference the AKC web site for statements about controversial issues such as commercial breeding or dog bites.

<http://www.akc.org/press-center/facts-stats/>

You can also contact us for a detailed “AKC Talking Points Fact Sheet” to take with you to media interviews.

- The AKC is an organization for people who love dogs. The AKC is a not-for-profit organization established in 1884, and is the principal registry for purebred dogs in the U.S., registering hundreds of thousands of dogs annually.
- The AKC encourages the enhanced enjoyment of your dog through activities that you can both participate in, sanctioning more than 22,000 events annually, including conformation, agility, obedience, rally, tracking, herding, lure coursing, hunt test, and field and earthdog trials.

getting their attention

TALKING POINTS

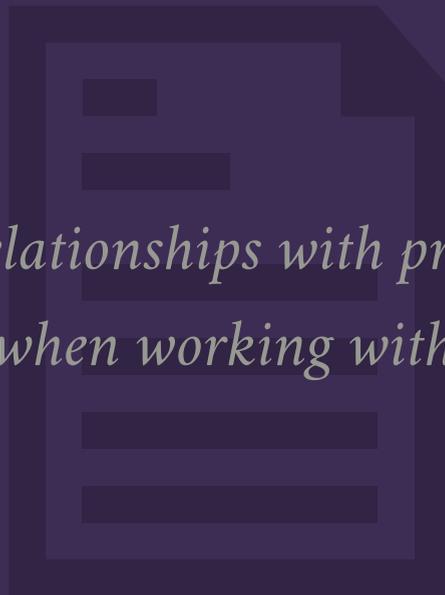
- All the dogs at AKC events are AKC registered, enrolled as Canine Partners or listed as a Purebred Alternative Listing dogs. As a pet owner, even if you don't plan to show your dog, AKC registration is important as it allows you to mark your dog's place in the history of its breed and opens the door to various AKC services that enhance your relationship with your dog.
- AKC registration fees help support numerous programs and services that benefit all dog owners. The AKC is a "club of clubs" not a club of individuals. The AKC and its more than 5,000 affiliated clubs educate the general public and support canine causes through programs such as encouraging basic training for all dogs, promoting the proper care of your dog and supporting health research that benefits all dogs.
- The AKC web site – www.akc.org – features everything you want to know about dogs, including breed profiles, training tips, how to pick the right dog for you, breeder referral and much more.



tips for working with
THE MEDIA



Press materials, relationships with press and timing are all crucial when working with the media.



tips for working with **THE MEDIA**

PRESS MATERIALS

- Always put press materials on club letterhead or create your own by using the “Header” function of MS Word.
- Keep it simple, no more than two pages.
- Use a consistent format from one release to the next.
- Include contact information. The voicemail and email you provide should be checked at least twice a day. Cell phone numbers are ideal as they allow a reporter direct and instant access to your club’s spokesperson or event organizer, increasing the likelihood of coverage.

tips for working with **THE MEDIA**

PRESS RELATIONSHIPS

- Introduce the media to the people who make good stories. Don't say "our club is great," but rather "we have a club member who used Agility to overcome his battle with shyness" or "we have raised \$5,000 for K-9 bulletproof vests," etc.
- Send a variety of news items throughout the year, not just a big release about your annual dog event.
- Provide a small calendar listing about your regular training classes, your annual awards dinner (you can invite the local pet columnist to your dinner meetings, especially one with a speaker).
- Set a specific time and place to meet the reporter at your show and be prepared to make introductions and answer their questions.
- Be as flexible and understanding as you can when their schedule changes. Provide them with a copy of the event catalog, fact sheets about your club, or any other AKC material you deem appropriate.

tips for working with **THE MEDIA**

TIMING

- The key to establishing good media relationships is your availability and responsiveness. Reporters usually have tight deadlines and are reacting to breaking news, or creating a story on a slow news day. The sooner you return their calls the higher the likelihood of your quote getting into a story or getting coverage for your event.
- Once you build a reputation as a reliable source that can get them information quickly, they will call you more often. If you are not able to help the media person, please refer them to the AKC.
- For events, you should contact newspapers for “calendar listings” at least one month prior to the event by sending a media alert to the events or calendar editor. Consider including a photo from a past event.

tips for working with **THE MEDIA**

- Even if you have previously pitched the story, a few days prior to the event send the media alert to assignment (for TV) and city desk (for newspapers and wire) editors. Keep in mind that even if you are expecting a reporter or news crew to show up, soft news like a dog event is always low priority. If a breaking news event such as a fire or robbery occurs, the coverage of your event may be canceled or postponed.
- Understand the varying needs of media. Television news broadcasts often air multiple times a day and work on a very short lead-time. Wire services and online outlets are constantly being updated. Daily newspapers have their front page stories being prepared right up until they go to print, while features (i.e., the Home or Lifestyle section) may be prepared well in advance.

FOLLOW UP

Often, in order for a press release to get from the editor's desk into print or on-air, you have to call or email the editor to sell your story – this is called “follow-up.”

tips for working with **THE MEDIA**

- When calling, speak to the right person – someone who covers the area you live in and the topic you are pitching. If not, they can often refer you to whoever covers pets, events, lifestyles, sports, issues, etc.
- It's worth the extra work to try to find the right contact. The media get many emails every day so you need to research specific names and make sure you're targeting the appropriate person. Address the alert to a specific reporter you have already made contact with or are expecting to attend your event. Call the publication if necessary to get the correct name (and spelling) of the editor, reporter, or producer.
- Once you have the right person on the phone, have a list of talking points in front of you to help you highlight all the important facts. Be brief and to the point. Explain why the story should be of interest – “localize and humanize.” Following-up is crucial to getting coverage, but there is a fine line between follow-up and being annoying. Be persuasive but not pushy.
- It may take several conversations with an outlet before they agree to send a reporter to cover your story.

tips for working with **THE MEDIA**

- Don't be afraid to call back after regular business hours – many daily TV and newspapers have 24-hour staff and are often less harried in the early evening hours. A great way to introduce yourself is to read/watch/listen to what a reporter covers and reference it. “Hi, this is Jane from the Canine Kennel Club – I just saw the story you did on the local shelter and thought since you are interested in pet or animal-related topics, I'd call you about this idea I have...”
- Remember that you can't expect a reporter to always cover your story, and you may hear “not interested” a number of times until you get some publicity. However, each time you contact them, it reminds the reporter/assignment editor about all the positive activities your club is providing to the community. Don't be discouraged!
- It's best to select one or two people within your club to continually make contact with the media. Over time, they will begin to recognize you and eventually see you as a resource and spokesperson. They will think to call you whenever a dog-related story comes up.

tips for working with **THE MEDIA**

- When seeking coverage for a dog show or other event, let them know that your club's experts are available to speak with them about any dog-related subject. Send the reporter a "dog-related experience" biography on each of your club's experts for future use. Reporters keep files about specific topics, which they refer to when they have a breaking story. Even though they may not want to cover the story you are pitching now, you may be called upon in the future.

AND FINALLY,

- Remember that reporters are people too! Don't be intimidated or afraid to work with them. If you are honest with them and respect the fact that they are trying to do their job, you have a good chance of being treated fairly in return.



creating special
ATTRACTIONS

To generate as much media interest as possible for your dog show, add a media-worthy special attraction, such as an action-packed demonstration or unique presentation.

Increase press coverage throughout the year by creating stand-alone special events to raise awareness of your club.

creating special **ATTRACTIONS**

SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS AT A DOG SHOW

- Try inviting local radio or television personalities (such as weathermen) to broadcast live from your show site.
- If your mayor or councilman owns a purebred dog, name him “Honorary Chairperson” of your event and invite him to present the Best of Breed trophy for his breed
- Have a petition drive for signatures in support of/or against any legislation your club might be working on. If your dog club is a member of the state federation of dog clubs, invite federation representatives to the show and promote their appearance to the media.

creating special **ATTRACTIONS**

- Invite local chapters of Search and Rescue and Guide Dog organizations. Ask them to put on a demonstration during the lunch break or before Best in Show, or give them a donation and schedule a check presentation between the groups.
- Mark milestone anniversaries with commemorative trophies, posters or logos by local artists. Invite them to the show for signings and presentations.
- If celebrities attend, see if they will agree to be quoted in your press materials. For instance, Jim Jones, WXYZ news anchor, said. “I am highly supportive of the (name of event). It benefits all dogs and makes our town a better place to live.”
- The media love pictures of kids and dogs so be sure to invite local Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts and/or 4-H clubs to attend as special guests. You can also ask them to serve as assistants.
- Look to holidays and special months to tie into dog shows. For example, February is Pet Dental Health Month sponsored by the American Veterinary Medical Association. Invite a local vet to have a booth at your show.

creating special **ATTRACTIONS**

- Use non-pet holidays. For example, October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Invite a local American Cancer Society chapter, donate vendor space for its booth, invite top people and have them put out a press release touting the community outreach at your show.
- If you offer 4-6 Month Beginner Puppy Competition, Best Puppy in Show or Bred-By Exhibitors groups at your show, pitch it to the media as a special competition such as the “puppy extravaganza” or “breeders showcase” for photo opportunities.
- Sponsor a fun class for entrants, like Halloween costumes, or best-dressed Santa dog.
- Offer show tours, AKC Canine Good Citizen® tests, or Meet the Breeds events.

creating special **ATTRACTIONS**

Having events or continuing activities outside the club's annual dog show demonstrates your club's value to the community. Distribute plenty of flyers in local stores to publicize the events as well as sending press releases and media alerts to the media. Below are some ideas:

- Create a "K-9 Law Day" and donate a bulletproof vest to an area K-9 police officer or raise funds to purchase a K-9 Officer for your town.
- Schedule canine demonstrations, such as Agility, Obedience or Field, at local fairs or parades and/or set up tables and offer information to potential dog buyers.
- Contact town officials and ask if your club and dogs can participate in local parades such as Labor Day, Christmas, etc.
- Create a "Bring Your Dog to Lunch Day" at your workplace.
- Host a "Photo with Santa Day" for pets in your local area.
- Utilize a public park or library front lawn for an AKC CGC test or Meet the Breeds.

creating special **ATTRACTIONS**

- Plan Therapy Dog visits to local hospitals, veteran homes, and elderly housing.
- Send a representative to teach kids (schools, camps, and clubs) about becoming involved in the sport.
- Raise money and donate trash cans, benches, pooper-scooper dispensers, etc. for a local dog run (have your club's name and website printed on the items).
- Ask your local city official to issue a proclamation recognizing your program and ask him to declare the day of your event "Responsible Dog Ownership Day" or "Canine Good Citizen Day."



beyond the shows

A STORY

FOR ANY SEASON

beyond the shows

A STORY FOR ANY SEASON

SUGGESTIONS

- Is your club involved in rescue? Does it have a separate non-profit foundation for fundraising to highlight? How many dogs has your club placed or saved?
- Has a rescued or adopted shelter dog gone on to win obedience, agility or field titles?
- Do you have any outstanding junior handlers in your club?
- Does your club provide opportunities for community involvement such as obedience training classes, visiting hospitals and/or senior citizens with Therapy Dogs, or hold match shows or field trials?

beyond the shows

A STORY FOR ANY SEASON

AWARDS

- Has a local dog done something heroic? Can you honor that dog, or nominate it for an AKC Award for Canine Excellence (ACE)? For an ACE application visit akc.org
- What are your club members doing to educate the public? Hosting an assembly or running an art poster contest at a school?
- Has a member of your club been awarded a Community Achievement Award? If not, nominate them at: <http://www.akc.org/pdfs/CAANominationForm.pdf>
- Has your club donated gifts or time to local community groups, such as the public library?

beyond the shows

A STORY FOR ANY SEASON

PITCHING CLUB'S RESPONSE TO A NATURAL DISASTER

Writing letters to local media and holding a fundraiser for donations to the AKC Reunite Canine Support and Relief Fund and the AKC Pet Disaster Relief program are great ways to alert your community about the importance of helping the canine victims of natural disasters.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Write a pitch letter about the importance of including the family pet in disaster planning and why an evacuation kit just for your pet is important.
- Offer a club spokesperson and press kits to the media. Press kits should include: fact sheets about AKC, your club's history, AKC Reunite, event press releases, disaster planning check-list and your spokesperson's biography.

beyond the shows

A STORY FOR ANY SEASON

AKC RESPONSIBLE DOG OWNERSHIP DAY

The AKC celebrates Responsible Dog Ownership Days each year during the month of September.

- Anytime during the year, but mostly in September, AKC clubs and organizations are encouraged to hold local events to emphasize the importance of responsible dog ownership.
- AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Day offers clubs the opportunity to gain publicity, legislative visibility, and community contacts by holding events, which may include CGC tests, obedience/agility demonstrations, rescue booths, Meet the Breeds, etc.



get social

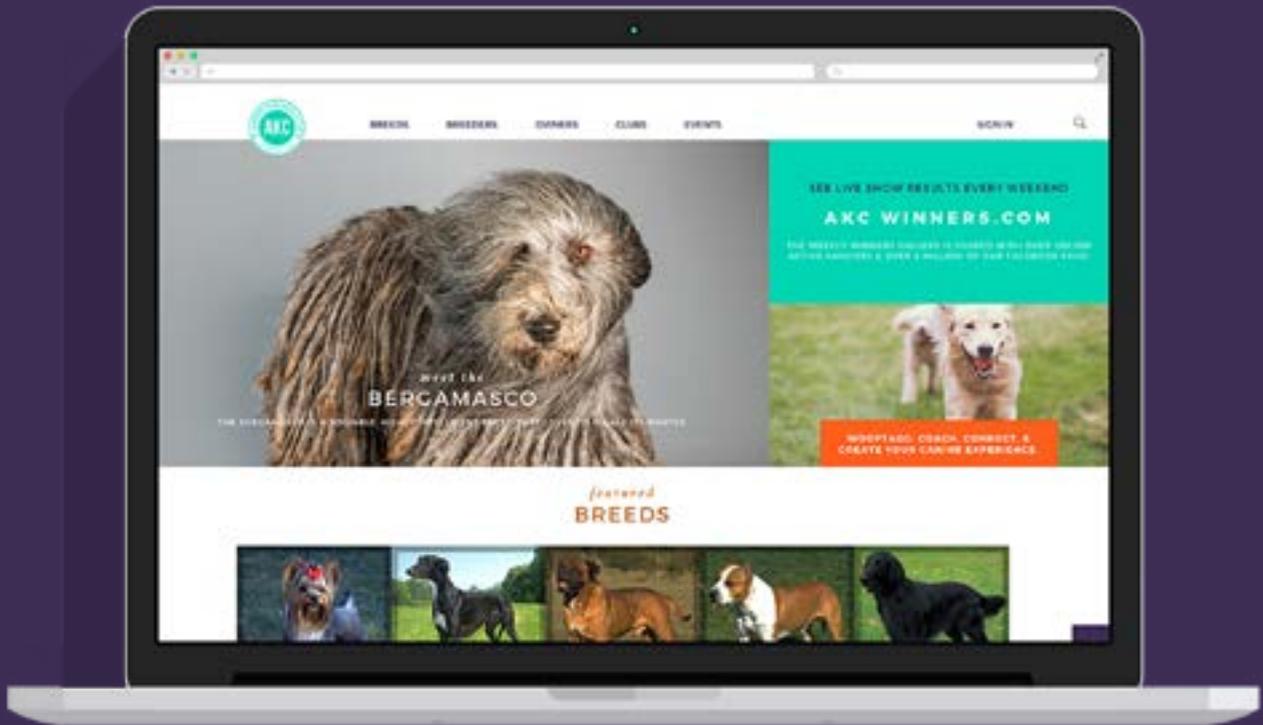
SOCIAL MEDIA 101

Social media is a great tool to reach your audience and generate buzz around your upcoming event

The image is a screenshot of the American Kennel Club's Facebook page. At the top, a blue banner reads "LIKE dogs? Help us become a community of 3 MILLION DOG LOVERS". Below this is a profile picture of a golden retriever and the page name "American Kennel Club" with a verified badge and "Non-Profit Organization" label. The page has 2,639,512 likes. A post from the American Kennel Club, dated "Yesterday at 8:00pm", features a video thumbnail of a dog in a field and the text: "WATCH and SHARE if you agree! AKCBreeders. Fact: Breeders invented rescue? Breeders know their breed best, and many rescue groups are breed specific, run by volunteer breeders." The post has 227,844 views, 11,747 likes, and 262 comments. Below the post, there are sections for "PEOPLE WHO LIKE THIS PAGE" (listing Britany Smith Pitts and Joey Palmer) and "LIKED BY THIS PAGE" (listing Canaan Dog Club of America and DogBuzzFeed). On the right side, there is a "Recent" list of years from 2018 to 1988 and a "Sponsored" section with an advertisement for "The All-in-One device powered by Optimum WiFi".

ONLINE RESOURCES AT

AKC.ORG



AKC.org is an invaluable resource to promote your club's event.

Visit www.akc.org to learn more.

online

ONLINE RESOURCES PAGE

FROM THE AKC WEBSITE CLUB COMMUNICATIONS PAGES:

- Sign-up for AKCommunicates! the e-newsletter for the latest in public relations tips and news from the AKC Communications Department.
<http://pages.akc.org/ManagePreferences.html>
- For more information on AKC Responsible Dog Ownership Days.
<http://www.akc.org/rdod>
- For more information on Club Publicity Templates.
<http://www.akc.org/clubs/promote/media-resources/>

FROM THE PRESS CENTER FOR MEDIA INQUIRES

- To get more information or somewhere to direct the media to for “facts and stats” pages, AKC news, archived press releases and spokesperson biographies.
http://www.akc.org/press_center/index.cfm?nav_area=press_center
- To contact the AKC Communications Department Staff either with questions, needing help getting started or where to send journalists for further quotes email communications@akc.org or call 212-696-8228.

**AKC IS HERE TO HELP
YOUR CLUB**

SUCCEED!

THANK YOU FOR READING

We hope this information was helpful, and may even inspire you club to promote your dog show, agility trial or any special attraction. Check out these other services and products and share them with your club members.

THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB

The AKC is a not-for-profit organization and the largest purebred dog registry in the world. We are the sports-governing body for over 22,000 dog events a year, including conformation (dog shows) and exciting sports like agility, obedience, rally, tracking, lure coursing, earthdog, herding trials, among others.

But the AKC is so much more. Here are just some of the ways we support and enrich the lives of dogs—purebreds and mixed-breeds alike—and their families.

AKC Humane Fund, supports breed rescue activities, assists shelters that permit domestic-abuse victims to bring their pets, and educates dog lovers about responsible dog ownership.

Canine Good Citizen® program : A 10-step test that certifies dogs who have good manners at home and in their community. Over 600,000 dogs across the United States have become Canine Good Citizens , and 42 states have passed resolutions recognizing the program's merit and importance.

AKC Reunite has brought more than 400,000 lost pets back together with their owners.

The AKC Canine Health Foundation, funds research projects and clinical studies. Since 1995 the AKC has donated over \$24 million to the CHF. (The AKC is the only registry that incorporates health-screening results into its permanent dog records.)

AKC conducts thousands of kennel inspections annually to monitor care and conditions at kennels across the country and ensure the integrity of the AKC registry.

We offer the largest, most comprehensive set of DNA programs for parentage verification and genetic identity to ensure reliable registration records.

AKC supports one of the world's largest collections of dog-related fine art and artifacts at the AKC Museum of the Dog,

We have the world's largest dog library at AKC headquarters in New York, both of which are open to the public.

PUBLICITY CASE STUDIES FROM AKC CLUBS

MRS. PATTI L . STRAND

Delegate, Dog Fanciers Association of Oregon, Inc.
Rose City Cluster Coordinator, Classic Specialty Coordinator
and Publicity/Sponsorship Chair

Please tell us about your show or cluster. What is your average entry and what events do you host for the general public?

Conformation entries at the Rose City Classic have stabilized at around 2,800 on our largest day of the five-day cluster, with another 200 in obedience and more than 500 runs in agility. In addition to conformation, obedience, rally and agility, we also host a CGC test on Friday, a Beginner Puppy class on Saturday and Meet the Breeds on Friday through Sunday. We also offer our breeder-exhibitors health testing clinics, some provided by local specialty clubs and some by professional vendors, and we host two semen collection vendors.

To involve the larger community, each year we offer a student art contest with a canine theme (e.g., Celebrity dogs of film and television, A dog owned by one of the 44 US presidents, etc.). Many of the region's schools participate. We hang the winning art in a prominent place at the show site, and on Thursday and Friday, local schools take field trips to the show so that their students can see their artwork on display. Many of the teachers give their students assignments to learn about the history of dog breeds: where they originated, what sort of work they did, and what the social and cultural mores of the local population were at the time. The kids even study breed standards. Then, when the judging program is posted on our website at www.rosecityclassic.org, students are instructed to pick a breed they like that will be shown during the hours their class will be at the show. Once at the show they are told to go to the ring when their breed is being shown and report on what they see. Kids are thrilled by this assignment. They anxiously interrupt their tour guides at the show to tell them, "I need to be at Doberman ring in three minutes to see my breed." The kids get totally into the show scene and love their breeds.

PUBLICITY CASE STUDIES FROM AKC CLUBS

How has your club successfully increased show entries?

The Rose City Classic is a five-day cluster made up of two all-breed clubs, which each hold two shows at the cluster, 17 stand-alone specialties, and four designated specialties. We work continually with our specialty clubs to support their success as well as the success of the all-breed clubs. We experienced a big drop while the economy was at its worst, but we are bouncing back now. The biggest reason we've remained successful is because we work hard to provide our exhibitors with the best show experience possible. 1) We put a lot of effort into developing good judging panels; 2) We give our exhibitors a number of events to enjoy; 3) We constantly work with our venue to make things exhibitor-friendly, like providing large rings (matted rings where necessary), reserved and open parking, and grooming options; 4) We work with local hotels and restaurants to get discounts and other benefits for our exhibitors. At this point, local hotels compete with each other to get our business.

How do you encourage the general public to attend your show/cluster?

We promote the show in numerous ways, including through the website, a Facebook page, TV and radio interviews, digital ads, and when possible, ads from local businesses. The art contest brings in families.

Does your club set aside a budget for advertising or other promotional activities?

Yes. It's a small budget, but we use it carefully to maximize results. We use all the free media available in the community, too, like some TV and radio stations, print media outlets, organizations that promote tourism, and free calendars/online bulletin boards where organizations are invited to post their events at no cost. We also seek out free PSA opportunities wherever possible.

PUBLICITY CASE STUDIES FROM AKC CLUBS

How do you promote your club on a year-round basis?

We maintain a website (www.rosecityclassic.org) that has information about the shows and advertises our sponsors. We are also building a Facebook presence (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Rose-City-Classic-Dog-Shows>).

How does your club recruit new club members?

Our club is open and we actively seek new members. We hold open meetings with educational programs at least twice a year and extend invitations to local dog enthusiasts who are not yet members of a local club.

What are your three best tips that could help other clubs to grow their show?

- 1) Hire the best judging panel you can, giving special consideration to judges who treat exhibitors well.
- 2) Make the event as exhibitor friendly as possible.
- 3) Identify your show's biggest assets (talented membership, venue, its date, community atmosphere and potential for sponsorship) and develop your show accordingly. What works in an urban setting probably won't work as well in a rural setting and vice versa. Put on the best dog show you can, developing and using the assets you have.

Who in your club handles public relations and/or advertising activities?

I am the PR coordinator for our club and I would be happy to help anyone who contacts me needing information. My email is Patti.L.Strand@gmail.com.

PUBLICITY CASE STUDIES FROM AKC CLUBS

DR. ALAN DORFMAN

First Vice President, Oakland County Kennel Club

Show Chairman, Oakland County Kennel Club (Michigan Winter Dog Classic)

Please tell us about your show or cluster. What is your average entry, what events do you host for the general public, etc.?

We draw a little over 2,000 entries a day at the Michigan Winter Dog Classic (<http://www.themichiganwinterdogclassic.com/>). We offer conformation, two obedience and rally trials each day, agility, the 4-6 Beginner Puppy Competition, the National Owner-Handled Series, Bred-By groups, Puppy groups, dock diving with North America Diving Dogs, and Barn Hunt (a whopping 800 extra entries above the 2,000 this year). Other activities include duck herding with Border Collies, Meet the Breeds, Police K-9 demonstrations and weight pull.

How do you encourage the general public to attend your show/cluster? Do you have a way to track attendance?

An event for the general public that's been huge for us is AKC's My Dog Can Do That!, which we offer for free. Since we started offering the event in 2013, we've set records every year. We had 504 dogs go through the course this year.

People love their dogs, whether they are purebred or not. Our belief is that great dog owners make for good dogs, so our aim is to educate owners and give them a good time with this event so that they can't wait to come back next year. They also get a free photo of themselves with their dog after going through MDCT as a souvenir.

We want to give people the opportunity to show off their dog. We also refer the owners to other events they can try, like dock diving and Barn Hunt.

PUBLICITY CASE STUDIES FROM AKC CLUBS

AKC's My Dog Can Do That! is also a big draw for gate. We've calculated that approximately 2.6 people come through the doors with each dog that enters the building. We let one person per dog in for free, so we're getting admission fees for approximately 1.6 people per dog. We charge \$10 per ticket.

How has your club successfully increased show entries?

We cater to the exhibitor as well as the general public. We try to make the show as exhibitor friendly as possible, offering bathing areas (no one wants to go outside in January!), pre-paid grooming, ready rings, large rings for big breeds, and easy access to the show hall from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm, with 24-hour security.

We also offer competitions like the AKC National Owner-Handled Series and the 4-6 Month Beginner Puppy competition.

Our vendor mall is extensive – if you put all the booths side-by-side, the vendors would be three football fields long. We try to give exhibitors something to do when they are finished showing, and our vendors are very popular.

We also offer live streaming of groups and Best in Show, and some breed judging throughout the day, on our website. This has been extremely popular. We take breed judging requests and try to fill all requests as best we can. One of the best stories I've heard is of an owner who was in the hospital and had never seen her dog in ring. With the live streaming, she was able to watch her dog win the group and Reserve Best in Show from her hospital bed. I thought that was very touching.

Who in your club handles public relations and/or advertising activities?

I handle most of the PR and advertising activities. FOX2 news is our media sponsor, so we include their logo on all of our posters and collateral. We have advertisements on electronic billboards around the city, so we're able to change the message leading up to the show to reflect the date: "2 Weeks to Go," "1

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Week to Go,” “2 Days to Go,” etc. We have a drive-time radio sponsorship that starts two weeks before our cluster. About a week before the shows, I do an in-studio interview with FOX2 news and WJR radio. Several high school journalism classes will come to the shows to interview people and take photos, so we also get promotion on school radio and TV.

What are your best tips that could help other clubs to grow their show?

Nine years ago, our cluster drew entries of around 1,000 and we've managed to take it up to 2,000-plus dogs. It can be done! I encourage clubs to keep an open mind and to not be afraid of change. Find another club that you can work with to team up for a four-day cluster and select judges that will draw majors.

Do the little things to make things easier and more enjoyable for the exhibitor and attendee. We offer air blowers for dock diving so that dogs can dry off quickly. Visitors can drop their show ticket into a bucket to be entered into a drawing for giveaways. We've offered 40" TVs and tablets as prizes, but it could be anything. We try to give them something a little extra for their entrance fee. Our show also usually falls on a divisional football playoff weekend, so we put several TVs up so people can enjoy the games.

Make yourself available. I put my cell phone on our cluster website and starting about 2 ½ weeks before our show weekend, I start hearing from people. By the time the show is over, I get about 600-800 calls. It can be a pain in the butt, but it is a personal touch and well-worth having a human talk to them.

MRS. PATTI L. STRAND

Delegate, Dog Fanciers Association of Oregon, Inc.

Rose City Cluster Coordinator, Classic Specialty Coordinator
and Publicity/Sponsorship Chair

DR. ALAN DORFMAN

First Vice President, Oakland County Kennel Club

Show Chairman, Oakland County Kennel Club (Michigan Winter Dog Classic)

