



BLRC Newsletter

News from the Club...

- ✦ **Peggy Stevens** has now judged three AKC Junior Hunter tests and is eligible to judge Senior tests as well. She also was a co-judge with Pluis Davern for the Intermediate and Excellent Working Certificates at the Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever National Specialty at the Manitowoc retrieving grounds in September.
- ✦ **Linamia's Jack of All Trades (Handy)** earned his Rally Novice title in three straight trials and Canine Good Citizen titles in October. His sister Linamia's Jumping Jill RN CGC earned her Junior Hunter title in August in four straight trials, and her Rally Advanced title in three straight trials in October. Handy is now working in agility, and Jilly is working toward her SH. Addison Oaks Superstar at Linamia CD RA JH CGC (Vega) earned two legs toward her CDX title in September and October. It looked as if she would title in three straight trials until she sat too far away from her handler (Peggy) after doing the broad jump. That third leg will have to wait, as she tore a cruciate ligament and had to have surgery on her left knee only a week or two after successfully completing all the jumps in three trials. Apparently she was jumping on a torn cruciate! There was no limping until afterwards and neither I nor her field trainer suspected an injury. Labs are tough!
- ✦ **Toastie** didn't qualify at the Winnegamie agility trial in August, but a fellow club member caught her clearing the final jump in style for a great photo. I was about 20 feet behind her running as fast as I could go to keep up.

**Badger Labrador
Retriever Club**

Issue #4

October 31, 2015

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News from the Club...



Accomplishments... or better yet: Brags!

- * **Greater Humble Area Kennel Club October 3, 2015** Judge James Fehring - Isthmus Black Label "Jack" bred by Sandy and BJ Bethke, owned by Jeff & Joan Ingelli, and handled by Susan Leonard WD, BOW for 1 pt, GCh.
- * **Tedco The Promise at Sandstone "Dillon"** bred by Brenda & Randle Toepfer and owned by Susan Leonard BOB.
- * **Greater Humble Area Kennel Club October 4, 2015** Judge Danielle Brown - Sandstone The Ghost of Tom Joad "Clifford" was RWD, GCh.
- * **Tedco The Promise at Sandston "Dillon"** bred by Brenda & Randle Toepfer and owned by Susan Leonard BOB.
- * **Herat of Texas Labrador Retriever Club October 23, 2015** Judge Judy Chambers Regular Classes, Judge Gerardo Saldana Sweepstakes - Sandstone The Ghost of Tom Joad "Clifford" bred and owned by Susan Leonard was 1st in Sweepstake and 2nd in Regular Class for 15-18 Month Dogs, Isthmus Black Label "Jack" bred by Sandy and BJ Bethke, owned by Jeff & Joan Ingelli, and handled by Susan Leonard was 3rd in Open Black, MoonLit's She's The One at Sandstone "Stella" bred by Susan Bennington and owned by Susan Leonard was 4th in Open Yellow Bitches.
- * **Centex Kennel Club October 24, 2015** Judge Honey Ann Glendinning - MoonLit's She's The One at Sandstone "Stella" bred by Susan Bennington and owned by Susan Leonard was RWB.
- * **Travis County Kennel Club October 25, 2015** Judge Kurt Anderson - GCh. Tedco The Promise at Sandstone "Dillon" bred by Brenda & Randle Toepfer and owned by Susan Leonard BOB.
- * **Conroe Kennel Club November 28, 2015** Judge Betty Nelson Pollack - Sandstone The Ghost of Tom Joad "Clifford" bred and owned by Susan Leonard was WD, BOW and BOB for 2 pts, MoonLit's She's The One at Sandstone "Stella" bred by Susan Bennington and owned by Susan Leonard was RWB, Intelligence Belladonna "Nadia" bred by Gabriel Buda and owned by Susan Leonard won her 3-6 month puppy class and got a Sporting Group 3 at the match.
- * **Conroe Kennel Club November 29, 2015** Judge Carol Jean Nelson - Sandstone The Ghost of Tom Joad "Clifford" bred and owned by Susan Leonard was RWD, and GCh. Tedco The Promise at Sandstone "Dillon" bred by Brenda & Randle Toepfer and owned by Susan Leonard was Select Dog.
- * **Lone Star State Classic December 4, 2015** Judge Steven Kirschner - GCh. Tedco The Promise at Sandstone "Dillon" bred by Brenda & Randle Toepfer and owned by Susan Leonard was Select Dog.
- * **Lone Star State Classic December 4, 2015** Judge Steven Kirschner - GCh. Tedco The Promise at Sandstone "Dillon" bred by Brenda & Randle Toepfer and owned by Susan Leonard was Select Dog.
- * **Lone Star State Classic December 5, 2015** Judge Jeffrey Peppers - Sandstone The Ghost of Tom Joad "Clifford" bred and owned by Susan Leonard was RWD, MoonLit's She's The One at Sandstone "Stella" bred by Susan Bennington and owned by Susan Leonard was WB for a 3pt major.
- * **Lone Star State Classic December 6, 2015** Judge Loraine Boutwell - GCh. Tedco The Promise at Sandstone "Dillon" bred by Brenda & Randle Toepfer and owned by Susan Leonard was Select Dog, which I believe completes his Bronze level Grand Championship, but awaiting AKC confirmation.



Fetch News...

THE MODERN-DAY FAIRY TALE: THE MYTH OF REACH AND DRIVE

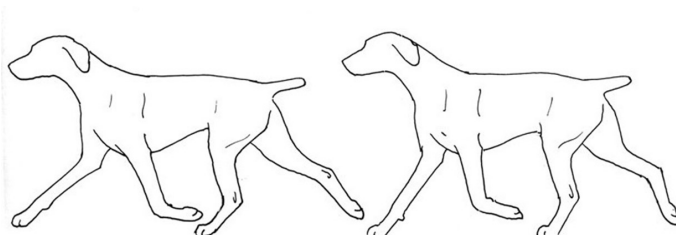
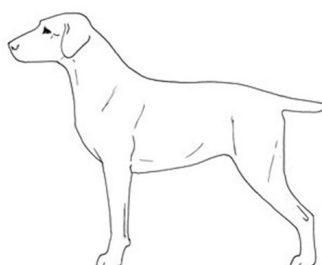
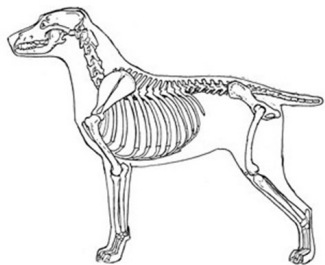
By Kathy Lorentzen

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Fortunate indeed are those in our sport who were taught by mentors who had a true foundation in animal husbandry and a real knowledge of working ability in their chosen breeds. Fifty years ago the separation between a dog that could easily perform its intended function and one that could do a lot of winning in the show ring was either nonexistent or quite slight. Dogs were often used for their created purpose during the week (hunting, herding, guarding, etc.), then bathed and brushed and taken to a dog show on the weekend. Breeding programs in many breeds were still based as much on function as they were on beauty. Dogs that could not perform the function for which their breed was originally created were not included in breeding programs. Working and winning went hand in hand.

Times have changed. Look around at dog shows today and you will see a myriad of dogs with structure so opposed to the requirements of their breed standard and trotting movement so artificially created by manipulative breeding that one must wonder how these oddly made dogs could ever actually go out and do a day's work. In the quest to win, fanciers have in many cases changed the basic proportion and structure of their dogs away from the useful norm toward strange exaggerations with unbalanced angles and bone lengths that produce incorrect side gaits. The long reach and high lift and kick may be eye-catching, but it is incorrect and inefficient.

Yet so many people are captivated and fooled by this movement. "Look at that dog cover ground," is a commonly heard phrase outside a show ring. But is that dog really covering ground, or is it an illusion? Further, is that dog that people think is covering ground even required by its breed standard to do so?



A correctly built and angulated, normal-legged dog such as this one has its legs correctly under its body for support, broad quarters with strong musculature, and a long, low side gait that is effortless and efficient. Illustrations by Marcia Schlehr.

FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION

The original wild dogs (wolves) had to survive on their own. They had to be a jack-of-all-trades, able to track, hunt and efficiently kill their prey. They excelled in sustained locomotion, having the ability to trot for very long distances with tremendous endurance. There was never anything exaggerated about their trotting style. They covered the maximum amount of ground with the minimum amount of effort, keeping their heads somewhat forward for balance and their feet close to the ground through all phases of the trot. This easy, free, energy-conserving gait allowed them to travel for miles in their quest to survive. Fancy? No. Efficient? Yes.

When man domesticated wild dogs, he created breeds for a particular function, and the trotting styles of various breeds differed based upon the structure that was created by selection for a particular use. Dogs selected for bursts of speed, swimming, digging, etc., varied in the way they trotted based upon the proportion and structure that best allowed them to do their specialized work. Unfortunately (but necessarily) at dog shows, every breed is evaluated at the trot, but not all breeds were created to be capable of trotting in the same manner. In an era when breed type was more important than exaggeration, flash and showmanship, there was more understanding and acceptance of the varying trotting styles than there is today.

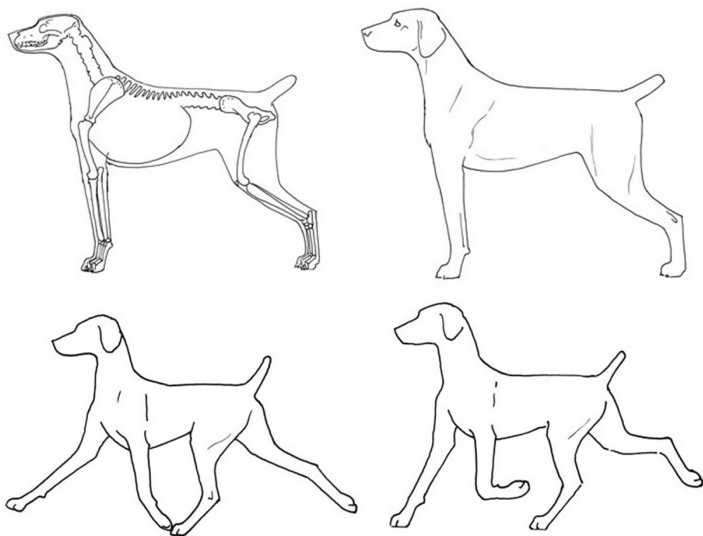
MOVEMENT IS NOT UNIVERSAL

Today there seems to be a quest for a universal style of trotting in many breeds, and breeders have changed some of the critical and fundamental characteristics of their dogs in an effort to create a trotting style that draws attention by its speed, animation and exaggeration, regardless of the fact that the animals being produced most likely would never be capable of performing their original function if asked to do so. While the majority of dogs produced in show breeding programs today are never required to perform outside the show ring, we as breeders should be charged with maintaining our breeds as they were originally intended by the people who created them and wrote their breed standards. It is not our job to change or "improve" our breeds.



Fetch News...

There is much discussion today about "tremendous reach and drive" (TRAD). So many seem to think that it is correct, and they want to produce it even in breeds whose standards distinctly describe a structure that won't produce long stride at the trot. So in order to lengthen stride on a dog, its proportions are changed. Square breeds are all of a sudden longer than tall. Slightly longer than tall breeds are longer still, and the length of their legs is shortened. Breeds that are supposed to be "well angulated" at the shoulder and the hip with a pelvic slope of 30 degrees off the horizontal (which gives them long, low-to-the-ground stride) are being bred with very open angles at both ends and pelvises that slope only 10 degrees. This sets the legs of the dog far out on each end and creates a side gait that is all high lift in the front and big kick up behind, and it's all in the air. It is this lift and kick that fools so many people.



A dog with very open angles at both the shoulder and the hip stands with its legs far out on either end of its body, which does not lend correct support to the body. This dog will trot with a lot of lift and kick. While it may look like it is taking long strides, the feet are actually on the ground for only a short period during each step, which causes the dog to have to work much harder to move. Illustrations by Marcia

HOW DOGS MOVE

Dogs that are vertical at both the shoulder and the hip do not stand with their legs correctly under their body for support. They do not have the proper width of their quarters (which produces strong musculature) that is created by correct angulation. Looking at the underline of a dog in a breed that should have good, balanced angulation and width of quarters is so educational.

Well-angulated dogs will be short in underline from the elbow to the knee, while vertical ones will be much longer. The two dogs might measure exactly the same from breastbone to point of buttocks and withers to ground, yet their structure will be completely different, and their method of trotting will differ also. The properly angulated dog will swing freely from the shoulder blade and the hip with long, low, easy strides and no wasted effort, while the vertical dog will stiffly "pop" from the elbow and the hip and lift the legs far too high off the ground on both ends, creating a gait that causes the dog a great deal of increased effort and gives it little to no endurance. The higher the legs go up in the air, the farther they have to come back down to contact the ground. And feet only work when they are on the ground; they have no use when they are up in the air.

Long steps means long steps on the ground. Forward propulsion comes from the forceful opening of the hip, stifle and hock joints when the foot is on the ground. The front assembly of the dog carries the majority of its weight, and the front legs go out in front of the dog in motion to keep it from falling on its nose. Front legs do not reach out and "pull the ground under the dog," as I so often hear said. When the dog is trotting, these muscles cannot pull; they only push. And the front leg is used for forward propulsion only once the leg is perpendicular under the body. Feet that stay on the ground for a long period of each stride create a far more efficient, useful and enduring gait than a dog whose front and rear legs hit the ground and "pop" right back up in the air. It might look fancy, but it is far from useful and demands great effort. Watching a dog that moves correctly should give you the impression of effortless balance and carriage, not struggle and hard work. But far too often today we see the hard-working dog rewarded over the correct one and then hear that the easy-moving dog wasn't "asking for the win."

EVALUATE NATURAL MOVEMENT

An additional problem seen all too often today in combination with incorrect structure is the dreadful habit of dogs being shown on a very short, tight lead, with the head forced back over its shoulders and causing even more incorrect lift of the front legs. This method of handling can throw off even a well-made dog, so think of what it does to a dog lacking correct structure. Incorrectly made dogs most often have very poor foot timing anyway (a one, two, three, four beat rather than a two-beat trot), and having their heads held up and back only adds to their inefficiency. Dogs should always be allowed to put their head where they would carry it naturally in order for the judges to evaluate true gait, and judges should insist on dogs in their ring being gaited that way. If dogs fall apart when let down to navigate on their own, then they should not win.

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About Us

Club organized by Labrador Retriever fanciers both in the show ring and in the field to continue to improve the breed.

Mission

To promote and support the maintenance and improvement of the quality of the Labrador Retriever.

