

Anatolian Shepherd Dogs

Our guest columnist is Catherine Emanuel

EDUCATIONAL COMPONENTS AT A NATIONAL SPECIALTY

After returning from the 2016 Anatolian Shepherd Dog Club of America national specialty, it was a good time to reflect on some of the great opportunities that a national specialty affords the fancier. The event was held in Pleasanton, California, on October 21, with supported entries the rest of the weekend. With record-setting entries, we were excited to attend “dog-free” and just enjoy working the show and seeing the dogs. Coming from the cold East, the weather could not have been more ideal with temperatures in the 70s during the day and nothing but sunshine.

On the night before the specialty, the ASDCA offered a judges’ education (JE) seminar. This seminar was not our highest attended, but it served as an opportunity for those judges who were there to have as much attention and time as they wanted. We had a lovely selection of dogs to go over. Judges seminars are for judges, but members and fanciers alike should consider these opportunities. We as a club do not charge our members to attend and welcome their attendance as a chance to learn more about the breed and the club. Attending a JE seminar is a great opportunity to understand how the clubs want judges to judge your breed. As a matter of fact, if you are new to exhibiting it is an opportunity to learn what we expect judges to know about our breed and therefore make you a better exhibitor.

In addition to the JE seminar this year, we had another educational experience for attendees. We offered an introduction to nose work. This is a fairly new companion event that allows owners to participate in the art of competition and the experience of bonding with their dog without the stress of conformation. Again, we had only a handful of people that took advantage of this opportunity. The event had two great teachers, multiple demonstrations, and opportunities to practice with your dog.

If you are on the fence as to whether or not to go to a national specialty and your club offers such educational opportunities, consider going. In 2015, members had the chance to ask questions of livestock guardian dogs expert Dr. Raymond Coppinger, as well as attend an exception reproduction seminar with Dr. Robert S. Dove, DVM. In all of these cases the educational components were either free or extremely inexpensive, with funds being raised for rescue. These are chances that

come around once a year and are unlike anything you will get to attend at the regular allbreed shows.

As an officer of the ASDCA, I am proud to see that we are striving to add more educational components at nationals and hope to see it continue. There is one thing that is clear in the sport of purebred dogs: We should never stop learning.

—C.E.

Thank you, Katie.
—Jo Lynne York,