

## The Annual Gathering of the Clan

By Carol White

Our guest columnist this month is Carol White, president of the Anatolian Shepherd Dog Club of America with a report on our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary national specialty. Thank you Carol!

On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1970, a small group of individuals, who all shared one thing in common – the Anatolian Shepherd Dog – decided to get together and meet on an annual basis. This gathering was dubbed, “The Annual Gathering of The Clan,” and so it began.

On July 2, 2021, Anatolian owners came together in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Anatolian Shepherd Dog Club of America (a year delayed thanks to Covid-19). The ASDCA leadership promised a golden event, and it delivered big time on its promises.

The ASDCA was especially honored to have sitting ringside, Mrs. Dorothy Ballard, wife of our club founder, the late Robert C. Ballard, who traveled from her home in Santa Fe, New Mexico to be a part of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary festivities. She was accompanied by her daughter Eileen Lavine and granddaughter, Kira Lavine, who both stated they felt Bob’s strong presence throughout the weekend.

The show itself was held indoors in a huge air conditioned building at the Oklahoma State Fairgrounds. We had reserved space in the grooming area for those Anatolian exhibitors who needed a place to crate their dogs.

On day 3 of the 5-day show cluster, the day scheduled for our national specialty, we had an impressive entry of 34 dogs. We had representation from beginner puppy in the 4-6 months old class to our senior veteran dogs with the oldest being 12 ½ years old.

Our sweepstakes judge was Mrs. Linda Clark from Tulsa, Oklahoma, a long-time, highly respected professional handler who hung up the leashes to become an AKC judge. The ASDCA chose one of dogdoms most respected judges and renowned author of dog-related books and articles, Dr. Carmen Battaglia from Roswell, Georgia to adjudicate our breed at our historical 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.

The ASDCA received many compliments for our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary trophy table. Even Dr. Carmen Battaglia, commented: "Boy, your club really went all out!" All of the trophies were selected to carry through our 50<sup>th</sup> golden anniversary theme. The breed trophies featured our anniversary logo. We also unveiled our new Best of Breed perpetual trophy. Our original "Zorba Award" ran out of room for name plates honoring our national specialty winners from years past.

The trophy table for Day 2 featured stained glass/etched plaques and laser cut wooden ornaments carrying out a Noah's Ark theme. A framed "Noah's Ark" poster was displayed on the trophy table with the wording, "Where did the Anatolian Shepherd Dog originate? Where did Noah's Ark come down?"

The Day 3 trophies were stainless steel serving pieces embellished with brilliant gold branches/ gold leaves. On this last day of showing, exhibitors were given awesome key chains topped with a small crystal ball showing a lovely head of an Anatolian Shepherd. The key chains were the ASDCA's way of thanking our exhibitors, many who traveled hundreds of miles to attend our 2021 National Specialty. We had dogs traveling from California, Texas, New York, Florida, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Massachusetts, Kentucky, New Hampshire, Missouri and a local from Oklahoma.

The national specialty awards and raffle/auction banquet held at our host hotel, Embassy Suites, was a success. Our national specialty judge, Dr. Battaglia and sweepstakes judge Mrs. Linda Clark, both attended and gave short speeches. Also attending the

banquet as a guest of one of our club members was Dr. David Hayhurst, who judged Sweepstakes at our ASDCA National Specialty 10 years ago in Napa, California.

The most coveted award given out by the ASDCA is the Hisar Shield Award, honoring a club member's "Lifetime Achievement" and service to the Anatolian Shepherd Dog Club of America. The award is not given out annually, but this year, the ASDCA awarded the Hisar Shield Award to Laura Edstrom-Smith who for 30 years has dedicated herself to the service of the club and to the breed.

Everyone who attended the banquet walked away with a "goodie bag" filled with many custom-made items (I love crafting) you will not find in any store. This was my way of saying "Thank you" for supporting the club and attending our 50<sup>th</sup> celebration. The most unique item in the gift bag was a commemorative "Challenge Coin." The coin depicted an Anatolian in front of the American and Turkish flags.

Each attendee at the banquet received a commemorative latte mug filled with gold-wrapped candy. Each person also received a booklet entitled, "A Look Back at Anatolian History: Famous Firsts." The booklet was put together by Marilyn Harned.

The weather in Oklahoma City was hot and humid, and pesky mosquitoes abounded. But it could have been worse. We look forward to next year's "Gathering of the Clan" which will take place in Nashville, Tennessee in the fall. Start making your plans now.

Jo Lynne York

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