

AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB
Delegates Meeting
December 12, 2025

Gina M. DiNardo, President in the Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m. ET.
(National Anthem played.)

Delegates were reminded to check in at the reception desk for attendance purposes. When Staff prints the blue-colored badge, the Delegate is automatically marked as present.

The Chair introduced the persons seated on the dais: Chairman, Dr. Thomas M. Davies; Vice Chairman, Dr. Michael Knight; Joan Corbisiero, Professional Registered Parliamentarian; Sheila H. Goffe, Executive Secretary; Danielle Fernandez, the Court Reporter.

Condolences were offered in the recent passing of members of the Delegate Body:

- Fred Hughes on January 30, 2025. He was the Delegate for the Pocatello Kennel Club since March 2006.
- Rita Mather on April 22, 2025. She was the Delegate for the Sahuaro State Kennel Club since April 2007.

The Executive Secretary read the report on the Nominating Committee and the report on additional nominations.

Ms. Goffe: Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 2, of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club*, the NOMINATING COMMITTEE

- Gail LaBerge, Chair – Atlanta Obedience Club
- Gretchen Bernardi – Mississippi Valley Kennel Club
- Ellen Hardin – Golden Retriever Club of America
- Barbara Shaw – Greater Collin Kennel Club
- Matthew Townsend – Carolina Working Group Association

Alternates:

- Robert (Bob) Rynkiewicz – Eastern German Shorthaired Pointer Club
- Monica Stoner – Saluki Club of America

appointed by the Board of Directors at its July 2025 meeting have nominated the following Delegates as candidates for such vacancies on the Board of Directors as to be filled at the next Annual Meeting of the Club on March 10, 2026. There are three vacancies for the Class of 2030.

CLASS OF 2030

- Dominic Palleschi Carota – Pharaoh Hound Club of America
- Jason Hoke – Chain O'Lakes Kennel Club
- Thomas S. Powers – Kennel Club of Beverly Hills

Pursuant to Article VIII, Section 4, of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club*, the following Delegates has been endorsed in writing by the required number of Delegates as a candidate for the vacancies on the Board of Directors for the Class of 2030, to be filled at the next Annual Meeting of the Club on March 10, 2026:

- Carl C. Ashby III – United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club, Inc.
- Karen J. Burgess – Greater Clark County Kennel Club, Inc.
- Patricia M. Cruz – Heart of the Plains Kennel Club
- Sue Goldberg – Lewiston-Auburn Kennel Club, Inc.
- Laurie Maulucci – South Windsor Kennel Club
- Lisa Peterson – Norwegian Elkhound Association of America, Inc.

Ms. DiNardo: The Bylaws state that nominations may not be made from the floor. Nominations, therefore, closed on November 15, 2025.

In accordance with the Delegate Standing Rule, each candidate is allowed three minutes to address the Delegate Body. Keith Frazier will indicate to the candidates when three minutes have expired. The Chair will introduce the candidates who will speak in alphabetical order and no questions from the floor will be entertained.

The first candidate for the Class of 2030 is Carl C. Ashby, III representing the United States Kerry Blue Terrier Club, Inc.

Mr. Ashby: Good morning. Let's consider the important role that club members play in everything that the AKC does. As a club of clubs, the AKC cannot move forward without mutual respect and trust between AKC and the clubs that sustain it. Too often, clubs feel that AKC is more focused on regulations, policy, and fees than on building relationships. That perception undermines the foundation of our shared mission. I strongly believe that clubs are the backbone of the American Kennel Club. AKC cannot survive without a strong and vibrant club network. For me, it's more than a talking point, it's something I believe in my core and will guide me as a director. For AKC, clubs are not optional. Powered by the unpaid volunteers, clubs host events, training classes, showcase purebred dogs, provide political influence, and generate significant income to AKC. AKC must value its 5,000 clubs and listen to them. When was the last time your club was asked what their concerns were or how they might be helped? Understanding those concerns is extraordinarily important to build the type of relationship that we need. A partnership must exist between the clubs and the American Kennel Club. Clubs must also view AKC as an enabler and asset where neither can survive without the other. Finally rigid policies do not fit today's reality. Clubs need and expect common sense solutions to help meet the challenges that they face. I know that the AKC Board can take the lead in that. In 2016, like today, many clubs were struggling. I asked the Board to form the All-Breed Show Advisory Team. The mission of that team was to allow clubs to work with experienced people in the fancy to strengthen the financial performance of their clubs. Many clubs took advantage of this and benefited from it. The Club Development Department is a direct result of that effort and continues to provide assistance to clubs, mentor them and share expertise. That is the type of relationship that we must have with our clubs. I am committed to creating a stronger

AKC-club bond, one that's built on trust, respect, and collaboration so that both the AKC and clubs can succeed more than they ever have before. In March, I do ask for your vote, not just to elect me, but to create a vision where all of our clubs and AKC work closely together, and that'll be carried through with everything that we do. Thank you.

The second candidate for the Class of 2030 is Karen J. Burgess representing Greater Clark County Kennel Club, Inc.

Ms. Burgess: Good morning, everyone. Like you, I have an extensive background in the sport of purebred dogs. I've been a Delegate for the Greater Clark County Kennel Club for 26 years. A club officer, board member, show chair, show secretary for multiple All-Breed group and Parent Club events. I sit on the Board of Directors and have twice served as a Secretary to the show committee for Morris and Essex. You have elected me to our Delegate Parent Clubs Committee for multiple terms.

We have challenges across the country and in various events, the facts are clear – overall traditional sports entries are down and expenses are up. Club membership is not valued in the same way it once was. We have new participants, new sports, and new special events, which must be considered in our planning. Many of the new participants want events that result in personal achievement between them and their dog, but don't require extensive timing or training. What I hear from those clubs involved is that we are tired. Tired of the bureaucracy made to feel that what clubs do is never enough. Tired of being made less than while attempting to work with certain AKC resources. I think most of you have had personal experiences along these lines.

So how can I work to help the AKC Board help our clubs? My professional experience as an accountant involved problem solving, strategic planning, finance, budget, tax preparation, personal management, purchasing, and contract negotiations. I know how to read a balance sheet and what questions to ask about the numbers. I have worked with the past AKC Board and Staff to develop new events and to adjust some processes. If elected, I plan to do more. We need strong, inclusive, encompassing strategy to support our core events, our newer activities, and develop new ways to serve our clubs and the dog-loving community. I believe my experience and advocacy for clubs and support of purebred dogs, along with your support, will help us move forward to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. I look forward to speaking with you individually about your ideas and I appreciate your vote. Thank you.

The third candidate for the Class of 2030 is Dominic Palleschi Carota, representing the Pharaoh Hound Club of America.

Mr. Carota: Good morning, everyone. My name is Dominic Palleschi Carota. I'm a 14-year Delegate for the Pharaoh Hound Club of America. I served on the Board of Directors of the American Kennel Club for eight years. Four years of that was as Vice Chairman. What got me to that point? We all got our first dog from a breeder. Those individuals mentored us and were our entrance into Confirmation, Companion, or Performance events. What that taught me was

cooperation, it taught me how to work with people, how to love people, how to develop lifelong friendships and relationships. I have a 27-year relationship with my handler. We were both young when we started. I walked her down the aisle. This is the group that we are. What does that mean? How does that translate to today? We have to work together to get through the challenges that are out there.

As I touched on earlier, the challenges facing the American Kennel Club are technology, artificial intelligence, animal rights organizations, the advent of lower cost, and more efficient cloning. They are not the American Kennel Club's doing, they are challenges we will face in the world for decades to come. I want to be that voice in the boardroom for you. I want to be able to work with you.

As I started out, I had a great relationship with my breeder. I developed a breeding program. I took that level of cooperation, that level of engagement, and I brought it to the Delegate Body, and I served on the HEC Committee. During that time on the HEC Committee, we came up with a little event called Fast CAT®, which we thought was a good idea. Under the leadership of Bob LaBerge, who was our Chairman, and in cooperation with staff, we put through some protocols that the Board ultimately passed. Now we have a sport that, in many cases, has been the lifeblood of many clubs in our organization. In some cases, it's kept the lights on. I took that experience from the committee and brought it to the Board.

Now, you've heard me say, 'I', a lot. Well, let's forget about that. Let's talk about 'We'. To get things done in that boardroom, you have to be able to reach across the aisle to make an agreement and sometimes it does not go the way you think. What you do next is respect that person and move on. That is the core of our sport. Without respect, without civility, without cooperation, without leadership, we are sunk. When I first joined the Board, I reviewed what the statute says about not-for-profits in the state of New York. It's three words, folks, duty of care. You have to care for this organization and protect it. We have to protect it moving forward. Please support me in March. I want to be that voice for you in the boardroom and protect this organization for the next 140 years. Thank you so much.

The fourth candidate for the Class of 2030 is Patricia M. Cruz representing Heart of the Plains Kennel Club.

Ms. Cruz: Good morning. For those of you who don't know me, allow me to introduce myself. I'm Pat Cruz, Delegate for the Heart of the Plains Kennel Club in Lubbock, Texas. As a seated Delegate for ten years before running for the Board, I know that a Board seat is not an entry-level position. After 50 years in the sport, let me assure you that this is not my first rodeo. A brief resume of my dog experience – I'm a breeder, owner, handler, exhibitor, ring steward, member of Dog Writers Association of America. Currently, an approved AKC Judge since 1972. I've been privileged to judge on six continents and recently was involved with the FCM paperwork securing the show in November 2026 in Mexico City. I'll be on that panel. I'm a member of the Afghan Hound Club of America since 1978. I'm not a new kid on the block. I

recently helped restore the Knickerbocker Bull Terrier Club, I'm active in local kennel clubs and have served as an officer in many kennel clubs and in my Homeowners Association.

I'm proud of the motions and the votes on behalf of the clubs and the judges while I was on the Board. For example, our Delegate e-List is more secure after working with AKC's IT Staff taking it from Yahoo to Google when people were besieged. Your exhibitors and your judges are safer because I pushed that AEDs be mandatory at shows. NOHS is now an opt-in for clubs when it was originally supposed to be a requirement. Concurrent and FSS specialties are now part of an All-Breed event. The two-shows-in-a-day format was passed in 2013 and first held at my local shows proving to be helpful for struggling clubs in building treasuries. Several years ago, after more than one Board vote, I was successful in unmasking the names of judges on applications and fought for the denial of the Judging Approval Process at that time. Clubs now have Bred-by-Exhibitor Puppy classes, a motion that I made in 2017 which has helped give dogs that don't mature as quickly as others the ability to get the coveted Bred-by-Exhibitor medallion.

What about now? Many questions about eliminating Limited Registrations. Too many dog shows, not enough dogs. Judges advancing without seeing enough dogs to find indigenous breed type. Disqualifying unacceptable colors in the breeds. Companion and Performance events being a fun for spectators, while Conformation totals fall. Seventy-five new Delegates in 2025, this high turnover should be reversed. The loudest cry has been the increase in fees, and I really believe that they should not land on the backs of the kennel clubs. They didn't incur these increases in fees. They're only trying to make up for the shortfall.

I've been your voice in the boardroom for eight years, and I loved it. I will continue to speak for you. I would appreciate your vote in March. Thank you very much.

The fifth candidate for the Class of 2030 is Sue Goldberg representing Lewiston-Auburn Kennel Club.

Ms. Goldberg: Good morning. AKC Reunite, the Humane Fund, the Canine Health Foundation, Government Relations, the Dog Museum, these are just some of the initiatives I've witnessed in my 34 years as a Delegate of which AKC can be justifiably proud. During that same time, however, I've also borne witness to some disastrous business decisions. Decisions that were disclosed to this Delegate Body after the fact, that have cost the AKC millions in losses and have strayed far from its mission.

As an Executive Recruiter for the last 41 years, I ask questions for a living. I've observed the leadership styles and decision-making skills of senior management at small, privately held companies to the Fortune 100. Decisions that help companies thrive, others to merely survive, and in some cases, the unfortunate choices that doom companies to failure.

I commit to you that if elected, I will not vote on any action until we have satisfactory answers to these three questions:

One, what are the unintended consequences of this decision?

Any idea needs to be thoroughly vetted before proceeding. What's the worst that can happen? I believe in hoping for the best but planning for the worst. What's our exit strategy if things don't go as planned? Asking tough questions has been the cornerstone of my business career.

Two, how does this align with AKC's mission?

I recognize the need to introduce mixed breeds into our sport, but our focus must remain on the reason AKC was founded in the first place, to preserve and protect the purebred dog. Preservation breeders devoted to creating sound, healthy animals should be valued and promoted. Any action the board takes should support them.

And, last, but definitely not least, how will this action affect our clubs?

I understand a Board member's first fiduciary responsibility is to the organization, but that should not be to the exclusion of the interests of the clubs. If anything, we should try to minimize their burden. Why was the event fee raised despite the resounding objection of this Delegate Body? We are all in this together. The boardroom door should not be shut, keeping the Delegates out, awaiting the results of a Board action in which they had no say. We have many smart, talented Delegates in our midst. Why not reach out and tap those talents before anything is cast in stone? Hearing a variety of opinions, disagreeing without being disagreeable, learning from the expertise of others, these are part of crafting a strong business plan.

My goal, as a Board member, is to help the AKC regain its footing making sound business choices to move the organization forward while staying true to its mission and keeping the interests of our clubs at the forefront. If you agree that the Delegate Body deserves a stronger voice at the boardroom table, I would like to be that voice and I'm asking for your vote. Thank you.

The sixth candidate for the Class of 2030 is Jason Hoke, representing the Chain O'Lakes Kennel Club.

Mr. Hoke: Good morning, everyone. I am Jason Hoke representing the Chain O'Lakes Kennel Club. I have to say, standing before you, this is a humbling experience because when I look out into the room, I see all of the people that mentored me and brought me to this point in my career. What that does, that speaks to the tradition of the American Kennel Club. It shows that we build a community and a family throughout the years, and that's how we can maintain the sport forever. It's really in that tradition that I form my core values that I bring to the world of purebred dogs. Many of you gave me this opportunity to learn, and now I ask for the privilege of giving back to you.

We talk about tradition and tradition matters, but so does progress. What I hope to bring to the AKC board is a steady respect for our history paired with a clear, forward-looking vision. We're standing at a pivotal moment in the time of AKC, one that calls for innovation, creativity, and

the courage to evolve. Change is hard. I still have an AOL email address, it's really hard to not move past that. I did get a Gmail address now, so I'm moving ahead. The AKC was founded in 1884 and it remains the gold standard of registries. But as registries decline, I don't see a failure, I see a way to progress and move forward. I see opportunity. The AKC paper must once again feel valuable. In today's world, value comes through enriched, modern offerings. When someone registers a dog, they shouldn't feel they just have a piece of paper. They should immediately feel they have joined a community. We offer all of these introductory courses, and these courses through the Canine College or the AKC website now must lead directly to platforms to give new people instruction. We have to understand the world has changed. We don't necessarily sit in front of a computer anymore. Everything is on your phone. I see a few of you on your phone right now. We have to embrace this technology. The youth of today wants things instantaneously. They cannot be held to go to a web browser on a computer. They have to be able to click, point, get information quickly, and move on, that's how society is becoming.

The next thing, which we didn't talk about during the forum, is we must invest deeply in our Juniors. That's where I started. I started as a Junior Handler. Juniors are our future breeders, judges, club members, and maybe AKC Board members at some point in their career. We have to create a post-Junior pathway for the Juniors to move through, from Juniors to working for clubs. There has to be programs that bridge this gap. Retention is not a must, it's a necessity. We have to engage them and keep them involved, it's so important.

Just as important as that are the Performance and Companion events. I hosted the Great Dane Club of America National as a Show Chair two years ago. We had more entries in Performance and Companion events than we did in regular entries. We have to educate the clubs on the value of this. Perhaps the most urgent message we need to send is supporting anti-dog legislation. If you ask me the one thing I will not bargain with as a member of the Delegate Body is my undying legislative support. I offer over 50 years in this sport; I'm a member of three All-Breed Clubs and serve on the Board of two Parent Clubs. This is what I can give back to the AKC Delegate Body, and I hope that you'll support me in moving this club forward. Thank you.

The seventh candidate for the Class of 2030 is Laurie Maulucci representing the South Windsor Kennel Club.

Ms. Maulucci: Good morning. Those of you who know me, know that I am deeply immersed in the business of AKC clubs and AKC events 52 weeks a year. I'm an active member of nine All-Breed specialty and group clubs holding a variety of leadership positions. As an All-Breed and specialty Show Chair, I'm committed to my support for Companion and Performance events. Three years ago, I brought together two clubs to jointly hold four Fast CAT® events annually. In 2024, our Thanksgiving Classic Cluster lost its Obedience and Rally Chair and had no one within the cluster clubs willing to fill that void. I reached out and brought together a team that has now created a three-day Obedience and Rally Extravaganza that we are happy to say grew exponentially for 2025. I also recently chaired my first Agility trial.

We are all able to gather together here because of breeders. Our breeders deserve to be celebrated, not denigrated. Protecting their ability to produce dogs with which we share our lives, as well as participate in AKC Sports, should be of utmost importance. In 2014, I was elected President of the Connecticut Federation of Dog Clubs, working with AKC Government Relations to monitor proposed legislation that would affect not only breeders, but also all dog owners in our state. In 2024, we were awarded the Walter Bebout Memorial Award for Leadership in Canine Legislation.

I'm proud to be one of the core members of the AKC-Tufts Canine Whelping Program course, which is entering its eighth semester at Tufts Veterinary School. We partner first and second year vet students with AKC breeders planning a litter so they may learn firsthand the dedication to exceptional breeding practices necessary for producing a successful litter. These students have been able to gain an understanding of what a responsible breeder looks like, as well as experience a natural whelp, both things the vet school curriculum is unwilling or unable to provide.

I've been working to help clubs succeed in a multitude of areas for over 30 years. This experience has given me a breadth of knowledge that will enable me to be a strong voice on the Board for the clubs that you and I are here to represent. There have been moments during 2025, when voices from the Delegate Body expressed a desire to be more informed about the business of the Board, particularly when business decisions are being made that directly affect our clubs. I know that I have the skills to make significant contributions while working collaboratively with fellow members of the Board, Staff, and the Delegate Body. I envision my service on the AKC Board to be a continuation of the contributions to AKC that I have made during my adult life. Representing you and all of our clubs as a member of the Board would be my honor. Thank you for your consideration.

The eighth candidate for the Class of 2030 is Lisa Peterson representing the Norwegian Elkhound Association of America, Inc.

Ms. Peterson: Good morning. When I first became a Delegate in 2001 for the Norwegian Elkhound Association of America, I had little interaction with AKC beyond dog shows and registration. But when I walked into the ballroom for my first meeting, met the staff, and listened to the leadership on the dais, my eyes lit up, and I began to dream. During this time, I was an owner, breeder, handler, competed in Obedience, and had enjoyed a career as a journalist covering the criminal justice system. Three years later, I was hired by the AKC to join the Communications department, filling a vacancy left by Gina DiNardo, who had been promoted. A few months later, I finished a nice bred-by bitch, reflecting six generations of responsible breeding. When I was awarded the winner's bitch ribbon, I started crying. Not because I had won, but because I knew that I would not get to special this lovely bitch because my new role at AKC didn't allow us to show champions. I was given the rare opportunity to put aside my future individual wins to serve as an AKC spokesperson and eventually as Director of Communications for a decade. I would get to promote AKC's commitment to purebred dogs to millions of people. I chose the greater good over the personal best.

As a former staffer, two of my proudest moments are being part of the Hurricane Katrina disaster relief team and my small role in defeating a proposed mandatory spay-and-neuter law in California, AB 1634. It became a national issue. I appeared on Fox News and went head-to-head with the bill's co-sponsor. I convinced USA Today to write an editorial in our favor, and I wrote an op-ed read by lawmakers about the misguided legislation. In the end, AKC, its federations, clubs, breeders, and more all working together defeated the bill.

After AKC, I founded my own PR consulting company and worked with Westminster as a PR Manager for six years. I helped hundreds of journalists tell the story of responsible breeders. More recently, I worked at Embark Veterinary, a dog DNA company, overseeing breeder content marketing and sponsorship events. When asked to return as my Parent Club Delegate earlier this year, I gladly accepted. I am ready to get back to work. I'll bring my journalist's objective fact-finding skills to make decisions on the Board, and I won't be afraid to speak my mind. We are on a journey together. As a returning Delegate and a former staffer, I bring a fresh perspective to an institution I know intimately. Despite current challenges, I believe AKC will thrive if we embrace change further. I'd like to be the agent of change on the Board. I'd be humbled if you'd let my passion, talents, and experience help lead the way. Thank you.

The ninth and final candidate for the Class of 2030 is Thomas S. Powers representing Kennel Club of Beverly Hills.

Mr. Powers: Good morning. I'm honored to be re-nominated by the Nominating Committee for this position. I've been on the AKC Board for 12 out of the last 14 years. I've served on the Audit Committee, the Compensation Committee, the Board Appeals Committee, and the Pension Committee. Prior to that I served on the Board appointed Constitution and Bylaws Committee, known as the Menaker Committee. We met once a month for three years and did a complete review of AKC's Constitution and Bylaws. For a number of years before being in the Delegate Body, I was the Chair of the Southwest Trial Board. I have a deep appreciation of our traditions as I was raised in a family of breeders where my parents were breeders, exhibitors, dog club presidents, and show chairs. Both of my parents were Delegates. I have it on good authority that only Mari-Beth O'Neill and I can make that claim of having two parents in this Delegate Body. In the early 1960s, when our family got our first Irish Wolfhound, that was when my interest in purebred dogs really took off. After the death of my father, my mother gave the kennel name to my wife and myself, and we continue to breed and show Irish Wolfhounds under the prefix of Powerscourt. Lani and I have also bred and shown finished Mastiffs, Beagles, Dachshunds, Glen of Imaal Terriers, and Harriers. We're now down to four dogs, but we're still breeding. I've always been interested in the business side of dog shows – that began about age 14 when I was selling catalogs at the Plainfield Kennel Club dog show in New Jersey. I have been a member of the Plainfield Kennel Club and the Irish Wolfhound Club of America for 56 years. Almost 40 years ago, Lani and I joined the Kennel Club of Beverly Hills, and I was appointed show chair. As a member of that team, I've been privileged to produce a number of truly spectacular dog shows, including one on USA Network and two on the NBC Network.

My professional career has been long and varied. I practiced law for almost 50 years in California. I represented everything from common street criminals to Fortune 500 companies. About half of my practice is transactional and the other half was in litigation. I can't tell you how many co-ownership disputes I've handled over the years and that turns out to be my pro bono work for the fancy. I know how to ask questions. I know how to make decisions and bring to you what I hope is reasoned, mature judgment. I know how to form consensus. I've been in a number of businesses, a veterinary clinic, retail pet supply, dry cleaning business, and I look at AKC as a customer service business like all of those were. I know how to make a payroll. I know how to make sure that the bills are paid, and I know that the employees and the constituents are counting on the company to do those things. I want to represent you. I want to represent your clubs, your members, and all the constituents of the AKC, so let me ask you directly, please vote for Tom. Thank you.

The Executive Secretary read the names of the Delegate seated since the last meeting:

Donald M. Bright, Elberon, VA to represent Tidewater Kennel Club of Virginia

Frank E. Lavoie, Bois D'Arc, MO, to represent Ozarks Kennel Club

Professor Tom K. Lewellen, PhD, Port Ludlow, WA, to represent Gig Harbor Kennel Club

Pamela B. Peat, Scottsdale, AZ, to represent Affenpinscher Club of America

Cheryl L. Secondo, Brooksville, FL, to represent Tampa Bay Kennel Club

Dawn Sealy, St. Augustine, FL, to represent Tri-City Kennel Club

Patricia A. Sosa, Madisonville, LA, to represent Louisiana Kennel Club

The following Delegates, who were attending their first meeting since being officially seated, were introduced from the floor:

Frank E. Lavoie, to represent Ozarks Kennel Club

Professor Tom K. Lewellen, PhD, to represent Gig Harbor Kennel Club

Alejandro Lima, to represent Fort Lauderdale Dog Club

Linda McGrath, to represent American Water Spaniel Club

Cheryl L. Secondo, to represent Tampa Bay Kennel Club

Dawn Sealy, to represent Tri-City Kennel Club

Rhonda Shifferd, to represent Greater Ocala Dog Club

Patricia A. Sosa, to represent Louisiana Kennel Club

The minutes of the September 9, 2025 Delegate Meeting were published in the online October 2025 *AKC Gazette*, and the complete transcript was posted on the Delegate Portal on AKC's website. If there are no corrections, the minutes will stand approved as published. There were no corrections and the minutes were adopted as published.

Dr. Thomas Davies delivered the Chairman's Report as follows:

Morning, everybody. It's great to be together again as we close out another year in the life of our organization. Our December meeting always gives us a moment to pause, reflect, and celebrate. It's time to reflect on our progress, share meaningful dialogue, and look forward to the year ahead. The year has been a meaningful one for AKC, a period marked by transition, renewed focus, and continued evolution in our programs and relationships. We're closing a

chapter that reminds us how far this organization has come, particularly with the 25th anniversary of the AKC National Championship, that has grown into an international canine event. As we consider what this anniversary represents, I'm reminded of Peter Drucker's words: *"The best way to predict the future is to create it."* Our championship show is a clear example of that idea – the show began as Ron's vision and, through years of hard work, has become the premier stage for our sport.

What began as an ambitious concept has evolved into a showcase of the collective passion of breeders, exhibitors, handlers, judges, volunteers, staff, and partners. As we honor this anniversary, we're celebrating an embodiment of everything purebred dogs represent: tradition, heritage, commitment, and excellence. Even as we celebrate the strength of our traditions, we must look ahead. The future of our mission to protect and preserve the purebred dog increasingly demands a global perspective. We continue to strengthen our relationship across the global purebred community through meaningful international collaborations. Our work with the FCM – Federación Canófila Mexicana, including the historic upcoming show we are licensing and sanctioning, demonstrates the value and strength of working collectively. Alongside our relationships with the Royal Kennel Club, the Canadian Kennel Club, and many others around the globe, these efforts reflect AKC's growing leadership in canine stewardship. These alliances are essential as responsible dog ownership and ethical breeding face increasing pressure worldwide. Looking towards 2026, we also have exciting developments here at home. Next year, we launch the Regional National Owner-Handler Series events, an important expansion that brings higher-level competition closer to owner-handlers across the country. We're also preparing to introduce the Regional Junior NOHS competitions, offering young handlers more pathways to grow, learn, and thrive in our sport. These initiatives reflect our long-term vision – a sport that is accessible, welcoming, and positioned for healthy growth.

Engaging new exhibitors, supporting young people, and reinforcing opportunities for owner-handlers are investments in our future. But no program, no event, no initiative can secure the future of our sport on its own. People do that. We do that. As we look toward that future, I think of Winston Churchill's reminder: *"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts."* Perseverance is woven into every corner of our community – from the breeder working toward the next generation, to the Junior mastering their craft, to the clubs that keep the sport thriving week after week.

For 2026, the challenge before us as a community and as stewards is to strengthen the culture of our sport by fostering kindness, mentorship, and a genuinely welcoming environment. Though running shows can be stressful, the tone set for newcomers and seasoned exhibitors determines who feels supported, respected, and connected within our community. Good sportsmanship, family-friendly shows, and a spirit of helping one another must remain our standard.

As leaders at the club level, we must also be strong advocates for the American Kennel Club and for the importance of registration, ensuring that exhibitors and the public understand the value that it brings to preservation breeding and the future of our sport. These behaviors

will influence the future of our organization every bit as much as the rules we adopt and the programs we create. During this holiday season, I want to offer my warmest wishes to you, your families, and of course your dogs. I hope the weeks ahead bring rest, joy, and meaningful time with the people and traditions that matter most. Thank you for your leadership, your partnership, and your unwavering commitment to our American Kennel Club. Happy holidays.

Ms. DiNardo delivered the President's Report as follows:

As we close out the year together, I want to begin with simply – thank you. This has been a year of transition, of growth, of continued evolution for our organization and our sport. Throughout every change, every challenge, and every opportunity, the AKC community has demonstrated that we are dedicated, resilient, and deeply committed to the future of our dogs. We have so much to be grateful for.

This year has reminded us that progress doesn't happen all at once, it happens step by step, decision by decision, with the support of people who care. I'm proud of the direction in which we are moving and the work we are doing to strengthen our programs, modernize our operations, expand our outreach, while still protecting the traditions that make our sport meaningful. As we gather here at year's end, our thoughts naturally turn to this wonderful weekend in Orlando, the flagship event that has come to define our celebration of dogs – the AKC National Championship.

Many of you remember its beginnings, the journey to get to this 25th anniversary was a long one. In 2001, the show launched as the American Dog Classic, a new idea derived by Ron Menaker, an invitational event that marked the early days of what would become our crown jewel. Over the past 25 years, we've transformed this event into a true showcase of excellence, passion, and community. In that time, we've crowned 24 National Champions across 22 different breeds, each representing the very best of our sport. As the event has grown, so has our commitment to elevating the experience for exhibitors, breeders, handlers, and spectators alike. In 2003, we introduced the Best Bred-by-Exhibitor competition. In 2013, we added National Owner-Handled Series Finals. In 2017, we debuted the AKC/Royal Canin All-Breed Puppy and Junior Stakes, a competition that highlights the next generation of show dogs. This year, on our 25th anniversary, we celebrate an extraordinary milestone with more than 9,160 total entries and 5,557 dogs competing for the title of America's National Champion.

These numbers represent more than participation. They represent commitment, your commitment. They reflect breeders, exhibitors, handlers, volunteers, and staff who believe in this sport and will work tirelessly to preserve it. They represent our future. And they represent something even deeper – connection. We are fortunate to be part of a sport that continues to bring people together at a time when so many institutions see declining engagement and participation. As more of our daily lives shift online, the real in-person spaces where people can gather and build relationships and find belonging have grown fewer. Yet here we are together in Orlando, surrounded by dogs, friends, competitors, and the place that brings us joy, purpose, companionship, and a reason to show up. This week is about more than spirited competition, it's about belonging, friendship, the joy that comes from sharing our passion. It is

a reminder of why our mission matters and why this community endures. As we celebrate this week, I encourage each of you to take a moment to reflect on the gift we share, the privilege of stewarding a sport rooted in purpose, passion, and tradition. While we're together this week, practice one random act of kindness. Smile at someone you don't know, offer help, share a moment of grace. You never know whose day you might change. Thank you for your leadership, for your commitment to the American Kennel Club, for your partnerships, and I look forward to what we will continue to build together. I wish you a healthy, happy holiday season.

Ted Phillips, CFO, delivered the Financial Report as follows:

Good morning, Delegates. We appreciate your attendance here today, and we also appreciate your support. Let's continue the conversation we had back in September and look at the nine-month results for AKC as a standalone entity. These results are indicative of our financial forecast for the remainder of this year.

As of September 30, 2025, the result from operations is a loss of \$3.97 million, primarily due to lower registration revenues. The prudent use of the annualized spend of the investment portfolio and current interest and dividends reduced the loss from operations to \$1.6 million. The net loss from operations on total revenues of \$66.4 million is 4.6 percent, rounded up on the slide to 5, below the same nine-month period in 2024. Expenses total \$70.3 million and are 1 percent lower than the same period in 2024. An important note is that this expense variance is less than the relative inflation rates impacting our largest expenses, which are staff and professional fees. In summary and based on the forecast that we prepared as we did our annual budget in September, we expect total revenue to be lower for the remainder of 2025, and we forecast a net loss from operations at year-end.

On this slide, we have the three primary sources of operating revenue. These major areas total the amount of \$66.4 million that I mentioned on the previous slide. Registration and event fees total \$45.2 million and represent 68 percent of total operating revenues, which are 5 percent lower than the nine-month period in 2024. The largest component of this revenue line is registration and related revenues, which total \$31.5 million and represent 47 percent of our total revenues. When you compare this to that segment of this total against the 2024 period, that number is 7 percent lower than the 2024 period. We're just isolating it down to be specific about that area. Revenues from events total \$13.7 million represent 20 percent of total revenues and are comparable with the same period in 2024. Advertising, sponsorship, and royalty revenues comprise 19 percent of total revenues and are 11 percent or \$1.5 million lower than the same period in 2024, which is principally due to lower advertising revenue as that revenue follows our registration activity. E-commerce products and service revenue total \$8.5 million and are 13 percent of revenue. This line increased by \$700,000 or 9 percent over 2024.

Now, let's go deeper. This slide is a further breakdown of registration revenue. Dog registration revenue totals \$15.5 million and was \$2.2 million or 12 percent below the same prior year period. Litter registration revenue totals \$8.7 million and was \$1 million or 13 percent higher

than the same period in 2024. Appended to this presentation that will be posted on the Delegate Portal will be the non-financial statistics of both dog and litter registration, so I encourage you to review that. To round out the revenue related to registration on this slide, there are two significant areas, Pedigree sales totaling \$3.62 million, which is 22 percent lower than the same period in 2024, and the remaining registration-related revenue totaling \$3.6 million, principally earned from certificate transfers, AKC Canine Partners, purebred alternative listings, litter certificates, and AKC Puppy Folders.

Let's take a look at the breakdown of revenues from major sport categories. Combining a couple of those columns, Conformation and Companion revenue, totals \$9.2 million and are comparable with the prior year period. Performance events total \$3 million and are 7 percent higher due to increased event application and service fees. The Family Dog program revenues total \$2.87 million and are 3 percent lower than 2024. Our sponsorship, advertising, and revenue area has three breakouts here for you. This slide further delineates the lower revenue I mentioned earlier of \$1.6 million. While each of these categories do report lower revenue, the largest decrease is in advertising revenue. Year-to-date advertising revenue totaled \$3.2 million and is \$1.3 million or 28 percent lower than the same period in 2024.

Let's move on to expenses. As mentioned earlier, total operating expenses are \$70.3 million. Staff and travel expenses total \$36.8 million or 52 percent of total operating expenses. We roll up the number on professional fees and product fulfillment into two columns and those have positive variances versus the prior year period. It's important to know that in the professional fees area, there's a decision made to hire folks with specific skills that staff does not have and that allows us to have cost control and flexibility of expenses.

This slide represents our nonoperating expenses of insurance, rent depreciation, and donations. Our insurance, rent, and depreciation are increasing principally due to the depreciation of internally developed software tools and products that have been put together by the organization. Donations are lower than prior years as the allocation of in-kind contributions to affiliates is lower than 2024. Total donations to affiliates was \$3.6 million or 5 percent of our total expenses. As a reminder, our financial reports include expenses authorized by the Board of Directors in the annual operating budget.

Finally, we have our balance sheet. This is a standalone statement of financial position for AKC as of September 30, 2025. Assets total \$268 million with the largest asset on the balance sheet of investments of \$191 million. Investment performance for the ten months ended October 31, 2025 was positive at 14.5 percent. The benchmark set up based on the asset allocation policy was exceeded by 1.3 percent. The liability section of the balance sheet is comprised principally of retirement plan obligations; they total \$73 million. The net assets are restricted by the Board back in 2009 for the protection of retirement plan obligations, support of the affiliates, and to sustain future business operations. Thank you for your time. I appreciate your attention. We will have this posted to the Delegate Portal, and I'm here if you have any questions.

There was a vote on the proposed amendment to **Chapter 14, Section 2** of the *Field Trial Rules and Standard Procedure for Retrievers*. It explains that a disqualification by a judge in hunting tests or field trials will count as a disqualification across both sports.

Upon approval, corresponding revisions will be made to the following rulebooks:

- *Beagle Field Trial Rules for Brace, Small Pack and Small Pack Option – Chapter 5, Section 4*
- *Beagle Field Trial Rules for Large Pack Field Trials – Chapter 5, Section 4*
- *Pointing Breed Field Trial Rules – Chapter 14, Section 4B*
- *Spaniel Field Trial Rules – Chapter 5, Section 4*

This amendment was initiated by Staff, proposed by the Delegate Field Trial and Hunting Test Events Committee and brought forward with approval from the AKC Board of Directors.

There were no questions or discussion.

There was a two-thirds vote in the affirmative and the amendment was adopted.

Ashley Jacot, Vice President of Education, presented the Eddy Awards:
Good morning. We all recognize that exceptional dogs begin with dedicated, knowledgeable breeders. Education drives our sport forward and that commitment to learning and sharing expertise is what strengthens the future of purebred dogs. This year's AKC Eddy Award honorees represent the highest standard of breeder education, creating innovative programs, resources, and mentorship that uplift and empower the breeding community. Before presenting the awards, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to our committee members, Mari-Beth O'Neill and Guy Fisher, for their thoughtful review of the nominations and their careful selection of this year's recipients.

It is my honor to announce the 2025 AKC Eddy Award recipients:

- American Pomeranian Club – Delegate, Dr. Geno Sisneros
- American Rottweiler Club – Delegate, Peter G. Piusz
- American Whippet Club – Delegate, Karen Lee
- Icelandic Sheepdog Association of America – Delegate, Patricia Putman
- Irish Setter Club of America – Delegate, Karolynne M. McAteer
- Newfoundland Club of America – Delegate, Julie Poulin Siefert

Congratulations to these exceptional clubs for their dedication to advancing breeder education. Your efforts inspire all of us to pursue excellence and continue enriching our shared mission. If you'd please come up if you're here and get your certificate. Thank you very much.

Gail LaBerge, Delegate from the Atlanta Obedience Club, presented an update on the AKC PAC:

Another year getting to come up and talk to you guys. Happy holidays. It's nice to see all your faces this morning. We're going to do something different. First, the AKC PAC Board wants you to know that for us, PAC stands for Preserve, Advocate, and Care. Several people have talked about protection. That's our goal – to help Sheila Goffe's Government Relations Department protect our interest as it appears with laws, ordinances, etc. I want to thank Sheila. She put this information together for me to present to you. Since the beginning of the year, bills to regulate hobby breeders have been introduced in 20 states. AKC GR is working hard with a lot of success to push back on these bills, but we need your help. The AKC PAC is crucial because its funds give responsible breeders and advocates direct access to lawmakers who impact the future of dog breeding and help keep supportive lawmakers in office, that is so crucial when there are so many that are opposed to what we do. But we are being significantly outspent by groups seeking to shut down or regulate hobby breeders out of existence. Listen carefully – in 2024, we contributed \$67,800 to key election campaigns and we were very successful. We had over a 90 percent success rate, which is very unusual, but we are very picky about who we support, and they have to understand the AKC position on laws and ordinances. By comparison, Animal Wellness Action, which is a new group created by Wayne Pacelle, who used to be HSUS's head, spent more than \$1.35 million, so to say that they outspent us enormously is putting it mildly.

As an added bonus, this year, you have an opportunity with our sweepstakes. It is a getaway to New York City for the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. It includes four-night hotel stay, tickets to the dog show, plus other major social events, including the Museum of the Dog party and the Take the Lead Westminster party. . Individuals who donate \$100 will receive five tickets; those who donate \$25 will receive one. No purchase is necessary. Please visit the GR/PAC table outside to make a donation. Tickets will also be available across the street at the GR/ PAC booth. We will be drawing the winner on Sunday afternoon, so you need to get your tickets now. In addition, one of the things that we've talked about on the PAC Board is recurring donations, and Ted Phillips, our Treasurer, has encouraged us. You go online and set up how much you want your donation to be every month, you can put it on a credit card or have it come out of your bank account. As Chair of the PAC Board, I am always thinking of what we can do to encourage you guys to acknowledge how important this is. I challenge each of you in this room to do a minimum of a \$15 recurring donation. I challenge you to go back to your clubs and ask your membership to do the same. Spending \$15 isn't even half of what a dog show entry costs us today. Donating \$15 a month has to be worth your love for this sport and what Government Relations does to protect it.

Since we're all kind of competitive, at the March meeting during the PAC update, the Delegate with the most club members signed up for recurring donations will receive a great gift – I'm not telling you what it is. I want to hear from Katie, who handles the PAC administration for GR that she is getting a lot of people signed up for recurring donations. Thank you for listening and recognizing how important the PAC is to Government Relations. Remember, if you've got a lawmaker that you've worked with that's really good in your area on our issues, make a recommendation. The whole idea of raising this money is to give it away to protect us. Again, happy holidays. Safe travels. If you're entered across the street, I wish you luck. Thank you.

Eduardo Fugiwara, Delegate from the Two Cities Kennel Club spoke from the floor:
A lot of you that know me and know how much this cause is dear to me, the PAC is one of the best things we have. As was said, bringing in new lobbyists without giving them firepower makes their job much harder. In the spirit of helping raising funds to the PAC, the Irish Terrier Club of America agreed to do a fundraiser within our membership. And one of my favorite expressions in the American vernacular is put your money where your mouth is. To prove how much I really care about this, here's a donation for you.

Ms. LaBerge: Thank you very much, Eduardo. Now, this is a real challenge for you guys because he just made Diamond Level in giving.

The Chair informed the Delegates that the Annual Meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 10, 2026 at the DoubleTree Newark Airport Hotel in Newark, New Jersey. The March meeting will be the election of the Class of 2030. More detailed meeting information will be emailed to the Delegates as soon as it becomes available.

Lunch was served in Grand Ballroom C.

Delegates were not required to turn in badges. New badges will be printed at each meeting. Delegates were given an option to recycle the badge holders and lanyards.

The following Delegates spoke during New Business:

Patricia Cruz, Delegate for the Heart of the Plains Kennel Club, requested a one-year stay by the AKC Board on the increase in fees set to start January 1, 2026 and January 1, 2027. She asked the Delegates in favor of the proposed moratorium to stand in support.

Don James, Delegate from the Leonberger Club of America, who spoke as a member of the Parent Club Committee, announced the four recipients of the Pat Laurans Difference Maker Award for the quarter. The honorees were Chris Levy, Chris Sweetwood, Karolynne McAteer and Tom Sharp.

Hearing no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

(Proceedings concluded at 11:57 a.m. ET.)

The opinions expressed by the speakers may not necessarily reflect those of The American Kennel Club.