

AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB
Delegate Meeting
June 9, 2026

Gina M. DiNardo, President in the Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. ET.
(National Anthem played.)

Delegates were reminded to check in at the reception desk for attendance purposes. When Staff prints the purple-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; Shari Cathey, the Court Reporter.

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

Terry R. Bridges, Athens, IL, to represent Illinois Capitol Kennel Club
Dennis N. Corash, PhD, Penrose, CO, to represent Terry-All Kennel Club
Martha H. Goings, Huntington, IN, to represent Northeastern Indiana Kennel Club
Gregory Hastings, Hillsdale, WY, to represent Cheyenne Kennel Club
Sharon A. LeVan, Amelia, OH, to represent Clermont County Kennel Club
Joao Machado, The Woodlands, TX, to represent Oakland Dog Training Club
Christian A. Morales Reyes, Miami, FL, to represent Greater Miami Dog Club
Dr. Michelle R. Rowland, Washington, IL, to represent Illinois Valley Kennel Club of Peoria
Lori Sage, Beavercreek, OR, to represent Sherwood Dog Training Club
Lee Sohl, Kent, CT, to represent First Company Governor's Foot Guard Athletic Association
Sharon Tracy, Pocatello, ID, to represent Pocatello Kennel Club
Linda C. Wozniak, Chapel Hill, NC, to represent Durham Kennel Club
Sally N. Wynn, Murfreesboro, TN, to represent Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America
Michael F. Zywicki, New Glarus, WI, to represent American Cesky Terrier Fanciers Association

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

Debarah Billings, to represent Biewer Terrier Club of America
Dennis N. Corash, to represent Terry-All Kennel Club
Sally N. Wynn, to represent Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America
Michael F. Zywicki, to represent American Cesky Terrier Fanciers Association

The minutes of the March 10, 2026 Delegate Meeting were published in the online April 2026 issue of the *AKC Gazette*. The complete transcript was posted on the Delegate Portal on AKC's website. There were no corrections, and the minutes were adopted as published.

The **Rat Terrier Club of America** was duly elected as a member of The American Kennel Club.

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

Good morning. I want to begin by addressing the login issues that have created difficulty for many of us and for AKC customers over the past several days.

On May 8, 2026, AKC implemented mandatory two-factor authentication as part of our ongoing efforts to strengthen account security, protect customer information, and reduce fraud risks across AKC Marketplace and other AKC platforms. This initiative is part of a broader modernization effort tied to single sign-on technology and our long-term commitment to maintaining a secure and reliable digital experience.

The issues some customers experienced were not caused by two-factor authentication itself, but by a third-party vendor issue that inadvertently caused a limited number of accounts to become unvalidated. Once identified, our teams worked as quickly as possible alongside the vendor to restore the affected accounts. I am pleased to share that remediation is well underway, and the vast majority of issues have now been resolved.

I would also like to recognize our Customer Service team for their extraordinary efforts throughout this process. They remained fully engaged, responding to inquiries, monitoring website activity, and assisting customers every step of the way. We understand the frustration this situation caused, and we are committed to resolving all remaining issues while continuing to safeguard the security of our organization and our customers.

As we work to strengthen and improve the experience that we provide to our customers, we are equally committed to recognizing and supporting the people who are the foundation of our sport. That commitment is reflected in the continued success of the AKC National Owner-Handled Series.

What began as a pilot program in 2012 has grown into one of the most successful initiatives in our sport and is now offered at 92 percent of All-Breed shows nationwide. The program was built on a deep understanding of who owner-handlers are, what they contribute, and the dedication they bring to the sport every day.

Today, I am pleased to share that recognition is expanding even further.

Effective this May, owners of dogs that have earned NOHS Levels of Achievement certificates may add those accomplishments as official suffix titles to their dogs' AKC records. Available at the Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum levels, and grandfathered back to the inception of the program, these titles will appear on future pedigrees and registration certificates, creating a lasting tribute to the passion, perseverance, and sportsmanship of owner-handlers and

ensuring their achievements become a permanent part of their dogs' histories. Owners may apply through the AKC Title Application Portal using their dog's registration number.

We are also pleased to announce the host clubs for the 2026–2027 NOHS Regional events:

- Cornhusker Kennel Club - Nebraska
- Skokie Valley Kennel Club - Illinois
- Corpus Christi Kennel Club - Texas
- Birmingham Kennel Club - Alabama
- Los Encinos Kennel Club - California
- Plainfield Kennel Club - New Jersey
- Clackamas Kennel Club - Oregon
- Cook Inlet Kennel Club - Alaska
- South Shore Kennel Club - Massachusetts

Event dates and additional information are available on [akc.org](https://www.akc.org) under Sports & Events.

As we continue evaluating the future of our organization, we are taking a thoughtful and comprehensive look at many aspects of the AKC – from our internal processes and technology infrastructure, which Gina will discuss in greater detail during her report, to expanding international partnerships with kennel clubs around the world, and finding new ways to share the AKC story and connect with dog owners across the country.

To support that effort, we recently developed a new short “Welcome to AKC” video that showcases our passion for dogs, highlights the important work we do every day, and demonstrates how the AKC's impact extends far beyond registration and events. The video reflects the heart of our organization – our commitment to dogs, responsible ownership, education, canine health, and our mission to make the world a better place for dogs.

I am happy to share that the video will serve as a cornerstone of our new Welcome Email Series, launching in July 2026, helping introduce new audiences to the AKC in a more engaging and meaningful way. It's a reflection of who we are, what we stand for, and how we continue to evolve in our service to dogs and the people who love them.

(Video played.)

Dr. Davies: In conclusion, just a couple of personal remarks. Those who know me know that I, unlike some of our high-level government officials, seldom go off script. But here I go. We talk incessantly about the graying of the sport. I am perhaps a bit grayer than many of you. Along with that graying comes the realization that while the passion continues in the heart and in the mind, sometimes the other parts of us say that perhaps it's time to mitigate some of those activities. Speaking personally, it's a bitter pill to swallow, but at some point, it will and has come to each of us. It can take a toll on our psyche. It is not pleasant to experience. The fact remains it will happen and dealing with it will be difficult. To borrow from Ernest Hemingway's,

The Sun Also Rises, “You don’t get away from yourself by moving from one place to another.” What prompted these comments? Last Friday, we received the June edition of *Perspectives*. In it, there is a wonderful piece by Gini Denninger, which I encourage you all to read, digest, and read again. It certainly helped me in navigating this transition. I’m sure it will aid in your transition as well. Thank you, Gini.

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

Today, I’m pleased to share an important step forward for AKC as we begin our Business-Led Transformation initiative. This work represents an investment in AKC’s future and our ability to continue serving the sport, our breeders, clubs, exhibitors, dog owners, and the many communities connected to AKC for generations to come.

To support this effort, we’ve engaged BDO, a consulting firm with deep experience in helping organizations align strategy, operations, business processes, and technologies in a way that will support long-term success. We selected BDO not only because of their expertise, but because of their collaborative approach and their understanding that meaningful transformation must be driven by the business and shaped by the people who know it best, our employees and our Delegates.

I’m excited about the opportunity ahead because this is not simply a technology project, nor a change for the sake of change. It is a business-led effort focused on strengthening AKC as One AKC.

As you know, people interact with AKC in many different ways. Some engage through registration, others through events and competitions. Some come to us for education, commerce, performance sports, or customer support. All of these experiences are important, and they often happen independently.

Our goal is to create a more connected experience where our customers and constituents experience AKC as a single organization, regardless of how or where they engage with us. When we talk about “transformation,” we mean something much broader than improving one department, replacing one system, or launching a new project.

Transformation means stepping back and asking important questions, which I have tasked our staff with to be very honest about the problems that we have, the goals that we want to accomplish, and where we want to see AKC going in the future. We say things like:

- How do we serve our customers today?
- Where are our processes helping?
- Where are they creating friction for our constituents?
- How can technology better support the business instead of limiting it?
- How do we position AKC to remain trusted, relevant, and sustainable for the next 140 years?

Those are the questions that will guide our work. As we move forward, there are three objectives that will anchor our efforts. First, customer-centric experiences. We want our customers to experience AKC as one organization across registration, events, commerce, education, and support. Their journey should feel connected and intuitive, not shaped by organizational boundaries. Second, aligned and agile business processes. We want processes that are consistent where alignment matters, flexible where differences create value, and scalable enough to support continued growth and improvement. Third, sustained, flexible, and updated technology platforms. Technology should enable our business and our mission. It should be secure, adaptable, maintainable, and designed to evolve over time. This effort will involve many parts of AKC because no single team, no department, no person can do this work alone.

Over the coming months, AKC teams and BDO will work together through interviews, workshops, surveys, working sessions to better understand where we are today and where opportunities exist for the future. Equally important, this work remains grounded in our mission and our values that have guided AKC throughout history. We're not changing who we are. We're strengthening how we operate so we can continue fulfilling our mission more effectively with greater connection across the organization.

I believe this work is essential. AKC has a remarkable legacy and with that legacy comes great responsibility, not only to preserve what has made us so successful and so important, but also to prepare the organization for what comes next. This transformation is about building that future together.

I look forward to sharing updates as we progress. I'm very excited for what we will accomplish and thank you for your continued support. I plan to reach out to many Delegates for feedback, let them experience what is being proposed, and get expert advice from those who use our processes and procedures most.

I would now like to introduce Doug Ljungren, who will be speaking with you today about our exciting new international partnership initiatives.

Doug Ljungren, EVP Sports & Events, spoke as follows:

Early this year a Delegate forwarded to me an interesting Facebook post. In essence it said: "The world is changing. The world of dogs is changing. What is the AKC of the 20th century doing to adapt and thrive in the 21st century?"

What a thought-provoking question. I'm here to discuss what could be part of the answer in shaping AKC's long term future; our international partnership initiatives. This coming November 2026 will mark a historic milestone. For the first time in our history, AKC dog shows will be held outside of the United States. From Thursday, November 12 through Sunday, November 15, AKC shows will take place daily at the Expo Santa Fe Center in Mexico City. Held through a

licensing agreement with the Mexican Kennel Club (Federación Canófila Mexicana) which goes by the initials of FCM, the FCM Universal Championship show will closely reflect the AKC show experience as we know it. The shows will feature AKC-approved judges, be evaluated against AKC breed standards, and include four Junior Showmanship competitions. Onofrio will serve as the superintendent for these events.

Since there are many breeds in the world that are not fully recognized by AKC, and since FCM wants these shows to be welcoming to all dogs, there will be a concurrent special attraction show that is open to all breeds that are not eligible to participate in the AKC show. In addition, we are hoping to offer AKC Canine Good Citizen testing during the shows, helping expand awareness of this program and further promote the important role that dogs play as family companions.

FCM has started promoting the Universal Championship. They had a booth at the World Dog Show in Italy last week. They have a social media team that has been hard at work, and I'd like to share with you a draft video that they have developed.

(Video played.)

Our global engagement extends beyond Mexico. We have signed Mutual Cooperation Agreements with the Kennel Club of Brazil, the Korean Kennel Federation, and the New Zealand Kennel Club. These agreements are public statements of our shared commitment to advancing the sport of dogs and supporting the long-term future of purebred dogs worldwide.

Together, we are working to expand canine events and registrations, strengthen education and breeder support, promote responsible dog ownership and breeding, and continue highlighting the important role that dogs play as family companions.

We have also held productive discussions with the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC). Earlier this year, AKC began recognizing some CKC titles on AKC pedigrees, an important step that benefits exhibitors and breeders in both organizations.

Our collaboration has continued to grow in other areas as well. Last year, the CKC expressed interest in the AKC Fetch program, and we shared with them our regulations. This July 2026, the CKC will launch their own Fetch program, modeled after the AKC program. AKC Fetch judges are trained online through coursework in Canine College. CKC has chosen to utilize AKC's Canine College for training their Fetch judges, rather than building their own system.

The initiative with Mexico has been more than two years in the making. The path getting there has not been a straight line. When you're building something new, you must be able to accept the uncertainty that goes with it. It requires patience, flexibility, trust, and a willingness to listen and understand our international partners. These relationships take time, but they create meaningful opportunities for collaboration and growth. We are currently in discussions with

several other organizations around the world, though many of these conversations are still in the early stages.

Collectively, these efforts send a message that AKC is opening its doors to wider collaboration, welcoming more people and more dogs into our community.

As we've engaged more deeply with our international partners, we've learned some important things:

- The AKC brand is deeply respected around the world.
- AKC Judges are viewed as among the most knowledgeable anywhere.
- Kennel clubs genuinely want to engage with us to share their challenges.
- Perhaps the most concerning, in the broadest picture, is that there's a decline in purebred dog registrations globally. Now if you just think about that for a minute. What's going on here? Are purebred dogs falling out of favor? I don't think so. These are treasures that have been passed down to us from generations before. We need to step up. I go back to Mari-Beth's Forum presentation. Of all the dogs in AKC litters, 45 percent are registered. If we just get to 50 percent, that would be a huge step forward. We need to advocate better for purebred dogs.
- Participation in dog shows is declining worldwide.
- New dog owners want activities that are fun, quick to learn, and not overly time consuming. Now in a lot of our Delegate committees, we dismiss that point of view. However, that's what the dog world is moving toward, and we have to understand that and embrace it and make it ours.
- Many kennel clubs are seeking to diversify their activities that they can provide.
- Due to the many new AKC sport activities that have been launched in recent years, AKC offers the most diversified canine sports portfolio in the world.
- Other kennel clubs are eager to learn from AKC's experience. I can assure you we can learn from them.

The goals of our international partnership initiative could have a major impact on AKC's future. These goals are:

- Explore opportunities to expand and enhance canine events.
- Promote registration of purebred dogs to expand breeding opportunities.
- Share knowledge and promote the education of judges, exhibitors, event officials, and breeders.
- Promote dogs as family companions through Canine Good Citizen programs.
- Collaborate on animal rights issues and canine health issues to align on facts.

Through these activities, we increase our knowledge, deepen our perspective, enhance the AKC brand, and strengthen the global dog community through cooperation and sharing.

While these efforts are creating new opportunities, they also come with new challenges. We believe that the long-term potential is meaningful and well worth exploring. It is important not to look at these initiatives as what they could mean for AKC in the short term. Instead, we should think about what the AKC and the broader world of dog and dog sports could look like in 20 years.

I hope this has provided some greater insight into our international partnership initiatives and how we view these efforts within the broader context of exploring opportunities that may shape and strengthen our future.

I will end where I began. The world is changing. The world of dogs is changing. As a 142-year-old organization, we are faced with a challenge of change – the comfort of doing business as usual versus the willingness to consider alternative approaches to accomplish our mission.

Each of us needs to ask ourselves in our own way, within our clubs, within our Delegate committees, what must we do to evolve and thrive in the 21st century? Our future will depend on it. Thank you.

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

Good morning. Again, as always, thank you for attending, and we appreciate your support. Before I begin the presentation of our 2026 first quarter results, I'd like to remind everyone that these are preliminary and unaudited. Today's presentation highlights the key operating trends we're seeing in the first quarter, including continued pressure on registration revenues, our efforts at disciplined expense management, and the strength of the balance sheet as we navigate a softer revenue environment. Here's a high-level view of the interim financial results and key operating metrics for the first quarter ended March 31, 2026.

Total operating revenue was \$21.9 million, or 6 percent lower than the same quarter in 2025. Total operating expense was \$22.7 million, or 7 percent lower than the same quarter in 2025. Before we use our investment spend rate that is predetermined at the beginning of the year, Q1 2026 results reflect an operating loss of \$796,000 versus an operating loss in the same period of 2025, that totaled \$1 million. After we apply the investment spend rate in 2026, the net result was a loss of \$86,000. The key takeaway, before we get into more details, is that revenue remains under pressure, but the expense discipline and targeted investment support improve the net result year over year.

On this slide, please note the three primary groups of operating revenues. Registration and event fees totaled \$14.7 million in the first quarter of 2026, which is 4 percent, or \$595,000 lower than the previous first quarter period. However, it is still our largest source of revenue. Advertising, sponsorship, and royalties totaled \$3.8 million. They were down about 16 percent, or \$713,000. Products and service sales totaled \$3.5 million, down about 6 percent, or

\$203,000. All three revenue groups are clearly softer year over year, with registrations remaining the largest driver of underperformance.

This slide provides a breakdown of the revenue of the registration dollars into dog and litter components. Dog registration totaled \$5.3 million, which is a decline of 7 percent, or \$378,000, and litter registration totaled \$2.6 million, which is a decline of 12 percent, or \$360,000. Looking at the unit activity, we see that litter registrations and dog registrations equally declined by 11 percent in their respective categories, with litters landing at 49,697 and dog registrations at 111,864. At the same time, let's remember that our online activity ranges as high as 87 percent of all registrations, which is an important metric for AKC. Related to registration, we have our pedigree sales coming in for the first quarter at \$1.1 million, which is a 22 percent decline, or \$300,000, versus the prior year's quarter. Other registration-related fees totaled \$1.2 million, compared with \$1.3 million in the prior year. These lines follow the underlying registration volume, so lower dog and litter activity continues to have a ripple effect across several categories.

Here's a breakdown of the major sport category revenues. Conformation revenue increased by 19 percent to \$1.5 million; Companion events increased by 8 percent to \$1.9 million, and Performance events increased by 19 percent to \$813,000. The only underperformer in this area was the Family Dog program, which was lowered by 11 percent at \$846,000, as compared to \$946,000 in the prior year's period. Here's the activity of entries and events. We see the slide that you've heard about regarding entries, where they're down 3 percent to 783,000. The number of events, however, has increased to a little over 6,000, so that increases three percent more than the prior year period. Patterns suggest that event demand remains stable, but participation per event is somewhat softer.

Looking at another key area of revenue, sponsorships, advertising, and royalties. Our sponsorship revenue totaled \$2.5 million and is down by about 11 percent from the prior year. Advertising revenue totaled \$763,000, and this is where we see the largest hit in this area, where it's 31 percent lower. It remains the most significant pressure point in this category and continues to move with registration-related activity at a faster clip than actual registration efforts. Royalties were down by 11 percent, as compared to the prior year.

Let's look at operating expenses. As you may remember from the first slide, and these will be posted on the Delegate Portal for you, total operating expenses were \$22.7 million in the first quarter. Of that, \$12 million includes staff salaries, travel, all those good things we need to move people around. This is a 5 percent decrease from \$12.7 million last year. Professional fees were also down. They totaled \$3.9 million, which was \$798,000, or 17 percent lower than 2025, and fulfillment costs were comparable. The continued focus on cost control is an important effort in how we're managing through the current environment without compromising our core operations.

This slide shows our expenses related to insurance, rent, depreciation. They're essentially \$2.6 million, so they're comparable with last year, a little bit lower because of some efforts around reevaluating how we look at some of our insurance costs while never compromising and also realizing some of the depreciation efforts of some of our long-term software initiatives that have become fully depreciated. Donations totaled about \$1.1 million versus \$1.3 million. Remember that there is an in-kind piece of donation that goes on. We have cash donations, which are supported by the investment portfolio, and on the in-kind piece, we've done some reevaluation to sort out how best to support our affiliates. That's where you see the slight decrease.

Finally, our balance sheet. The statement of financial position is a strategic asset as we move the organization forward through the efforts that Gina discussed. Total assets were approximately \$260 million, with investments of \$189 million representing the largest asset class. Now, if we can pause for a minute and recall that the market was very ugly on March 31, and since then we've seen a very nice recovery on our investments. We're pleased about that. The liability section continues to be comprised of retirement plan and lease obligations, and obviously these long-term obligations represent an important factor in our future planning.

Thank you, I appreciate your time. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, and we'll have the presentation on the Delegate Portal in a few days. Thank you.

There was a vote on the amendment to **Chapter 3, Section 12** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Classifications*, which codifies the clarification to the rule adopted by the Board at its May 2025 meeting that a competitive non-regular class may not be offered by an event committee for which castration or spaying is a condition of the class.

This amendment was proposed by Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee and brought forward with the approval of the Board of Directors.

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

The Chair called on the Executive Secretary to read the proposed amendment to **Article XIV, Section 1**, of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club*.

Ms. Goffe: This amendment is the **Article XIV, Section 1**, of the *Charter and Bylaws of The American Kennel Club*, which adds verbiage to address that a fee is required to be submitted to the event-giving club when a complaint is filed at an AKC event.

The amendment was proposed by the Delegate Bylaws Committee and disapproved by the AKC Board at the February 2026 meeting.

Pursuant to Article XX, Section 3 of the AKC Bylaws, the Delegate Bylaws Committee demanded that it be brought forward to the Delegates.

It will be published in two issues of the *AKC Gazette*, and you will be asked to vote on it at the September 2026 meeting. The full text is on the worksheet previously emailed.

There were no questions or discussion.

Ms. DiNardo informed the Delegates that the proposed rule change to **Chapter 11, Section 8**, and **Chapter 11, Section 8-D** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows* will be read and voted as one amendment.

The Chair called on the Executive Secretary to read the proposed amendment to **Chapter 11, Section 8** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dogs Affecting Eligibility*.

Ms. Goffe: This amendment is to **Chapter 11, Section 8** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dogs Affecting Eligibility*, which inserts clarification and identifying language, revises format and relocates text involving change of appearance to Chapter 11, Section 8-D.

The amendment was proposed by the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee and brought forward with the approval of the AKC Board of Directors.

It will be published in two issues of the *AKC Gazette*, and you will be asked to vote on it at the September 2026 meeting. The full text is on the worksheet previously emailed.

There were no questions or discussion.

The Chair called on the Executive Secretary to read the proposed amendment, **Chapter 11, Section 8-D** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dogs Affecting Eligibility*.

Ms. Goffe: This amendment is to **Chapter 11, Section 8-D** of the *Rules Applying to Dog Shows – Dog Show Entries, Conditions of Dogs Affecting Eligibility*, which inserts all text from Chapter 11, involving change of appearance, rearranges paragraph order to put like items together, and adds cropping of ears and docking of tail for clarity.

This amendment was proposed by the Delegate Dog Show Rules Committee and brought forward with the approval of the AKC Board of Directors.

It will be published in two issues of the *AKC Gazette*, and you will be asked to vote on it at the September 2026 meeting. The full text is on the worksheet previously emailed.

There were no questions or discussion.

The Chair called on Bill Ellis, Senior Director of Broadcasting, for a presentation on Reimagining Dog Sports for Television and Beyond, who spoke as follows:

Good morning. This feels even more appropriate following Doug and talking about the evolution of our dog sports. Last year I came up here and spoke about the reach that we have through our production and television broadcasts on national television, on ABC and ESPN, and also our weekly syndicated show. What I want to talk to you about today is taking a step back and looking closer at the events and how we reimagine these for television. It's no secret that the television audience evolves very, very quickly. You could still get a DVD in the mail from Netflix three years ago and send it back to them. It changes very, very quickly. Our productions need to change and evolve at that same rate. It's not enough to just cover competition. Viewers expect stories, personalities. They need all of the context that goes around the competition that they are watching. The challenge that we are continually faced with is not simply producing an event, whether it's a Conformation dog show, an Agility trial, Diving Dogs, et cetera, but rather creating a whole experience for the audience. I think one of the best examples that we can look to is the AKC National Championship dog show. We're all familiar with the great event in Orlando at the end of the year. We produce it live for everyone to enjoy in the moment digitally. Then the show is turned around, produced very quickly for a television special to air on the ABC television network. This past December was the sixth year in a row that the show premiered on ABC. Like we do every year, we do a lot of research, we do a lot of analysis, and we worked very closely with our partners at ABC to adjust the premier of that show to 12:00 p.m. Eastern as opposed to mid-afternoon because we felt strongly that it would provide us with a much more robust audience. ABC agreed, and thankfully that came to fruition. It was the best result that we have had with that show on ABC, reaching millions of people. I think the best takeaway and talking point that all of you can go out and spread the word about is that this show was the number one rated show on television, on any channel, between 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. that day, that was not the NFL. We will take that company every day and twice on Sundays.

Anytime we produce our shows, it's really about meeting these audiences where they are. They consume content in so many different ways. We can't assume that they're consuming this content for the first time on television. Maybe it's digitally, maybe it's in person at an event. These productions need to evolve through enhanced storytelling, fan engagement, production quality, all of the things that keep an audience engaged. It's not about making changes to any of the sports but rather changing the way that audiences experience them. A big part of the way that we do that is through the power of storytelling, something that we look to in not only the broadcast but working closely with our digital team, social media team and the editorial

team so that we can really highlight these great stories for the viewers. It might be about a competitor and their dog. It might be about a Junior Handler showcasing the next generation of our sports. It might be about a working dog outside the ring as a therapy dog. It's those stories that really enhance the production and in turn, amplify the experience for the audience.

In addition to stories, it's about great cinematic camera work. Elevating it through slow motion, enhanced data and graphics. We have spent more than the last year developing how we show data, metrics, statistics through television. Audiences expect those from sporting events, right? We all have seen so many examples of this. We are starting to bring that to life this year. What was the speed of that dog as they went through an Agility course? How high did they jump off that dock? What was the force of that dog coming off the dock when they were competing in Diving Dogs? All of those different elements combined to create this modern sports presentation. One of the ways that this has really come to life recently is just a couple of days ago. We were in Philadelphia at the Navy Yard on their Marine Parade Grounds. We took over this incredible field, and we hosted the American Kennel Club Celebrates USA 250. Three days, three events that were all produced for ESPN that will premier later this summer, all under the same theme of celebrating America's 250th anniversary.

In continuing this kind of innovation and elevating of the sports, we had Diving Dogs on Friday, then turning our attention to Agility for Saturday and Sunday. I want to highlight the Sunday Agility event, the Agility Team Challenge. This is a brand-new event, first-of-its-kind team event through AKC Agility. We worked very closely with the AKC Agility staff, as well as getting feedback from Agility competitors because we really sought to create an event that would be new, not only for television audiences, but new for those competitors and a way for them to showcase their dogs in a different and unique way. The first thing we did was identify six team captains, not only people that compete at the highest levels of the sport, but people that we identified as being great ambassadors for this new event. From there, we assigned additional team members. We ended up with six teams. They represented six different cities from across the country in keeping with this patriotic USA 250 theme. They competed on a larger Agility ring in two early rounds. There were some nuances to those courses that you wouldn't find at a typical AKC Agility trial. Based on those results, they were seeded and put into a bracket. Once again, sports audiences are pretty familiar with what a bracket format looks like. We turned that ring into two. We split it right down the middle, and teams competed head-to-head in three different knockout rounds. So, a completely different competition experience, a completely different visual experience, not only for those there, but for the television audience as well. We were thrilled with how it went, but the most impactful takeaway was how excited and how much these teams really embraced this new format. They were so excited to get to compete with their dogs in a different way and have this incredible camaraderie among their teammates in a sport that is traditionally just an individual sport.

As we were getting ready for this weekend and we knew that we were going to have Agility

on one side of the field and Diving Dogs on the other side of the field, we realized that we needed to create a centralized hub, if you will, for not only competitors, but the fans and spectators that were going to be there. I would like to introduce you to the AKC Doghouse. The goal with the AKC Doghouse was to create a more elevated and premium experience. This is an image from this past weekend. The AKC Doghouse was built in the middle of the field. It's open air. It was really kind of the anchor for not only the field, but all of these events as well. There was a Kid Zone. There was an AKC Meet the Breeds® activation. We had about 10 to 12 breeds each day for the public to come and interact with. There was AKC branding throughout, which included QR codes that led people back to learn more about all of the work that we do at the American Kennel Club. This also provided a hub for all of the brands and sponsors that interact with these shows and, you know, quite frankly, allow us to continue to do them and give them that touch point with audiences. We're very happy with how it turned out and equally excited that it's something that we will be able to continue to roll out and customize at future events. I won't leave you without a video. Gina showed a video. Doug had a video. The video guy has to have a video. I will let you enjoy this short video, which highlights some of the work that the team has done over the last 18 months to put these shows together. (Video played.)

Mr. Ellis: As we look ahead, I'll leave you with a couple of points. One, the evolution of the American Kennel Club on television, specifically through this partnership with ESPN and ABC is very intentional and very thoughtful and does not happen by accident. We are a small but mighty team. We have great production partners. We work very, very hard to bring these events to life and showcase them on ESPN, who are incredibly supportive of the work that we do. There is always a focus on promoting not only the actual event that you're watching, but the AKC mission and messaging and introducing audiences to the ways that they can get involved through the AKC. My hope is always that folks will watch it and go, "Wow, I didn't know that I could do that with my dog." I want to learn more. If you're free this weekend, you have two opportunities to watch shows that were produced earlier this year, both on ESPN2. We just confirmed yesterday afternoon that there will be an encore broadcast of the National Agility Championship on Saturday at 12:00 p.m. ET and the Diving Dogs Premier Cup on Sunday at 2:00 p.m. ET. Hopefully everyone will get a chance to watch, and even more importantly, you'll spread the word. Thank you.

Ms. DiNardo: This department has done exceptional work by partnering with the most important sports network in the world and making AKC events relatable to millions of people, encouraging them to join our AKC family. We are fortunate to have such an amazing team.

The Chair called on Mari-Beth O'Neill, VP of Sports Services, for a presentation on behalf of AKC and the Junior Task Force Committee, in support of 4-H Canine Clubs, who spoke as follows:

Good morning again. Today I'd like to recognize two clubs that have established Junior clubs under the umbrella of their All-Breed clubs, based on their relationships and involvement with the local 4-H club. They are Finger Lakes Kennel Club and Greater Clark County Kennel Club.

Finger Lakes Kennel Club member involvement with the Junior Tailwaggers goes back at least 45 years. Over the years, various members have volunteered as instructors, judges, mentors, and more. Part of this initially was that all the local dog groups used the same location to hold training classes, sharing space equaled sharing time, equipment, and resources. Currently, Finger Lakes Kennel Club supports the 4-H club by loaning equipment for their trials, sponsoring awards, and helping promote the club. 4-H members can attend their drop-in handling classes at no charge.

When AKC formalized the Junior Liaison position, Melissa LoPinto became Finger Lakes Kennel Club's point person. She and Jacob Ragusa spearheaded the Finger Lakes Kennel Club establishment of a Junior Kennel Club under the umbrella of Finger Lakes Kennel Club. The ten members of the Finger Lakes Kennel Club are also Junior members of the Finger Lakes Kennel Club. They ran the Plan B match this spring and are planning next spring's event already. They volunteer as jump setters, leash runners, and general gofers at Agility trials. Some of the older Juniors are starting to learn how to steward in Conformation. They have helped at shows, matches, Earth Dog, Fast CAT®, and are also active in 4-H beyond dog events. Over the years, Tompkins County 4-H Junior Tailwaggers members have joined other 4-H clubs, and their artwork, scientific presentations, baked goods, and more have been recognized as the Tompkins County and New York State Fairs.

The Finger Lakes Kennel Club membership recognizes the importance of 4-H as a resource for dog sports, both for the AKC as well as other organizations. We are proud of our Junior members and the Junior Kennel Club and are excited for the future of all. Thank you to Amanda Pough, President of Finger Lakes Kennel Club, and alumna of the Tompkins County 4-H Junior Tailwaggers. Margaret Pough, would you please come and accept this certificate for the club?

(Certificate presented.)

Ms. O'Neill: Seeing as how Margaret's daughter, Amanda, is the current club president, this is an appropriate multi-generation honor.

Greater Clark County Kennel Club has supported the 4-H club in Clark County, Washington for many years through trophy sponsorship, donating time for training, judging matches and fairs, and hosting a Meet the Breeds event at the local fair. The percent of 4-H's coming into AKC events was low, so the Greater Clark County Kennel Club AKC Junior Club was established to help streamline more connections to getting more 4-H's into AKC events. The goal was not to just support Junior Showmanship, but to develop strong leaders in all venues of AKC. Greater Clark County Kennel Club established a Junior club under its umbrella, led by Emily Fish. The

members of this group have assisted in coordinating with the club, offering Junior Showcase events, coordinating a match, and they are planning a Scent Work trial the weekend of June 27-28, 2026. Delegates Karen Burgess and Don James are two members of Greater Clark County Kennel Club. (Certificate presented.)

Thank you to both of these clubs for establishing these Junior clubs to become involved in the running and coordinating of multiple AKC events and learning leadership skills.

The Chair called on the Executive Secretary to read the list of vacancies for the Delegate Standing Committees that are to be filled in September.

Ms. Goffe: These are the vacancies on Delegate Standing Committees that are to be filled at the September 2026 Delegate meeting:

All-Breed Clubs Committee – 3 three-year terms.

Bylaws Committee – 4 three-year terms.

Canine Health Committee – 4 three-year terms.

Companion Events Committee – 3 three-year terms.

Delegate Advocacy and Advancement Committee – 3 three-year terms.

Dog Show Rules Committee – 3 three-year terms; 2 one-year terms.

Field Trial and Hunting Test Events Committee – 4 three-year terms.

Herding, Earth, Dog, Coursing and Scent Work Events Committee – 3 three-year terms.

Parent Clubs Committee – 3 three-year terms; 1 one-year term.

Perspectives Editorial Staff – 6 two-year terms; 3 one-year terms.

Ms. DiNardo announced that the Delegates will be emailed self-nomination forms by the end of June. The self-nomination form must be returned to the Executive Secretary by Monday, July 20, 2026.

Questions on procedures to be followed should be directed to the Executive Secretary. Delegates may only self-nominate for one committee, except that a member of the *Perspectives* Editorial Staff may also serve on another standing committee.

In August, the Delegates will be emailed the nominees for each committee and their qualification statements with the September meeting notification.

The Chair called on Bob Rynkiewicz, Delegate from the Eastern German Shorthaired Pointer Club, to provide an update on AKC PAC, who spoke as follows:

Good morning, all. As you know, this is an election year. I'd like to start off by thanking Government Relations for the work that they're doing to keep us informed, especially on topics such as the Farm Bill. I also want to personally thank each and every one of you, if you've contacted your Senators or Representatives. You can still reach out to them. They are going to be voting by the end of this month. We need to make the impact. We need to have this bill

passed without all the extra flim-flam stuff that goes along with it. You have groups that are trying to push through, as I would say, nonsense amendments. We need to get out there. You probably have gotten a memo from Government Relations with a form letter that also has contact information for your Senators. Please take that form letter and customize it. Tell the folks what you do, how you're involved with dogs, and how important it is.

Regarding the PAC, there's a table outside. We're looking to raise money. One thing that many of you probably don't know is that 100 percent of the contributions you make go to support your legislators, whether at the federal, state, or local level, pertaining to dog legislation. Many times, you go to different organizations, and they say, "Make a contribution: \$12 a month, \$19 a month." Of that, maybe a dollar goes to the real cause. In your case here, 100 percent goes. Also, this year, the PAC is offering a week-long trip.

Ms. Goffe: This is our trip to the beach in Costa Rica.

Mr. Rynkiewicz: Two bedrooms, two baths, living room, and it overlooks the ocean. Tickets are \$25 each, five for \$100. I'm willing to take \$500 bills from you. All right, thank you very much, and we'll see you outside at the donation booth.

The Chair informed the Delegates that the Tuesday, September 15, 2026 Delegate Meeting will be held at the Doubletree Newark Airport Hotel. More detailed information will be emailed as soon as it becomes available.

Lunch was served following the meeting's conclusion on the Terrace.

Delegates were not required to return the 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:

Helen Prince, Delegate from the Scottish Terrier Club of America, spoke on behalf of the Parent Clubs Committee, who presented the Pat Laurans Difference Maker Award for the quarter. The three honorees were Gayle Bontecou, Thomas H. Bradley III and Harry Miller.

Dr. Charles Garvin, Delegate from the Dalmatian Club of America, recognized an upcoming milestone, the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, and noted that it has been one year since Gina DiNardo first presided over the Delegate meeting. He described the past year a "new era" for the AKC, marked by improved attitude, morale, efficiency, and effectiveness across the organization. He referenced support from the AKC Board of Directors for Gina DiNardo as President and encouraged the Delegate Body to formally demonstrate support and appreciation for her leadership.
(Standing ovation.)

Eduardo Fugiwara, Delegate from the Two Cities Kennel Club, emphasized the importance of watching the two AKC Sports TV programs on ESPN this weekend. He encouraged the Delegates to not only watch themselves, but to also invite club members, families, and friends to tune in, as higher viewership can lead to more rebroadcasts and attract sponsors. He expressed gratitude to the Broadcasting department and current sponsors for their efforts.

Monica Stoner, Delegate from the Saluki Club of America, spoke as the Editor of *Perspectives*, sharing that the next issue will focus on Juniors and Junior articles. She asked the Delegates to send pictures of kids and their dogs outside the show ring. Monica assured potential contributors that even if they felt they couldn't write well, they could submit their ideas for refinement.

Neal Goodwin, Delegate from the Flat-Coated Retriever Society of America, personally addressed the decline in entries at Conformation events and the importance of recognition for dogs through group placements. He pointed out that the increase in recognized breeds from 126 in 1983 to 205 today has lowered the chances of any breed receiving a placement from 22 percent to less than 14 percent, reducing the incentive for exhibitors to participate. Neal proposed that groups with more than 30 breeds should have six placements, while those with fewer than 30 should have five, adding a total of 12 placements per show and potentially increasing exhibitor participation and entry fees.

Hearing no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

(One sharp rap of the gavel.)

(Proceedings concluded at 12:00 p.m. ET.)

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