

The Vlcak Howl

Quarterly News Letter for the Czechoslovakian Vlcak Club of America **February, 2012**

Message from the President

Well, this got out a little later than I expected! January was full of all kinds of surprises at Galomy Oak Kennel, so February it is...

Welcome to 2012! We have an exciting year ahead of us! 2011 was a year full of progress for the club, here are a few highlights:

- Adoption of Club Bylaws, Code of Ethics and Breed Standard
- Recognition of our club as a national breed club by the AKC
- Correct realignment of our breed from the Herding Group in to the Working Group
- Guidelines for the participation of the Vlcak with the Canine Health Information Center (CHIC) were established

Our membership, along with the breed's progress and participation in the "dog world" of the United States continues to progress. As a club, we have welcomed many new dogs this past year, as well as been involved with activities such as nosework, herding, tracking, trailing, service work, obedience, rally obedience, conformation showing...not too shabby a start! 2012 is sure to be equally as productive!

We look forward to welcoming you to our annual meeting in Virginia this summer! Only good times can be expected from a group of Vlcak owners gathering together!

Happy New Year!
Marcy Goldstone
President

Update on Club Status

Our Board has been working behind the scenes on getting the proper "workings" for our club established. Treasurer Josh Patterson has applied with the IRS to make our club "legally official". Once we have the correct numbers, accounts, etc., we will be able to accept dues, donations and other monies necessary to grow our club. Our application process will cost somewhere in the range of \$300. We may ask for donations or the trust of some of our members to donate to getting our club off the ground to cover this \$300.

In the meantime, we would like to begin officially accepting membership applications, with dues to be paid later this year. Membership applications may be sent to Secretary Sean Hodgins via electronic mail or via regular mail. We ask, for this year only, that your membership application be sent before April 1st, 2012. A membership form has been attached at the end of this form. Please fill it out and send it to the listed address.

We are in regular communication with AKC, and will be updating them of our club's progress in our documentation towards official breed recognition. Photos of you and your dog (with registered name) at different events would be greatly appreciated, so we can begin keeping a "log" of all that we do. Thanks for being a part of all that we are accomplishing!

From Herding to Working

As mentioned in the President's message, AKC has moved our breed from the Herding Group to the Working Group. This move was based largely on the fact that our breed was never intended for herding, and also a consensus amongst owners, breeders and breed experts, both in the United States and Europe, that our breed would be better served by being recognized as a breed that works – generally in the areas of trailing/tracking, obedience, protection and also having the endurance to accomplish these tasks for many hours at a time. In Europe, with the FCI, the Vlcak is still classified as a Herding breed. This is due to the fact that there is no Working Group in the FCI, and with their German Shepherd Dog heritage, the Herding group was "the next best fit".

Our breed is also known for its versatility; it is certainly not limited by any labels. The AKC is considering a system wide "realignment", to be voted on in March, which would split the existing seven groups into eleven groups. If this proposal is passed, we have requested as a club to be placed in the "Working Utility" group. This group recognizes dogs that are versatile in their purposes.

If you have registered your Vlcak with the AKC Foundation Stock Service in the past, you may have noticed that you recently received a new recording certificate and/or pedigree. If you looked closely, you may have also noticed that your dog's registration number changed to reflect the breed's movement from the Herding to the Working group. It should look something like WS***** . For the time being, please hold onto your old certificate, as a record. Use your new number for anything official.

Open Shows – the new frontier

AKC has just announced a pilot program that will allow our dogs to compete in conformation shows through the AKC. This program is called "Open Shows". With these shows, dogs may compete towards a "Certificate of Merit", with a point system similar to regular AKC shows. Once a dog earns it's Certificate of Merit, it will have a "CM" as a suffix on its name. These shows are different than regular AKC shows, and do not count towards points for a championship.

Open shows are open to all breeds (no championed dogs for recognized breeds, however), including FSS breeds! They are supposed to be a bit more informal, and allow novice handlers, clubs and new judges to become familiar with the procedures for showing dogs. No professional handlers are allowed, and most shows will offer day-of-show entries.

Breeds must have reached "Miscellaneous" status before parent/breed clubs can sponsor a show, so we aren't quite to that point yet. But in the coming years, be on the lookout for open shows sponsored by other groups to gain some ring experience, and support the fancy. Many of the miscellaneous groups

will be sponsoring open shows that are just open to Miscellaneous and FSS breeds – a great opportunity to see many of the rare breeds all in one place!

Focus on Health

In the US, we currently have had 5 litters born. As the breed becomes more widely known, more people will take on the breeding of our precious dogs. In 2011, we established the criteria for health testing to become established with the CHIC (Canine Health Information Center) database. Not only will this database lay the foundation for stronger, healthier dogs in the future, but it will also help us to monitor health trends and collect data for the health of our dogs in the future.

In our Code of Ethics, it is required that you do the tests and obtain a CHIC number before breeding. After April 1, 2012 it will be a requirement that breeders advertising their kennel on our club website have a CHIC number, with all required tests and satisfactory results for the parents of any litter bred and advertised through our website, or any other means. If the breeder fails to follow this requirement, they may face suspension from using the club website for advertising purposes. Some exceptions may be made for dogs born in 2006 or before for elbow dysplasia (older dogs who weren't tested, because elbow dysplasia testing wasn't common, that may be at risk under anesthesia). On a case by case basis, we may also consider some exceptions for foreign studs. We require that only healthy dogs be used for breeding, or in the case of degenerative myelopathy or pituitary dwarfism, carriers or at-risk dogs must only be paired with non-carriers. The tests required for CHIC may change in the future, as more diseases are diagnosed, or as new health tests become available. Currently, the tests required before breeding are:

Hip Dysplasia – OFFA, PennHip or acceptable foreign registry
Elbow Dysplasia – OFFA
Degenerative Myelopathy – OFFA
Eye Clearance – CERF
Submission of DNA sample to the CHIC DNA Repository – CHIC

Other recommended tests are:
Pituitary Dwarfism – University of Utrecht
Cardiac – OFFA
Thyroid – OFFA

Even if you do not plan to breed, it is certainly worth your time to health test your dog, so you can be aware of underlying issues that may cause problems down the road (or give you relief if your dog doesn't have them!), and also to help further the collective knowledge of our breed. Many of our imported foundation dogs from Europe come from an intense background of health screening, as well as temperament and conformation screening. As the founders for our breed in the United States, we should continue the European legacy so that our breed as we know it can be enjoyed for many generations and maintain its high quality!

For more information, please refer to the CHIC website:
<http://www.caninehealthinfo.org/brdreqs.html?breed=CW>

Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting ~ Labor Day Weekend, August 31, 2012 – September 2, 2012

We are still in the planning stages but hope to offer several types of events, including:

Friday Evening – President's House, Gloucester, Virginia

Meet-and-Greet bonfire and party

*Informal fun, European style – just remember we have to be up early the next day!

Saturday Morning – Gloucester Kennel Club, Gloucester, Virginia

Educational Conformation Show (including altered classes for spayed/neutered dogs)

Seminar on health, structure and working temperament within the breed

With enough early commitment, we are hopeful that we can bring in an FCI judge from Europe to give us written critiques of each dog and increase our knowledge of the breed

Saturday Afternoon/Evening – Whitcomb Lodge, Beaverdam Park, Gloucester, Virginia

Annual Meeting and Picnic

* Come enjoy a short retreat into wilderness with other Vlcak owners to enjoy some good food and good times, while moving our breed forward! Enjoy a large freshwater lake, park, trails, canoe rentals and plenty of open space. Be sure to bring a long training line so the dogs can have their fun too!

Sunday Morning - Yorktown Battlefields National Park

Seminar on training for the tracking and trailing phase of a breed working test with local instructors.

*Learn the basics for starting tracking and trailing in the fields where America was born, and the British surrendered. We will also briefly discuss the obedience and endurance portions of a future breed working test. Rain or shine – our dogs are weatherproof!

Sunday Afternoon – Historical Yorktown, Virginia

Farewell Lunch, followed by a dog walk through historical Yorktown (beach and historical sections)

*Finish the weekend up with a tasty pub-style picnic lunch on a grassy knoll alongside the beach. Join us afterwards for a farewell walk through historical Yorktown with the dogs (we are sure to garner some strange looks!)

More information should be available in the next newsletter, including accommodations! Mark your calendars – we look forward to seeing you and your dog!

Final Note...

Be sure to catch up with us on Facebook – lots of lively discussion, Vlcak stories and pictures, and the latest club information!

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/113104538708230/>