



# BREED COLUMNS

## SPORTING GROUP

embarrassed. It could be that he got into the kitchen garbage or jumped up on the counter and stole a porkchop—or worse, the steak you were planning on having for dinner that night. All you have to do is ask your dog, “Did you do that?” while referring to the garbage strewn on the floor? The simple phrase “What did *you* do?” will cause your Chesapeake to grin away at you and sometimes add a little snorting in the process. Not all Chesaupes will show you their teeth, but most of them do. I did have a dog, Tiderunner, whom I trained to show his bite on command. I gave him the command “Show me your teeth,” and he would willingly follow my direction. When I was growing up, my family referred to it as “sniggering”—that description has been lost over time, while “smiling” and “snickering” have taken its place.

—Betsy Horn Humer,  
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## Curly-Coated Retrievers

### LET'S START AT THE VERY BEGINNING

Back in 1979, there was no internet. Dog show people communicated by phone, and long-distance calls cost extra. In fact, the original communication regarding starting a national breed club for Curly-Coated Retrievers was initiated in a breed column article in the AKC GAZETTE written by Kathy Kail (Day) and through a mailing list maintained by Marillyn Caldwell. The difficulties of communication did not stop a determined group of people from pulling together the largest entry to date of Curly-Coated Retrievers or having a meeting to create a national breed club.

For two days, March 31 and April 1, 1979, the International Kennel Club of Chicago saw listed in the catalog an entry of over 30 Curlies, with 28 actually shown. Exhibitors came from nine states and Canada. No one had ever seen this

large of a Curly entry in the United States. It was truly historic.

Because back then the IKCC was a benched show, it was the perfect place to sit and discuss the formation of a national breed club. Benched shows are where dogs are required to be in an assigned space, unless in the ring, for a specified period during the day. We brought chairs and food with us because we could not leave the dogs unattended. If someone wanted to watch another breed in the ring, others would stay behind to keep an eye on the dogs. You could not leave until dismissal time (usually 5 P.M.). Today, only the Westminster show is still benched.

This show allowed plenty of time to sit and discuss what the club would be about, how we were going to make it happen, and who would lead the way. Marillyn Caldwell (Sevenravens) had the knowledge and the drive to lead the group to forming the club. She was also our first president.

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*Longtime Curly-Coated Retriever columnist Ann Shinkle, who retired as columnist last fall after 50 years in the role, with one of her dogs. Ellen Manes wrote in the April issue: "Ann has served the Curly-Coated Retriever community as almost no one else has. Her commitment to the column and its importance in communicating the numerous aspects of Curly life is unprecedented. ... Ann kept the many wonderful attributes of Curly-Coated Retrievers in front of the dog community all these years. In addition, she had many guest contributors add their voices and expertise. Our national breed club owes her a great debt of gratitude for her hard work."*

In the end, 43 people signed on as charter members. The Curly-Coated Retriever Club of America was chartered on June 1, 1979. Of those 43 people,

only four are still members of the club: Sheila Anderson, Kathy Kail, Ann Shinkle, and me. Several others were members in long standing until they passed away:

Ted Brenner, Marillyn Caldwell, Dale Detweiler, Yvonne Dormany, Mary Alice Hembree, and Doris Hodges, to name a few.

The unofficial and official national specialties were held in Chicago until 1982, when it was held in California. Since then, the specialty has been rotated around the country. It has allowed a large gathering of like-minded Curly enthusiasts to share their experiences with each other. These early shows became a foundation upon which we have built a network of camaraderie and information that has been so beneficial to the breed's progress, health, and status in the dog world.

So, this is a peek inside the beginning of our breed club which will, hopefully, continue to champion the Curly-Coated Retriever and be a beacon for the future of the breed.

—Ellen Manes,  
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Curly-Coated Retriever  
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COURTESY ANN SHINKLE