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Pembroke Welsh Corgi: At the 2016 national, MBIS/GCh.B Heronsway Comedy Central (Julia), always breeder-owner-handled by Anne H. Bowes. Anne is the PWCCA's AKC Delegate and was named AKC Herding Group Breeder of the Year in 2007.

site was found in Denton, North Carolina. The herding events will take place Saturday and Sunday, October 2 and 3. Agility will be on Monday, October 4, in Mechanicsville, Virginia. Tuesday, October 5, is the date for the obedience and rally trials at the host hotel. They will be followed by Sweepstakes, both Puppy and Veteran, on Wednesday, October 6, with regular classes following: dogs on Thursday, bitches on Friday, and Best of Breed on Saturday.

Since everything is subject to change due to the pandemic, and some of our normal activities may be modified or not held, check www.pwccanational.com for updated information, as well as the Calendar of Events on the PWCCA website. The Calendar also has up-to-date information on the status of all regional specialties, including the judging panels and contact information.

The year 2020 was at best a trying time for us all. We are optimistically looking forward to the 2021 national specialty, knowing that plans are progressing for 2022 in Wilmington, Ohio, 2023 at Purina Farms, and at a soon to be announced location for 2024!

—Lynda McKee,
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Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America

Pulik

YOUR PULI AND MASSAGE

You probably know that massage can have tremendous physical and emotional benefits for humans, but did you realize that your canine companion might equally benefit from this therapeutic activity?

Both humans and canines can suffer from sore or stiff body parts and a "busy brain" (that is, being mentally wound up). Massage is one of the best ways for both people and dogs to loosen up, increase their range of motion, and maintain and restore flexibility of joints and muscles, as well as relax tired or overworked muscles and thereby relax and calm the mind. Massage manipulates the muscles, ligaments (which attach bone to bone), and tendons (which attach muscle to bone) to increase circulation and improve elasticity and range of motion. Through massage and feedback from the dog, a certified massage therapist can detect pain, tension, mobility restriction, sensitivities and areas of concern while using her hands to provide relief and relaxation.

Of particular interest are "trigger points" where there may be localized dysfunction or knot in the muscle fiber that can be caused by muscle strain from sudden wrenching movements, falls, and so on. Trigger points are known to cause decreased range of motion, muscle weakness, and dysfunction, and they can create future postural problems due to functional changes in gait patterns. Trigger points can cause pain to actually show up in another part of the body. The massage therapist can use the referral patterns of the trigger points to follow the point of pain back to the originating muscle, locate the trigger point in that muscle, and apply direct pressure to release the dysfunctions.

While it might be intuitive how an agility dog (or other dog engaged in high-impact activities) would benefit from regular massage, in fact any dog would be well served by mas-

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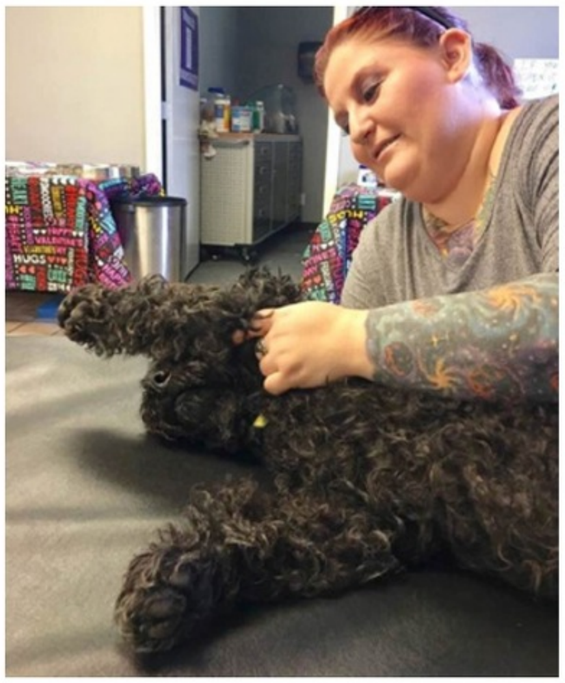
sage. Massage triggers the body's natural ability to heal itself from injury, strain, surgery, and exhaustion. Massage also aids in the detoxification of chemicals that the body produces to deal with stress, and it positively affects various body systems, including circulatory and lymphatic.

Knowledge of canine muscular and vascular anatomy is mandatory before performing a massage. In addition, knowing animal behavior is a prerequisite for performing a successful massage session. To locate certified (i.e., a certificate from an animal massage or body work course(s)) canine massage therapists, some good sources include getting referrals from your veterinarian, canine chiropractor, or fellow dog sport exhibitors/competitors. You want to be sure you have a credentialed person working on your dog that also has animal bodywork liability insurance. This is not only to protect your dog, but insurance companies will not issue a professional liability policy without a minimum of 100 hours of coursework. Be sure that if you are hiring a canine massage therapist, that you research what the laws of the state are for where you will be having massage on your dog done. The website of the International Association of Animal Massage and Bodywork (IAAMB) lists the laws pertaining to animal massage in each state: *iaamb.org/resources/laws-by-state*.



Pulik with massage therapist Maxie Chapman: Massage can enhance your dog's well-being and complement veterinary care.

COURTESY DAGMAR FERTL

At many agility trials, a massage therapist is on site to work on dogs. These athletic dogs may get massages before their runs, after their runs, when their times are slower than expected, or if something shows up in their gait. I often watch a therapist work on other dogs at a trial, or ask fellow agility competitors for referrals. I personally like to establish a long-term relationship with a therapist and even introduce my up-and-coming agility dogs to the idea of being on the massage table and being touched before they might have a true necessity to address any discomfort issues.

Owning an uncommon dog breed, I am especially interested in having my dog worked on by therapists with prior experience massaging or interacting with Pulik due to the temperament of the breed.

What to expect during your dog's massage session? The average session can take as little as 15–20 minutes to almost an hour, depending on what issues need to be addressed. Because your dog cannot talk, they must be evaluated in other ways: palpation (touch), conformation analysis (how they stand and

PURINA PRO PLAN

HERDING GROUP

hold themselves), and gait analysis (observation of their movements for anything extraordinary). Dogs find ways to compensate for discomfort during movement (to the trained eye, even very subtle changes in gait or the dog's behavior are noticeable). The massage therapist may use any of a variety of techniques for your dog's massage. Toward the end of the session, some passive range-of-motion exercises may be used (for example, support a joint on both sides, gently moving the limb through its comfortable range of motion and within its proper plane). In addition, the therapist may show you different ways to encourage your dog to stretch using treats (the exercises might include neck stretches where the dog follows the treat from side to side, toward either shoulder, or encouraging a bow). At the end of the session, the therapist should provide you with their findings (i.e., where the dog's muscles were tight, something that might require veterinary care, etc.).

I asked a few canine massage therapists with time spent on massaging Pulik how massaging a Puli might be different than working on other breeds. Most obvious of course is the coat factor—if the Puli is corded or cut down. The massage therapist has to maneuver through the cords in such a way to not pull on them and startle the dog. But every massage therapist also noted that the suspicious nature of the Puli means that while you need to move a little slower with this breed, it needs to be done with confidence and no "namby-pamby" touch. In this respect, it really is not that much different than if a judge is putting their hands on a Puli show dog in the conformation ring. One therapist noted that for massage, the Puli requires more intuitive communication than, for example, retrievers. This therapist said she takes her time with the Puli. She compared working on the Puli as similar to working on the Australian Cattle Dog, another tough breed to convince for massage.

It is important to realize that canine massage is not a substitute for qualified veterinary care. Canine massage is intended to enhance your dog's overall well being and complement the care provided by your dog's wellness team (including your dog's veterinarian, chiropractor, orthopedist, or rehab specialist).

Thanks to my canine massage therapist friends Roberta Kirby, Maxie Chapman, and Andrea Friedl who answered my questions and provided suggestions on to improve this column. I have entrusted my agility Pulik to these ladies over the years. I thank Maxie Chapman for permission to use photographs that I took of her working on my Puli.

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Spanish Water Dogs

BEYOND "HYPOALLERGENIC": UNDERSTANDING THE BREED

Most if not all breeders of Spanish Water Dogs have received the inquiry, "We understand that this breed is 'hypoallergenic,' and we are interested in a puppy." For the breeder, it then becomes a matter of which response they employ first.

Our first task regarding the request for a "hypoallergenic" puppy is to explain that while this is a single-coated breed that sheds far less than many other breeds, truthfully there is no such thing as a "hypoallergenic" dog. Specificity of allergens and severity of allergies vary considerably between individual dogs and people. If dander is the problem, less dander is scattered by a dog who does not shed, but it still certainly exists. If a major trigger is saliva, training the dog to not "give kisses," lick faces, and so on is an essential and fairly easy solution.

Most breeders consider these situations with great caution to avoid the heartbreak of receiving a subsequent call from the family to report that they must re-home the dog due to allergies.

Allergies aside, there are also puppy buyers who are attracted to a non-shedding breed simply for the convenience of having minimal dog hair on their clothing and in the house, car and so on. While a reasonable consideration, "who" is this breed with whom the buyer(s) can expect to share their life/lives for typically 12 to 15 years?

The AKC standard describes the breed as follows:

"… faithful, obedient, lively, hardworking, and watchful. He is highly intelligent with an outstanding learning ability. His loyalty and protective instincts make him a self-appointed guardian to his owner, his family, and his property. He should be neither timid nor shy, but is naturally suspicious of strangers. Properly introduced, and given time, the Spanish Water Dog will accept strangers. He is very affectionate with his own people."

Longtime breed owners and fanciers have come to value deeply the qualities above. For the new owner, however, they must understand the unique nature of this breed's temperament. In conversation with an experienced breeder and owner prior to acquiring my first SWD, he said to me, "These dogs almost seem slightly feral at times." While perhaps an extreme descriptor, it is not completely inaccurate.

Often described as "velcro" dogs, SWDs are extremely devoted to their chosen person and immediate family. Vigilant and tending to be wary of strangers, they are quick to bark at visitors to the home and even at passers-by