

GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION

*Midwest
Wolfhound*



A quarterly newsletter for Irish Wolfhounds & their people

*Volume LIX
Spring 2021*

GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION

Secretary's Report

- Track progress of the club and view the official record of each board meeting
- February Meeting Minutes

Calendar of Events

- Find locations, dates, & details of events GLIWA is participating in. Please join us!

Spotlight on Health

- The health & wellbeing of our hounds is our highest priority. Here you will find articles on health care, behavior, training and nutrition
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Dealing with Loss -by Risha Berzins

- "New beginnings are often disguised as painful endings" Lao Tzu

Therapy Work

- The Nuts and Bolts of Becoming a Therapy Dog Team with your Irish Wolfhound- by Pam Elgin

All Things Puppies!

- Spring is here! That means new beginnings, new birth, and making decisions on how to choose the right breeder/puppy.
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Quarterly Photos & Brags

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Secretary's Report



GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION Annual Members Meeting Agenda of February 13, 2021

The meeting was called to order at: 3:06pm

Board members Present: Maria Lubera, Michelle Whittenhall, Mark Bettin, Debbie Greene, Scott Mortenson, Risha Berzins

Absent: Claire Morrison, Elissa Culp

Reading of the Minutes: Maria moved that GLIWA approve the minutes as printed in the Midwest Wolfhound Newsletter. Debbie Greene seconded. Motion passed.

Reports

President- The president welcomed everyone to the first (and hopefully last) GLIWA zoom annual meeting. The purpose of this meeting is for electing officers & conducting the business of vote of membership. The president went through committee reports during the annual meeting to give members an idea of what's going on currently in the club. Maria thanked everyone for the participation in the GLIWA raffle that Angie Bixler arranged on the IW Bling FB page. GLIWA was the first club chosen for the raffle and made about \$2,500.

Vice President- No Report

Secretary / Membership- We currently have 89 members.

Thank you notes were sent out to Mindy Ballinger for helping with rescue and also to the May's family, for their donation \$1,000.00.

Former member Anne Varney reached out & has a few wolfhound books, including some children's books that Julie Hughes found for her. Anne would like to donate them to the club. Claire thanked her and she will be sending them to Maria Lubera when it's possible.

Treasurer –Available upon request- please email Joe Mahoney if interested.

Activities- Unfortunately, all St. Patrick's parades cancelled except the Milwaukee parade (moved to September 2021). Risha will check on exact dates.

Linda Scheck, Irish fest at Sears/NOW center arena contacted GLIWA asking to participate in their fall Irish fest if our state is opened. Mark Bettin and Scott Mortenson will coordinate.

Fun Match- Risha & Dave reserved October 16-17 at Cudahy Kennel Club. The event still depends on COVID restrictions and more will be announced at a later date.

Hospitality: No Report

GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION

Publications- Editors Debbie & Michelle ask that people please submit any ideas they have for the newsletters or write an article.

Rescue- Debbie Greene discussed the following:

We had one rescue since the last report. His name is Sebastian. He is a one-year-old male wolfhound that we picked up from his home in Aurora. We did not neuter him as he was under a year old and very skinny. His new family, the Mays, will neuter him at their cost when he is two years old. They took him to the vet a week after his adoption and the vet said he is in great health. He is a SWEET, lovable boy and his new owners are thrilled. They came to pick him up from Indiana in their plane. Sebastian went up the stairs and into his new plane as if he had been doing that his whole life! He did great! He will be doing much more flying in his new life. His owners gave a \$1000.00 donation to GLIWA in addition to his adoption fee. They are excited at the prospect of coming to events when it is safe to do so again.

Debbie put 22 packages together during the GLIWA auction and we made about \$2500 total. GLIWA still has plenty of stock to sell. We will continue to put it up for sale on Wolfhound Bling Facebook page.

Policy- No Report

Ways and Means- No Report

Old Business: None

New Business: Election of Officers and Board Members as follows:

President Maria Lubera presented the slate for 2021:

President: Maria Lubera

Vice President: Risha Cupit-Berzins

Secretary: Michelle Whittenhall

Treasurer: Joseph Mahoney

Directors, beginning new 2 year terms:

Scott Mortenson

Mark Bettin

Directors, finishing their terms

Elissa Culp

Helen Philpott (finishing term for Michelle Whittenhall)

Debbie Greene

“The slate of candidates to be elected by consensus as no nomination by petitions for any office or dictatorship was filed as per article VII, section 6 of the bylaws.”

No other business requiring a vote of the Membership was put forward.

Annual Meeting adjourned at: 3:39 PM

GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION



Board Members Meeting- February 13, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Maria Lubera at 3:39 p.m.

Scott Mortenson motioned to table all business until the next board meeting, which will be held in May (date to be determined). Risha Berzins seconded. Motion passed.

Board Members Meeting adjourned at 3:41 pm.

*Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Whittenhall- Secretary*



GLIWA Calendar 2021

Come join us and enjoy the day with your wolfhounds!

Summer/Fall Events:



Morton Arboretum's Dog Days

March 21, 2021

GLIWA is working on a block of tickets for a club entry & walk through Morton Arboretum for their Dog Day's event. Stay tuned!

<https://www.mortonarb.org/events/dog-admission-days>

Please keep checking back at <https://www.gliwa.org/events> for future event updates!

We look forward to seeing you.

Spotlight on Health



Seresto Flea Collar Recall



Investigation begins into Seresto flea collar death allegations
By Kathryn Rosenberg a day ago

The Seresto flea collar for pets is being cited as causing the death and injury of thousands of cats and dogs

The Center for Biological Diversity has filed a formal legal petition urging the Environmental Protection Agency to cancel the registration of the popular Seresto flea collar after it was connected to the deaths of close to 1,700 animals and injuries to many more.



Regularly taking out the number one spot as the best flea collar for dogs and best flea collar for cats on sites like Amazon, Elanco's Seresto flea collar has recently been linked to thousands of pet deaths and injuries, as well as hundreds of reports of harm to humans.

Documents obtained from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) revealed a link between animals wearing the Seresto collar and reports of lethargy, loss of motor function, scabs on the skin, and seizures that pet parents observed in their animals. To date, the EPA has received more than 75,000 complaints from dog and cat owners but up until last week, they had refused to take action.

Alongside their legal petition, the Center for Biological Diversity has also filed a lawsuit against the EPA, challenging their failure to release documents regarding the reported injuries caused by the Seresto flea collar.

“It shouldn't take a lawsuit to get the EPA to release public documents that could shed light on the deaths of over a thousand family pets,” said Lori Ann Burd, director of the Center's environmental health program. “It's inexcusable that the agency charged with regulating this pesticidal collar has not only refused to hand over public documents but has also refused to even take the basic measure of warning the public that it has received over 75,000 reports of it causing harm and even death.”

Mounting pressure from some members of Congress has caused the EPA to cave to the growing demand for a proper investigation into the Seresto collars. A spokesperson for the EPA says that they are in the early stages of requesting and reviewing information about pet incidents involving Seresto and that it's too early to say whether the collar has a higher rate of harmful events than similar products.

“EPA understands this is a critical issue,” the spokesperson said. “The agency’s immediate advice to pet owners is to talk with their veterinarian before using any pet insecticide to find out what the vet recommends, read the label, and follow instructions on safe use of the product, be alert for any unexpected reaction, and report adverse reactions with as much detail as possible.”

If your cat or dog is currently wearing a Seresto collar, you’re likely feeling understandably concerned and we recommend talking to your veterinarian first and foremost to seek advice on whether your pet is safe to continue wearing it.

Dr. Elizabeth Trepp, a veterinarian at Banfield Pet Hospital in Washington, believes the reports need to be looked into but says she’s never had an issue with the Seresto collar and neither have any of her colleagues. It’s a view shared by our in-house vet Dr. Joanna Woodnutt who says “many vets have used Seresto collars for years, including on our own pets, and have noted only very mild side effects.”

With all the vet comments we’ve read and sourced having found only minimal or no side effects with the Seresto collar in their pets and those they see in their practice, what might be causing the health issues pet parents are witnessing in their furkids? Is it the Seresto collar or might other factors be at play?

When it comes to skin issues, such as scabs, Woodnutt is reassuring. “Whilst scabs under the collar might seem serious, it was actually seen in the placebo group in trials as well, suggesting it’s not as much the ingredients in the collar as it is the collar itself.” Dr. Alicen Tracey, a vet and member of the Daily Paws Advisory Board, echoes the views of Woodnutt and suggests pet parents may first want to ensure their furkid is wearing their collar correctly.

“Flea-tick collars work by interacting with the skin to distribute the preventative medication and should therefore be placed around the neck snug enough to create skin contact, but allowing the applicator to fit two fingers beneath the collar,” she writes, if you don’t check regularly, the collar can get too loose or too tight, which can cause irritation.”

Another potential issue is the rise in the number of fake Seresto collars being sold to dog and cat owners as the genuine article. The collar has recently changed drug classification in the U.K., meaning it no longer needs a prescription, which is likely contributing to the number of fakes we’re seeing.

“Fake Seresto collars are definitely in circulation, and these products will not have gone through the rigorous testing that the original collar has undergone,” says Woodnutt, adding “because pet owners aren’t generally aware they’ve bought a fake product, it’s impossible to know how many of these reports have been about a fake product rather than the original one.”

Both Trepp and Woodnutt stress the importance of investigations being carried out before any official link is made between the health issues reported by pet owners and the Seresto collar. “Anecdotal reports are not helpful as they are open to bias, and almost all of the alleged reactions are anecdotal,” says Woodnutt.

Explaining that vets have a legal obligation to report suspected side effects and drug companies will usually pay for investigations to prove or disprove a link with their product, Woodnutt wants people to understand the difference between the allegations and a proven link. “Only if the link is proven or strongly suspected will a warning be published, a recall issued, or the datasheet will be changed to explain the possible new

side effect,” she says.

If you're feeling concerned about the information currently doing the rounds about the Seresto collar, have a chat with your vet who can advise you on the best course of action. The best flea treatments for dogs and the best flea treatments for cats both come in a wide variety of different formulas, including topical treatments and oral medications, so there are plenty of options available if you'd prefer not to use a flea collar.



IWCA's Osteosarcoma Study



Credit: Irish Wolfhound Club of America

Osteosarcoma Study Needs Help

Osteosarcoma kills 1 of every 5 Irish Wolfhounds. Helping clarify osteosarcoma inheritance in our hounds is a step forward to decreasing the incidence. You can make a difference by providing information.

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin, using data from the Lifetime Cardiac Study, Life Cycle II study and the IW Database (IWDB) have established an extensive health matrix and need information to fill in some gaps. Doesn't matter if your dog is a show dog, couch lounger, love of your life or all the above, YOUR info makes a difference!

Please send:

1. AKC registered name and age at osteosarcoma diagnosis and age at death (or just age of diagnosis if your hound is living with osteo). All registered hounds can help. Data is needed for many generations so please include hounds who died long ago.
2. AKC registered name and cause of death for hounds living to 10 without osteosarcoma. These hounds are valued controls.
3. If your hound has osteosarcoma and is not registered with AKC but his/her parents are - information can also be useful. Provide a name for the hound and age of osteosarcoma diagnosis/ death and the registered name of one parent.

Send information to genetics@vetmed.wisc.edu and use IWH OSA on the subject line.

You do not need to send information on hounds with cause of death entered in the IWDB or hounds with up to date osteosarcoma information in the Life Cycle II study as that data is already included in the matrix.

Thank you from the IWCA Health Committee and all hounds.



Spaying & Neutering Your Hound



Credit: Irish Wolfhound Club of America
<https://www.iwclubofamerica.org/general-health>

General Health Concerns

The Irish Wolfhound is just as likely as any other dog to be bitten by a flea or tick, munch on a poisonous houseplant, or eat himself into obesity. Some aspects of these issues do have Wolfhound-specific elements to them, and the IWCA provides information here on some of those, but for most general health issues you should rely on your veterinarian, your breeder, and veterinary references such as the [Merck Veterinary Manual](#).

Spay and Neuter

Several studies have shown a correlation between early spay/neuter and cancers in large and giant breed dogs. Anecdotally, IWs who are neutered at the "usual" age of 6 months grow up to be taller and leaner than their intact littermates. The topic is complex; research it thoroughly and discuss it with your breeder and veterinarian before deciding if and when to spay or neuter your Wolfhound.

An excellent article with references to many peer-reviewed studies can be found [here](#) on the Veterinary Information Network website.

Dealing with Loss



Companion Loss & Planning the Goodbye

By Risha Berzins

This is a painful topic on which to write, but companion loss is something that we each deal with to some extent as humans having Irish Wolfhounds, or any breed, for that matter. Having been through both, I am still unable to assess if loss is more painful when it happens suddenly, or when it comes after a lengthy illness. It is personal for each of us. The loss during whelping of a pup who never took a breath feels different from loss of a veteran wolfhound who took his last breath at a grand old age. Honoring the life of each dog makes the transition and subsequent memory of the ceremonial aspects more purposeful and beautiful.

The day came recently that I had to make the decision to allow our boy to transition while my husband was out of town with another of our dogs. It was a decision I gut-wrenchingly labored over but knew that it needed to be what was best for our veteran of 8 plus years. For him, and for his dignity, I could not await Dave's return home. Final is final, though, and I had to be sure that what my heart knew was right was actually true, so I called friends and talked with the veterinarians we trusted.

CH Howlin's King Cake CD BN RE AJP SCN SIN CGC TKN VC will always be a part of me. Hubig, my "King Cake"... He was the boy we kept from our third litter who came into this world during an emergency c-section with the rest in his litter as I received a call from doctors, many states away, that my own father was dying and I was asked to make "the decision" for him. Hubig was always noisy, silly, sweet, and as he matured, became the nurturing caretaker of the house. His role, I quite sadly realized after he was gone, was also the hub of the house. He was what made the house alive. He created the hum. We were all just the worker bees around him, and happily so.



How does one say goodbye to a perfect boy? A faithful boy? A boy who nurtured everyone, raised a litter, licked ears? Our obedience, rally, scent work boy, and champion? The boy with a perfect temperament who LOVED to be brushed, groomed, get his toenails done... always perfectly perched on his ottoman, assessing his “kingdom”. How?

I knew it was time. All I had to do was look in his eyes and look at how he was carrying himself...and there was my answer. He was tired. He and I communicated on a level I felt honored to be a part of. I gave him my love and honesty. He gave me his love and complete trust. In choosing to let him go from his physical constraints, I gave him the dignity he deserved as the most beautiful being with the majestic features and a gentle soul.

Planning a goodbye quickly in the time of a pandemic is also a challenge. For many reasons I knew that I could not take him to a veterinarian’s clinic to say goodbye. It had to be done at our home where he was comfortable and surrounded by his litter mate sister and nephew. In my opinion, having the other animals in the house say their goodbyes is important in their grieving process, too.

On short notice I was fortunate to find an exceptional veterinarian available to come to the home and after scheduling that, I contacted a few close friends asking them to come be a part of the ceremony and to assist in carrying him out after he was gone. Having wolfhounds, it takes some planning to be able to carry them at times like these.

Three close friends, all masked, one bearing a warm, loaded cheeseburger, came over as the vet arrived. Hubig ran to the door to greet everyone, tail wagging, and turned to lead us all back inside. This time he was not swift, but more labored in his actions. He went to his favorite spot, the ottoman, and situated himself. Thoroughly enjoying the cheeseburger, taking it from me bite by bite, with pleasure and gusto, his last snack was delightful. Using his favorite brush, now retired with his fur kept in it, I brushed him for comfort and assurance.

That day was unseasonably gorgeous and sunny for February. I opened the windows to allow in some fresh air and to allow his soul to be released when it later left his body. A New Orleans scented candle was burning. I smudged him with white sage and feathers, touching each paw and his handsome body, while chanting Daimoku, a Navajo prayer, and pagan blessings for him. A painting of his (dog) mother overlooked the event and playing in the background, a New Orleans/Mardi Gras playlist set the tone of a modified Jazz funeral and second line.

As he was drifting to his final sleep, Hubig licked my face and arms, and I looked into his eyes- he was grateful. I was giving him the kindest gift. We were all loving on him, recounting fond memories. I told him who would be there to greet him at the Bridge. At 12:28pm he passed in my arms. He left this world as more life was being created in his niece. May the circle be unbroken...

The veterinarian stepped out and gave us all time with Hubig. Dauphine and Claude to said their final goodbyes. In aloof Dauphine fashion, she grabbed her favorite toy and basically second-lined around the room, jumping over his body, celebrating his life, NOLA-style, and not visibly mourning his passing. Claude, our sensitive boy, jumped into a friend's lap and needed consoling for quite a while, however, then stood on the ottoman near his uncle's body. I placed some Mardi Gras beads around Hubig's sweet neck and we all carried him out to the veterinarian's SUV, to eventually be privately cremated. A howl of loss

and remembrance rang through the house soon after and the house fell quiet for days afterwards.

A bead artist friend in New Orleans gathered with others in memory of Hubig and they walked to the Mississippi River in the French Quarter, tossing beads in for his memory while chanting. She sent the remaining beads to me in a lovely bag in which I also placed a tuft of Hubig's fur. I surely have some amazing friends who gathered with me in many ways. My heart is full of their love and support, and yet, still so empty from the immense loss.

I miss his lips, the darkest whiskey barrel cherry black, supple, soft and perfect. I miss brushing his perfect coat. His muzzle, always tidy, with that one little harsh stray whisker on the left, ever so slightly askew...I acknowledged the delight of seeing it daily.

That night with snow still on the ground, by waxing gibbous moon, almost full, I mixed Plaster of Paris, and poured it in his footprints, allowing it to set up for hours, and removing it the next morning. I made

four castings in total and have them near lights that I turn on and off each day. Some have grass and leaves from the yard embedded in the castings. I touch each one as I go about my day, and tell him how much I miss him, still.

The following evening when Hubig's niece came home, she was in the kitchen for a second and then froze-startled and staring toward the living room. She then ran into the living room and sniffed exactly where Hubig passed away as though she were tracing a body outline with her nose. She respectfully, somberly laid across his ottoman, looking sad and sniffing it. Processing his loss. A series of back and forth from the ottoman to other pieces of furniture ensued...Looking distraught and questioning, then rather as though she was reading a screenplay of the whole event, she finally settled, mournful, and I consoled her for a while.

All the snow has melted now, washing away the winter with hope for renewed life as Spring is on its way. One paw print outline remains in the yard. Remnants of Plaster of Paris make the outline, now embellished with rocks of different sizes, twigs, and tiny weedy flowers as a memorial. I miss our perfect boy, but he is forever with me and I am very pleased with all I did to honor his passing.



Right: Risha Berzins & dear Hubig

Therapy Work



The Nuts and Bolts of Becoming a Therapy Dog Team with your Irish Wolfhound By Pam Elgin MA, LPC License Professional Counselor & Irish Wolfhound Owner

What are the benefits patients, children or adults get from a therapy dog?

Many people have a very romanticized view of therapy dogs. They think you just walk into a room and the dog behaves and has an immediate therapeutic effect on whoever your audience is. While this is a nice fantasy there is more that goes into the preparation and skills it takes for both the dog and handler to be an effective therapy team. Let's break it down. One accepted definition of a therapy dog is: "A therapy dog is a dog that might be trained to provide affection, comfort and love to people in hospitals, retirement homes, nursing homes, schools, hospices, disaster areas, and to people with anxiety disorders or autism. Another includes the idea that encompasses animal -assisted therapy and other animal assisted activities and help people recover and better cope with health problems such as heart disease, cancer, and mental health disorders.

First of all, it is important for the dog to have a calm, gentle and attentive demeanor. Not all breeds and not all Irish Wolfhounds fit that bill. To qualify a therapy dog needs to be at least 1 year old. He or She also needs to be well trained. If the training is not already part of your Irish Wolfhound's manners, you may need to first go through a dog training program and then take a look at a Certified dog therapy program. Another tenet of the ability to become a therapy dog is good hygiene. Your dog must be clean and tidy. Many places a team might go need to be sanitary like group homes, nursing homes and hospices to name a few. They will expect that your dog is clean, has short nails that will not catch on fabric or scrape skin. The icing on the cake is a good relationship with the handler of the team. Therapy dogs are trained and certified as a team. The dog might be a certified therapy dog but cannot go out with just anyone. The handler and the dog are an exclusive therapy team. If someone else wants to participate in therapy with your dog they will need to go through a certification program themselves with your Irish Wolfhound and this includes other family.

Now let's talk about the handler. Therapy is not just walking into a room and letting someone pet your dog. There are many skills and behaviors that the handler needs to be comfortable with. The handler needs to be well versed in the many reactions they might get when they walk in a

room.

The exuberance they can sometimes be welcomed by may be unsettling to the dog. Staying focused on what the dog needs when that happens is key. Other scenarios may include someone who is frightened and wants you to leave, or frightened but wants to talk through it with you and your dog at a distance. The latter in and of itself is therapeutic as working to tolerate a stressor and allowing oneself to get closer to a stressor can emotionally be very beneficial for anxiety or trauma (ex: previous history of being afraid of or bitten by a dog). Some people may effectively be at this place for quite awhile if they are dealing with a dog bite or other animal related trauma. In nursing homes or memory care facilities if I get a reaction like that, I ask would be ok if we try again another day? Sometimes part of that reaction in someone is of course due to the IW size, but also may have to do with memories of their own pets and triggers a grief or loneliness in them. Many people are not able to identify their emotions or what they need when they react, but you need to be respectful of any reaction they might have. Asking permission before you enter a room shows a piece of that respect, but not the whole. So, the skill of being able to identify a person's reaction, body language, emotions and needs is an important skill for the Therapy Dog Handler.

It is also important to know what to do with a trigger or reaction. You don't need to have all of the skills of a therapist, but you do need some. Other skills are being calm, empathic, and composed when someone is telling you their story or memory. Your job is to listen, not give advice and to show them you care. The therapy dog can bring out difficult memories and emotions and we need to be prepared to actively listen and affirm them. Sometimes it's helpful to ask questions softly like a question about their life or even their experience being at the end of their life journey. Sometimes it can be interfering in the experience for them. Knowing what to do is a skill that often is learned through experience. Being ready to hear tough stories and being comfortable to talk to someone about their cancer, trauma or impending death are also important skills for the handler.

Some of your job as handler is to run interference. For instance, you don't want your dog lifting their paw to "shake" and then scratching elderly skin that is already thin and fragile. An innocent kiss from an Irish Wolfhound could be an unwanted face wash for a child or adult. Sometimes people can be so exuberant in their reaction to your hound that they grab, pull hair, or smother a hound that can detract from the hound's experience. This sometimes happens in nursing homes or group homes. In our homes we know not to leave food unattended, but in a hospital, hospice, or other setting they may not be prepared for your hound to help themselves to their sandwich, fruit bowl, candy dish etc. So, running interference may be for the person you are visiting or for your hound. You want BOTH to have a positive experience.

Lastly, you want to pick a reputable and locally accepted Therapy dog program. It doesn't help to go through the time, effort and cost of a program only to find out that no one will let you in their doors because you don't have the "correct" certification. Nationally recognized programs may get you in the door, but much of their training maybe on-line modules. Locally accepted programs may yield you more actual time with a trainer and more supervised practice. Weigh out what is best for you, your dog and the setting you want to work in. A program that is well accepted in the community will have opportunities for you to get involved in and may introduce you and your hound to the liaison at those places to do therapy work. Think about what setting you would like to be involved in and survey them to find out if they have a preferred certification program they accept. Many hospitals, hospices and group home groups have a volunteer coordinator, and it is easy to contact through their website, email or calling.

Using an Irish Wolfhound as a therapy dog can be a tremendously rewarding experience, for the handler, recipient, and hound. We once were (and still are) spell bound by these hound's majestic and spiritual aura. And as a handler we have a tremendous responsibility to be sensitive and careful how we use them, where they come in contact with very emotionally and often physically vulnerable people.

Editors Note:

Pam makes some great points here! When we are walking around in a park or on a walk with Great Lakes Irish Wolfhound Association, these things are great to keep in mind! People stop us all the time! They are not always happy to see us either. But more often than not, the folks who stop us want a photo, a big kiss from our wolfhounds and to ask us all of THOSE questions.

All Things Puppies!



How to Spot a Backyard Breeder



April 11, 2018 by [Bob McMillan](#) [The Wild Stare](#)

They crank out 2 million puppies a year, indiscriminate backyard breeders whose main goal is to make a buck selling you the dog of your dreams. They can sound like sages of the breed, but when health and behavior problems crop up... it's buyer beware.

It's cheap and convenient. Want a dog? You can get on the internet right now, find a puppy within an easy drive of you and save a lot of money rather than going through hoops to get a puppy from an AKC-recognized breeder.

So why are so many people – including most recognized dog experts – telling you this is a big mistake? Because you're not buying a discount end table, you're buying a living thing, the newest member of your family. You didn't flip through the want ads when you decided to have a son or daughter. But this is different because it's...just a dog?

Why all the guilt trips? Because you're setting yourself up for heartbreak. And you're hurting the breed because as long as you're buying, they'll keep cranking the puppies out. And you're hurting other families who fall for the same trap you did. But at least you saved some money and it was easy...

Backyard breeders are not meticulous in how they breed and they're not interested in what happens to the dog once the sale is made. You're on your own. Good luck. Come again, just not too soon...

Today's purebreds are riddled with genetic disorders thanks to inbreeding. But you say you're avoiding all that by getting a mixed breed? Think again. What went into the mix? This and that from purebreds. You've simply reshuffled the mix, not avoided genetic problems from whatever breeds your dog sprang from.

The horrible truth is, sometimes people who go through the process and buy a puppy from a reputable breeder come to grief, too. Osteosarcoma. Hip dysplasia. Heart disease, liver shunt... the list goes on and on. Because in the dog world, not all breeders put the dogs first. Lies are told to protect reputations. Diseases in a line are kept secret. So even breeders who do their work and care foremost about their dogs are occasionally fooled.

If you've never had a dog who died young or fell wracked with pain from cancer or a similarly horrible disease, in this day and time you probably know someone who has. Getting a new dog today is a game of genetic Russian Roulette. You want to stack the odds in your favor however you can. The best breeder you can find is your best chance.

The best breeders break even or even lose money with every litter. They rarely breed and when they do, it's only after doggedly researching lineages for several generations back. They know their genetics. They don't pick mates simply because they won show ribbons. They spend hundreds of dollars testing dams and sires and hundreds more screening their puppies for disease, disorders and flaws. Only after getting to know you well will they sell to you, sometimes two years or more after your first contact.

And then there's those other guys.... Some ways to tell whether a seller is a backyard breeder:
Why Would You Want To Meet The Parents?

Why would you care what the puppy's parents are like? He's oh-so-cute and looks just fine to you. You won't be taking the parents out to dinner or exchanging Christmas cards. What's the big deal?

You want to know what your puppy's going to look like when he's grown, right? There can be considerable variations within the same breed. How's he going to act? Parents predict personality. How big will he be?

More important, what's their genetic background? The breeder should be able to walk you through several generations for both the mother and father. The breeder may not own the father so the father may not be on site, but they can show you photos, are intimately familiar with his personality and his genetics. Because they carefully studied before picking him.

RED FLAG: The breeder says he'll meet you somewhere offsite. To save you the drive, of course. If they won't let you come to their house and see the parents and the conditions there, keep on driving...

Let's Just Skip the Questions

If a prospective breeder doesn't grill you like the Gestapo, you're in the wrong place. A good breeder sees her puppies as grandkids. So if they don't ask you about your income, your property's square-footage, your knowledge of dogs and commitment to the breed, look out.

RED FLAG: Will that be cash or check? If that's their first concern, roll on...

What Do We Need A Contract For?

Responsible breeders may finally trust you enough to take their puppy home, but they set conditions in a legal contract just to be sure. They spell out what medical tests are to be given when, vaccination schedules, and when the dog must be spayed or neutered. You'll likely only receive a limited registration from a top breeder because the good ones recognize that few are qualified to breed. Full registration only goes to other known reputable breeders. Finally, the contract will likely state that if for some reason you have to give the dog up, it goes directly back to the breeder.

RED FLAG: We don't need all that paperwork. Let's just shake on it... You trust me, right?

They're Weaned, Come And Get One Now

Good breeders won't let a puppy go before it's at least eight weeks old, and most won't before they're ten weeks old. But they're on solid food. Why hang onto them for so long? Because those last few weeks with their mother and littermates are critical socialization time. It's when they learn to be dogs and get along with other dogs. To a backyard breeder though, the sooner they're gone, the better. One less mouth to feed.

RED FLAG: Sure, I know you can't wait to get your hands on this little cutie...what's the harm? Why Not Get One Of Each?

If a breeder produces more than one type of dog, look out. They're maximizing profit, not trying to improve the breed. To become proficient with any one breed can take decades because the genetics are that complicated. Understanding the breed standard and learning how to best approach it is a steep learning curve. Raising more than one breed at time well is unlikely.

RED FLAG: If you don't see what you like, keep looking. We have others !

Who Has Time For All Those Shows and Club Meetings?

A top breeder is passionate about the breed. They mix with other like-minded owners and breeders. This is how they learn, support each other, stay honest in their dealings and work together to improve the breed. It's not elitism, it's being part of a larger whole.

Backyard breeders stay under the radar for obvious reasons.

RED FLAG: I don't need other people telling me what to do. Trust me, I know this breed.

You Probably Won't Have Time To Stay In Touch

The hell I won't. If I'm a new puppy owner I'm going to need all the help I can get raising this little guy well. A good breeder will insist you give them regular reports of your puppy's progress. They're available when your puppy gets the runs, when she hurts a back paw from zooming around the yard, when she has her first season of heat, when she's old and has sore joints and one day when she's ready to leave you and cross the bridge. A good breeder is there the entire life of your puppy.

Once the check clears, backyard breeders will be vague, distant and hard to reach. They're done.

RED FLAG: Well the puppy was perfectly fine when I sold it to you. What have you done?

Backyard breeders are the scourge of any breed. You may save dollars on the front end, but you could end up spending much more than you would have going to a qualified breeder in the long run. Vet bills and corrective surgeries can hit your wallet hard. Not to mention the heartache of seeing your dog ill or suffering from genetic problems that a reputable breeder weeded out of their line long ago.

It's your choice, of course.



This is Not Advice you Want to Ignore



by Bob McMillan The Wild Stare

Looking for an Irish Wolfhound? Congratulations, you're in for a life-changing experience. But remember, going to the Little Big Horn was "life-changing" for George Custer, too. It can get tricky.

A walk through the process

So, let's walk through a few critical points. First, what kind of wolfhound are you looking for. Do you want (A) a whopping big dog with four legs and a tail or (B) a certified-healthy, painstakingly reared, rather large new member of your family?

If your choice was A, any dog will do, but if you want B, you really have just two options since you can't drive down to Walmart and pick up one on the pet aisle. You need to find an Irish Wolfhound breeder. Again, there are two broad choices: (A) a "professional" breeder who generates several litters a year or (B) the few good ones.

It's your choice, of course. But let us recommend B. Here's why:

Two kinds of breeders

Yes, you very well could find a healthy Irish Wolfhound puppy at a professional breeder. They're not, after all, trying to produce sick puppies or ones with behavior problems. They're in it for profit. They don't do things that the top breeders do like routinely perform liver shunt tests. Liver shunt is rare and the tests are pricey. So is all the testing that the best breeders do.

You can find such breeders on the internet or in the Yellow Pages under "puppies for sale." There are plenty of them and getting an Irish Wolfhound puppy from one is quick and easy. But once the sale is closed, you're completely on your own. And tales of hidden health problems from such breeders are legion. Vet bills for any dog are high but for a giant dog....? Well, what's in your wallet?

Obviously, B is the better choice. The best Irish Wolfhound breeders are extending and improving their line. They may breed once a year or they may not. They're not breeding for the marketplace, they're working to improve the breed. And every puppy in their line is precious to them.

Meet the royal family

If you find a reputable breeder and they agree to talk to you about puppies, there'll be a few questions. In fact, you'll feel like you're being screened to marry a member of the royal family. No, the best breeders aren't usually in line for the crown. A few just act like it.

The most respected breeders are keen students of the science and art of breeding. There are few surprises when a new litter of puppies arrive. Then they spend three intensive months up to their elbows in puppy poop cleaning and rearing up to 14 puppies at a time. And they do this year after year.

They have every week of the puppy's life planned out. They know the latest techniques for helping puppies grow soundly and claim the rock-solid temperaments of their parents. They're deep into the age-old art of breeding, too. They can reel off the traits of the mother and father and tell you the finer points of generations of wolfhounds who went into the making of the puppy you want to take home. And they're a little particular about who gets that puppy.

Wolfhounds aren't for everyone – really

The most respected breeders have seen it all. They've been told by prospective buyers that they have spacious accommodations when they actually live in a two-room walkup. Clients have claimed to have vast skill with giant breeds when all they've owned were labs and a couple of quirky beagles.

And it's not always a case of misrepresentation – a lot of would-be buyers simply have no idea what they're getting into. But the breeder does. So, the interview process is lengthy. You may even feel it's getting pretty personal (You or a responsible family member are planning to be with the puppy 24/7, right? And how are your finances?).

The best breeders will quiz you closely to be sure you can successfully raise a puppy who will weigh 100 pounds at six months but who has the cartilage and joints of a rubber chicken. It's not easy. The breeder knows this. Are you sure you do?

An Irish Wolfhound isn't a box of staples

They're not mass-produced. Top breeders lovingly rear them. And they're not required to sell to you. Their standards are high. This may sound a bit elitist. It is. But the most respected breeders aren't crossing prospects off their list because they went to the wrong school or don't vacation in Bali or Telluride. They're looking for someone who'll raise puppies as they would.

Can you hear me now?

Getting to meet the best breeders is difficult. You may have started your search on Facebook wolfhound groups or at dog shows. You'll be given advice on how to proceed. Hopefully it'll be cordial, but sometimes it's a bit blunt. The people who eventually take home the soundest dogs develop thick skins. They've researched the breed, haunted dogs shows and know deep down that this is the dog for them. They listen to advice when it's offered. Because the deeper they get into this, the more they realize that there are many pitfalls in owning a giant. And you really do want to start with the soundest puppy you can find.

And know this: The reason some wolfhound people are snippy is because they've taken the time in the past to offer insightful tips to newcomers and then watched that person ignore them and buy a puppy from a "professional" breeder. They're also known as backyard breeders. And they damage the breed that so many have nurtured over the decades by churning out wolfhounds who develop countless health problems.

This school is never out

Everyone involved with wolfhounds from new buyers to breeders with decades of experience keeps learning more about the breed. It's a steep learning curve. But once most people have a wolfhound, they're deeply in love with it. They're a dog like no other. Newcomers become desperate devotees. And it's suddenly apparent that they need guidance. Especially if their hound came from a backyard breeder and now their four-month-old is failing, their one-year-old needs joint surgery or their adult has an enlarged heart.

There's a reason Irish Wolfhounds are called "the heartbreak hounds." They claim your heart. You fall more in love with them than you ever thought possible. And then they're gone far, far too soon.

The real tragedy with the breed is newcomers who fall hard for a wolfhound and then discover

too late that they've gotten theirs from a breeder who was less than scrupulous – and now the dog is developing catastrophic health problems.

Do your research, be patient, persist, seek advice from the pros and listen closely. Because they love the breed as much as you do.

If you're lucky enough to get tips from a veteran Irish Wolfhound authority, respect it. Too many ignore it and buy a puppy from the wrong source. Then the heartache begins.



IWCA Resources for Puppies



Finding Your Irish Wolfhound Puppy

The recommendation to find a responsible breeder is still the “golden rule”, but just how do you go about that?

There is no one perfect way to find your breeder, but here are some basic suggestions. Reputable and responsible breeders often have waiting lists and getting the right puppy may take longer than you would like. You may need to look outside your region to find a breeder that has puppies available.

- Use the IWCA website as a first step resource:
- [Breeder Directory](#) and [Contacts Directory](#) - Reach out to these volunteers in your region to answer your questions about the breed and determine if there are breeders near your location.
- [Irish Wolfhound Events](#) - This section can tell you about specialty shows just for Irish Wolfhounds coming up. Attending one of these events is a great way to meet people and their hounds.
- [Regional Irish Wolfhound Clubs](#) - Contacting the regional club that is closest to you is another strong move to get you connected with people and activities in your area. St Patrick's Day parades, Club specialty shows and other events like Renaissance Fairs are more opportunities for you to meet the breed and their owners.

Go to a local all breed dog show to meet exhibitors and breeders.

You can search for kennel clubs and other all-breed organizations in your area on the [AKC website](#).

Meet the breeder you are hoping to get a puppy from.

It's not always possible, but it's still the best advice. Meeting someone allows you to get a good idea if they are a good match for you. Your breeder will be the best resource for you raising a healthy puppy. Get references from the IWCA Contact or Breeder from the lists on our webpage.

Be prepared to answer LOTS of questions about your interest in Wolfhounds, your experience and the home environment you would provide.

What about searching the Internet?

Learning about the Irish Wolfhound on line and finding many breeders with great websites can be educational. However, the dog world is filled with people who are breeding dogs, including Wolfhounds, who do not take care to do the necessary health tests or even try to breed dogs of excellent quality. Irish Wolfhounds have not escaped the exploitation of commercial-type and other irresponsible breeders who are interested only in profiting from the production and sale of puppies. Be sure to follow up any on-line contact with an in person visit and references to avoid being taken advantage of.

What you should discuss with breeders.

Tell me about the health and longevity in your breeding.

Anyone interested in producing healthy dogs will want to talk to you about common health problems in our breed, what problems they have tested for and what you can generally expect in lifespan for our breed. Breeders should be willing to share proof of health screenings such as OFA and CERF certificates with potential buyers. It's not a good sign if someone says they don't have any cancer or heart disease in their dogs as these are the two main reasons for Irish Wolfhound deaths.

How long have you been breeding Irish Wolfhounds? What is your experience with this breed?

Look for someone who can discuss the breed's positive and negative qualities. They should be able to talk about the qualities they are most interested in producing in their dogs. You may want to ask if they are involved in any breed clubs or organizations. Responsible breeders are interested in getting opinions and evaluations of their breeding program from judges and other breeders.

Ask to meet the adult dogs and the mother of the puppies.

Meeting the adult dogs including the mother gives you a better idea of what you can expect in

your puppy. What physical condition are the dogs in? Are they outgoing and friendly?

What requirements do you have of people looking to get one of your puppies?

Breeders should be willing to answer your questions, but they should ask many questions of you as well. Responsible breeders want to be absolutely sure their puppies are going to the right home with people who know what to expect and have made all the necessary preparations.

Do you provide a health guarantee and a contract?

It is important to discuss what happens if your puppy develops a serious health condition. If you can no longer care for the puppy, responsible breeders will always take the puppy back. Ask if the puppy will come with a list of vaccines and deworming treatments given. Ask to see a sample contract.

How do you socialize your puppies?

The breeder should be able to tell you how often the puppies have met people other than the breeder's family. What activities have the puppies learned before they go to their new home? Breeders can make a big difference in the confidence of a puppy by giving car rides, introducing sounds, different surfaces and meeting different types of adults and children.

When will you be able to take the puppy home?

The breeder should not allow a puppy to go to their new home before 10-12 weeks of age. ALL PUPPIES SHOULD BE TESTED FOR LIVER SHUNT prior to going to their new homes, usually about 9 weeks of age. Puppies also need ample time to mature and socialize with their mother and littermates. This time is longer in Irish Wolfhounds than many other breeds.

What will be supplied with the puppy?

You should expect to get documents listing the AKC registration of the puppy. These should come home with the puppy or be provided in advance. Many breeders send their puppies home with enough food for several days, a full pedigree, feeding directions, health history (vaccines, deworming and bile acids test result).

How much does the puppy cost?

The price of a puppy varies by region of the country. A good suggestion is to get in touch with the IWCA Contact person in your area and ask what the expected range of cost is. Beware of breeders whose puppies are being offered at a price substantially below the average for your area or who seem particularly anxious to sell you a puppy.

Credit: Irish Wolfhound Club of America

<https://www.iwclubofamerica.org/finding-irish-wolfhound-puppy>



So, You Want an Irish Wolfhound Puppy?



By Debbie & Robert Greene

Everyone wants a puppy...then what? **Find a great breeder!** I cannot stress this enough. But I will! **Find a great breeder!** Irish Wolfhounds by their size & nature tend to live shorter lives than other breeds. At least with a great breeder you have a better chance at a healthy, happy, longer lived, well-adjusted dog. They will test for the common problems and guide you along the way. You want to at least start with a good genetic line. A line with good conformation and health. A dog can look great, yet still be unhealthy! GREAT breeders do not breed for color! If anyone tells you that a certain color is more valuable... RUN! Get a list of breeders from the Irish Wolfhound Club of America or from your local Irish Wolfhound Club. The previously mentioned Irish Wolfhound Club of America's publication *Puppy Buyers Guide* is an excellent resource.

If you are open to an older dog, and I only say this as the rescue coordinator for Great Lakes Irish Wolfhound Association, we find that there are Wolfhounds available for rescue occasionally. When I say occasionally, I mean rarely! 2-7 per year is the most we have seen in the Great Lakes region. Mostly in the 3-5 year age range. In the several years we have been doing this we have only had one puppy. We have had two one-year olds and the rest usually are a bit older. You can never tell with these rescues, but I can personally say that they are so loving and caring. If you are open to opening your heart and home to a Wolfhound who needs a family, this is a great way to go.

Aile our first Wolfhound had four homes in three years. She was with us until she was 9.5 years old. Bodhi our second is now 11.5 years old! We have two more now, Flannery and Finn. Flannery just turned two and Finn is six. You never know what you will get in these adoption situations. Bo, who you see in many pictures on our Facebook page, had an original owner that had to move for work and give her up. She is now the most spoiled dog on the planet and lives with Mark Bettin, one of our event coordinators. Some rescues, like Clover Rose (who now lives on a farm in Indiana) and Sebastian (who also lives in Indiana) are cherished pets and lifelong companions to their new families.

Advice:

If you want a puppy meet the local, established breeders! Come to a show/fun match. Meet the other owners, talk about their dogs and breeders. Meet them and let them know who you are and that you are interested. Some people have lists that are very long for a great reason! They are good breeders.

What does a good breeder mean? They love the breed. They want to preserve the breed. They breed for healthy, happy dogs. They breed for the breed standard.

GET to know the breeders. Get to know fellow owners. Join/renew your membership for the Great Lakes Irish Wolfhound Association [by following this link](#). Come to our events. Come to lunches, walks, parades! We would love to meet you too!

And if you are interested in a rescue, please email greenecr@gmail.com. An application for rescue can be found here: [Adoption Form](#)

Quarterly Photos & Brags



See what GLIWA has been up to!

GLIWA Member's St. Patrick's Day Wolfhound Walk Naperville, IL 3/21/21

What to do when all of our St. Patrick's Day parades have been cancelled? Make our own of course! On Sunday March 21st, GLIWA members met up to enjoy a hike on the beautiful Naperville Riverwalk. We enjoyed a nice hike up and back on the Riverwalk followed by lunch at Quigley's. They had us in a private rooms where we could be more Covid safe. It was a beautiful day and we really enjoyed seeing so many NEW faces and getting new GLIWA membership applications.

Thank you to our event coordinators Mark Bettin & Scott Mortenson for organizing.

See photos below:

GLIWA

Naperville March for
St. Patrick's Day



GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION



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GLIWA Members April Wolfhound Walk! 4/25/2021

We met at Four Rivers Educational Center in Channahon, IL at 10:00 a.m. and took the group photo. We took the group photo at the beginning because there were two adorable puppies in attendance, and they could not walk the three and a half miles like their older friends. There were so many fabulous photos that even with several pages here in the newsletter there are still more so please check the Facebook page and the website soon.

This is such a beautiful place to walk! The trails are flat, and the scenery is fabulous. It is a great birding spot. There is a yearly migration of white pelicans and on the day we were there we saw swans, water snakes sunning, turtles and frogs as well as a long line of absolutely spectacular Irish Wolfhounds!

Walking with us that day (in no particular order) were Scott Mortenson, Mark Bettin, Maria Lubera, Joe and Madeline Mahoney, Debbie Greene, Gina Clapper, Scott Mitchell, Stephanie and David Powell, Gail Kaplan and Amanda Kelly and all of their assorted hounds. Then Claire Morrison met us for lunch.

Lunch was a blast! We met at the Channahon Bar and Grill. They gave us the entire fenced in patio for us and our dogs! We had the most fabulous waitress – CANDY! It was so fun to eat and partake in a few adult beverages in the sun, on a porch, with friends!

See below for photos

GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION





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GREAT LAKES IRISH WOLFHOUND ASSOCIATION





Some of the best things about GLIWA:

WALKS!

FRIENDSHIP!

LUNCHESS and DINNERS!

NEW FRIENDS!

SUNSHINE ON A SPRING DAY!!

COMMARADARIE!



**A VERY SPECIAL THANK
YOU TO
THE CHANNAHON BAR
AND GRILL AND
ESPECIALLY TO CANDY!**

