

Why Am I a Member?

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Editing John Daly

Why am I a member of the German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America? I contemplated this question, during a recent conversation with a long time GWPCA member that was considering dropping his membership this year. He voiced concerns about the direction of the breed, decisions being made in the club by the board of directors, and reservations about the club's value.

I listed the benefits of supporting the GWPCA as members: "You receive the Wire~News, and members receive an advertising discount.", "At Nationals, only members can participate in Futurity.", "Only members can receive the annual awards", "Only members can be listed on the GWPCA breeders list and be referred by the GWPCA breeder referral." And I threw out a couple more reasons. At this point I think they were seeing some benefits but were not totally convinced.

So I decided to email about 30 GWPCA members, ranging from senior members to novice. I explained the reason behind my questions and how I was doing research for an article; I then asked "What does the GWPCA have to offer me, my dogs, and the breed as a whole?" As I was clicking the send button, I thought I wonder what kind of response I will get. Do people agree with this member? Would they finally shed some light on the GWPCA problems and spell out what the club should do for ME.

Wait a second; let me go read that question again. "What does the GWPCA have to offer ME and MY dogs...?" Then I kept reading that one little word over and over again, ME, ME, ME! Was the GWPCA formed for ME? Is my ego so consuming that all I care about is what this club can do for Me? So I thought maybe I need reminder on why the GWPCA came into existence.

I decided to start by reading the objectives in the by laws. A. To do all possible to bring the natural qualities of the German Wirehaired Pointer to perfection. Not one statement about ME in that first objective. So I continued reading and believe it or not there was no mention of ME. So the question I asked "What does the GWPCA have to offer ME and MY dogs? Is the very root of the problem with the GWPCA. Too few of us ask, "What can I do for the club? What can I do for the breed?"

Active membership in the GWPCA gives you numerous opportunities to give action to the statement "What can I do for the breed?" The GWPCA offers education through the Wire~News, GWP U, Judges Education, Meet the Breed sponsorship and health clinics. When did you last write an article, participate in one of these events or belong to a committee.

Then we have the GWPCA National events. Without the GWPCA and its hard working members there would be no Specialties, no National Championship, no place to showcase our wonderful breed. These events allow members from across the country to gather in one place. To share stories, experiences and tips. They allow members to get together to talk about the breed we love so much. It's a place where new friendships can be formed and where mentors can be gained.

The GWPCA allows us to do so much more than we could do on an individual basis. Membership dues fund thousands each year to numerous health studies such as Canine

Lymphoma, Epilepsy, Brucella and many more health issues that affect all of our dogs. The GWPCA allows us to speak loudly as one voice on how we think the breed standard should be represented, guidelines for a code of ethics to breeders and which health screenings should be considered before breeding. The GWPCA provides a rescue organization for the less fortunate GWP's, this rescue group may not have existed without our membership funds.

This brings me back to the original concern from that long time GWPCA member who was considering dropping their membership. We may not always agree with everything the GWPCA and its board do, but the GWPCA does have a lot to offer ME! Is that its purpose? Or, would you get more satisfaction out of the club and be able to have a bigger voice in the direction of this breed we all love so much, if we would just ask...

What can I do for the German Wirehaired Pointer Club of America?