

Volunteer!

Do you enjoy your Australian Terrier? Have you ever thought about how much effort is expended by the Australian Terrier Club of America (ATCA) toward being a “steward of the breed,” and about what you can do to help?

The short answer is *volunteer your time*.

“How?” you might ask.

To answer this, we first need to understand the activities of our breed club. Led by the ATCA Board of Directors, the club’s primary purpose is “to encourage and promote quality in the breeding of purebred Australian Terriers and to do all possible to bring their natural qualities to perfection.”

According to our club constitution, this includes encouraging members and breeders to strive toward the standard, approved by the board and our members, of “the true type of Australian Terrier as the only standard of excellence by which the Aussie shall be judged.”

This is done through education. The ATCA Judges’ Education Committee (JEC), composed of our most experienced breeder members, educate the American Kennel Club judges of this standard. Once approved by the AKC, the judges will adjudicate to provide an independent assessment of how well our breeders are doing of meeting the standard as they display their finest Aussies in specialty shows, sanctioned matches, obedience trials, earthdog tests, and the like.

The ATCA Constitution describes these events as another primary purpose of the ATCA and regional specialty clubs, and members around the nation, provide the labor necessary to organize and conduct them and any other activities that “demonstrate the qualities of the breed in a favorable light.”

The JEC and the ATCA Members Education Committee (MEC) work to provide educational programs for our members to better understand the standard and structure of the Aussie during national specialty week. Also during specialty week, the Awards Committee recognizes the accomplishments of our members with their dogs. Public

education about the Aussie occurs each year, around the nation, through member participation in “Meet The Breeds” gatherings.

The editor of the ATCA’s quarterly *Talkabout* newsletter gathers articles written by members and specialists about all aspects of owning, breeding, showing, and loving our Aussies (including articles by the JEC and MEC). Also included is the quarterly Australian Terrier breed column originally written for the *AKC Gazette* by our breed and guest columnists. The Health Committee conducts health surveys, understands and promotes health research, and disseminates their findings to our members. In addition, they monitor longevity and incident reports sent in by Aussie owners and publish the results of these reports and all their findings in the newsletter and on the ATCA website. The website, maintained by our webmaster, contains all information pertaining to the Aussie and ATCA, including the standard and working documents, breeder referral, archived *Talkabout* issues, notices to the membership and the general public, the Aussie Store, and much more. The Aussie Store (<https://www.australianterrier.org/store.html>) provides items for sale, including the Illustrated Standard, a grooming DVD, and the ATCA Calendar (all created by members to create revenue for the club).

A list of all ATCA committees and their chairs are on the website. Contact one of them or the chair of a show or event and offer your “services.” The more you volunteer, the more you learn—and the more you learn, the sooner you too can help be a “steward of our breed”!

—Grace Massey

Australian Terrier Club of America <http://www.australianterrier.org/>