

LRKC Chairman's Report: AGM 4 March 2017

SHOWS

Due to the decision by SA Guidedogs Association early in 2016 to no longer make their grounds available for dog shows, the Committee made the decision to in future use only the Goldfields Show Grounds our permanent venue for all LRKC shows moving forward.

You will remember I referred in my report last year to the loss of sponsorship of dog food prizes for our shows. It was quite a wake-up call for not only the LRKC, but also many other specialist breed clubs that the major dog food companies decided to reduce their sponsorships of dog shows. It is a sign of the times we live in and it can be expected that the club will more and more have to depend on its own resources – its members – to fund events. We were in the end lucky enough to find sponsorship for food prizes for all of our shows. For this I want to express on behalf of the LRKC our sincere appreciation to the JCW Petfoods (for the 1st OS) and WUMA! for the Second Open Show as well as for the Championship Show. Let me tell you about these sponsors – their products have been used by committee members for many years and when we approached them for sponsorship, they extended their loyalty not only to long-standing customers but also to the club we are members of. They manufacture excellent products locally at very competitive prices and it is without prejudice that I recommend their dog food. As a special appeal to members of the LRKC – please make every effort to support these dog food companies.

Besides the dog food sponsors, so many members supported the shows with additional show prizes and raffle prizes, gifts to judges and ring stewards. I would like to specially mention Kevin and Jane Pott, Betty Howard, Thania Rowan, Genevieve Alberts and if I have forgotten to mention anybody here, please forgive me – your names will be added to the report before publication.

The **FIRST OPEN SHOW** or as I like to refer to the **Summer Open Show, sponsored by JCW Petfoods**, was held on 6 February 2016, judged by Mrs Lynne Ruddle. With an good entry of more than 40 dogs, the Junior Best in Show was Mr Chester Smart's Conkasha V for Victory of Dimeche, Senior Best in Show was Mrs Jane Pott's Caignair Picture Perfect, who was also the overall Best in Show with the Reserve Best Senior, Mrs Thania Rowan's Casimiro Sykstus of Rowania also the overall Reserve BIS on the day. Best Puppy in Show was Mrs Vanessa Lodge-Lowe's Rowania Hey Big Spender of Valhallan.

The **WINTER OPEN SHOW** was held on 25 June 2016, again with an entry of more than 40 dogs, judged by Mrs Susan Faes. This was the first time we were sponsored by WUMA!, and they went into additional expense to manufacture a gazebo in time for our show. Additional prizes were generously sponsored by some of our club members and all agreed this open show was really a great success. Best Junior in

Show was again Mr Chester Smart's dog Conkasha V for Victory of Dimeche and Best Senior in Show was Mrs Mercia van Tonder's Ch Craignair Special Vintage of Kloofzicht. He was also the overall BIS with Mr Dwayne Malcolm's Ch Craignair Switch Blade the RBIS. Best Puppy in Show went to Mr Pierre and Mrs Marietjie Nicholson's Chezenko Poursmsugaronme of Berrakaw.

THE 49TH ANNUAL CHAMPIONSHIP SHOW was sponsored by WUMA! with an entry of 31 dogs and 44 bitches. The show was held on Saturday 17 September 2015, judged by Mr Chris Mills from the UK supported by Mr Kevin Young as Ring Steward.

The Dog CC was won by Skibmanoch Zephyr of Bunnichem, with RCC going to Ms Sharon Brown's Elmsmere Burnt Sugar of Conkasha who also won Best Puppy in Show. The Bitch CC went to Ch Craignair Picture Perfect and RCC to Mrs Juanita Botha's Ablesing Bring die Storm.

In the final line-up was also the Champion Dog, Mr Dwayne Malcolm's Ch Craignair Switch Blade, the Champion Bitch, Ms Sharron Brown's Ailsacraig Special Star of Conkasha, but BIS went to the CC bitch, Ch Craignair Picture Perfect with RBIS to the Champion bitch Ailsacraig Special Star of Conkasha.

Directly after the show, all exhibitors were invited to a cheese and wine function. This was well attended and a lot of positive feedback from members about the show and function was shared with the committee afterwards.

I would like to reflect a bit on last year's shows: we were hopeful after the surprisingly good entry at both the open shows that our Championship Show entry would also be significantly up. Unfortunately entry dropped by 4 from 2015. Like I mentioned last year, the championship show is the show case of South African Labradors, obviously with respect to the excellent Labradors in other parts of the country, but with this the only Labrador Specialist Championship Show in South Africa, visiting judges go home with the idea they formed of South African dogs they saw at this Championship Show. This is why I really want to urge our members in other provinces to make special effort to travel for our championship show annually. This year, 2017, will be our 50th Annual Championship Show – reason to make this a special event and truly showcase Labradors in this country. For this reason the committee had also decided to invite a South African Labrador Specialist judge, former President of this club and presently one of our Patrons, the widely respected All-breeds and International judge, Mrs Rose-Marie Cabion. We would like to make something special of this event and I already now wish to invite members traveling from other provinces to plan you trip. It will once again be a double championship show weekend shared with the Gundog Club so another reason to take the time to travel to Gauteng for that weekend. I would like to ask local LRKC members to help our traveling members find accommodation – I am sure many local homes will be open for Labradors and their owners traveling from all over the South Africa. We hope to set up a team that will help with the logistics for this special event.

FIELD TRIALS

The **46th Annual Field Trials** were once again staged at the Val Farms over the weekend of 22 – 25 April 2016. Unfortunately the LRKC was unable to secure the usual Val Sports Club for base camp and we had to revert to the nearby Roodebank Geloftefees Terrein. This was slightly inconvenient for handlers that stayed at Val but in many respect the new venue had more and better facilities to offer than the Sport Club we were used to. Despite inconveniences to some, the trials were once again a great success. Number of entries was down in 2017 but we do not believe this was because of anything relating to the planning and base camp venue for the trial. To plan and stage this event always draw the most resources, both financial and human, and to in the end be thanked by several participants for an excellent trial is very rewarding and motivational. I want to once again thank each of my Committee members who worked really hard before, during and following the trials. I once again want to make special mention and thanks to Mr Gareth Thomas and Mr Tony and Mrs Marie Wynne for their help and support. To the officials - Judges, Field Trial Managers, Guns and Throwers – once again thank you very much for your time and hard work. To our main sponsors, MSD Animal Health and Jock – we appreciate your continued support of our sport. I would also like to specially mention Kevin and Jane Pott for their sponsorship of additional prizes and to Gerhard and Mercia van Tonder of their sponsorship of the raffle prizes.

The Puppy Stake was won by Ms Sharron Brown and Skye, Junior Stake by Ms Judith Buchanan and Echo, Maiden Stake by Mr Michael Kloeck and Shayde, Novice by Mr David Padbury and Major and Open Stake by Mr Henry Playne and Zack.

And then of course the LRKC in collaboration with the Golden Retriever Club of the Transvaal staged the 2016 KUSA National Field Trial Championship Stake on 20 and 21st August 2016 on the farms of Mr James and Mr Hoeck in the Hekpoort area. Being part of this committee consisting of committee members of two clubs proved to be both interesting, challenging but in the end very rewarding. If you haven't read it yet, I wish to refer you to the write-ups in the Lab Lines 2016 of the Chairman of the joint committee and Field Trial manager, Mr Kevin Pott, as well as that of the Secretary of the joint committee, Mrs Marie Wynne. It was both exciting and humbling to see those dogs at work. The quality of the handlers speak for itself when you look at the results: 21 pickups were set up over the two days and 9 of the 13 dogs finished the stake with 8 of the dogs finishing with SAHR point. It was thrilling to watch it happen and as one of the photographers I can say a high-light of my year. The same handler and dog that won the LRKC Open Stake also won the Champions Stake – Mr Henry Playne and his black Labrador Ravenside Gimlet FTA WHR (Zack).

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CLUB COMMUNICATION

WEBSITE:

The most important source of information for LRKC members and the general public interested in Labradors in South Africa is still our website. I was still responsible for the update and maintenance of the website throughout 2016. Last year in my chairman's report I had said that all I manage to find time to do was really just to keep the basic information up to date and add members' adverts for puppies and keep the breeders listing up to date. I had said that we can do so much better for the club with a more interactive, modern website and that we can use the website even better to grow the club and keep members' interest, but that it would require a person with a lot more time and skill, willing to do the job for free, or at much less than a professional fee. I had appealed to club members to come forward, give reference or even sponsor a professional website and the services of a professional webmaster for the club. A year later we still have the same site and my comments are still exactly the same. Despite this I must share with you that I was recently approached by the Golden Retriever Club to do a website for them as well, so despite what some members of the LRKC think about our website, it is still seen as good enough for other clubs to aspire to. In fact very few other specialist breed clubs even have a website. With that I am not patting myself on the back, merely stating that despite the obvious short-comings of our site, which I am the one most aware of, at least we have a functioning site where people can find information about the breed and the club, where members can see results of events and where we are keeping record of what is happening in the club, both written and photographic. I also wish to add that the website is still far better than it ever was at the time of any previous committee before us. And don't worry, I have not taken on the commission of the Golden Retriever Club.

I do however have some progress to report: the main problem we are facing with the present website is that it is designed and driven on the Dreamweaver platform – this is rather complicated software and time-consuming to update and we depend on one person to do it. We had again considered outsourcing it to a professional webmaster, but that would just be too costly being charged by the hour for work done on the site. The only affordable alternative we decided on was to obtain a template – to find an easy enough platform that will allow several people to update the site. We had considered a few options and decided to opt for a commercially available predesigned template. I had purchased such a template website and had it installed with the software (WordPress) directly in a root directory so that several users would be able to upload or update the site. Although we will still need to do some basic training, the format and software is far easier and hopefully will enable us to be more up to date and provide more functionality to club members than what we presently have. The site (currently only a template) has already been uploaded with a new domain name and installed with a new hosting service that will cost only \$2.95 per month. The new domain name will enable us to work on the site without compromise to the old site, until the new site is completely ready and then we will decide whether to revert back to the old domain name or keep the new one. The new domain name is www.lrkcsa.com

We hope that this new site will make it easier to keep the site up to date, easier to use and easy enough for future committees to take over without much hassle.

SECRETARY’S E-MAIL DISTRIBUTION LIST:

One of the main tasks for club secretaries is the distribution of Show Schedules and information from KUSA and DOGSPC about dog matters in South Africa. The DOGWORLD UK electronic Newspaper has become a very interesting read and source of information. Thank you to our Secretary for continuing to do this distribution so efficiently.

PUBLICATIONS:

LRKC Bulletin

The Honorary Secretary produced three electronic *LRKC Bulletins* during the course of 2016 – these are also available on the website for reference. Members are requested to continuously send material for these publications.

Lab Lines 2016

Was once again a publication to be proud of, reflecting out club activities and compiled with lovely flair and full of very relevant and interesting articles and reports! Thanks to all members who contributed with written accounts, photographs and articles of interest they shared with the club and the Genevieve for putting it all together.

The Book: The Labrador Retriever in South Africa

This book continues to be advertised on the website, other club publications and at events.

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership remains our most valuable resource. Looking at the numbers I just still cannot believe that these we are not a larger club in South Africa. I compared ourselves with the New Zealand Club last year, this year once again tried to think of ways to grow and keep our members, but I have yet to find the answer to grow the club.

27	122	96	3	191	43	18	223
Life Member	Mem paid 2016	Mem paid 2017	1 yr Free Membership	Web Members List	Web Breeders List	Website Link	Number of Members

102	13	87	62	57	17	67
Breeder	Accredited Breeders	Shows	Field Trials	Obedience	Other Working	Pet Home

Other Club activities:

The LRKC also hosted a Fun Day, again at the Inanda Country Base. This is proving to be very popular, if only we can get our members to advertise this event to their puppy buyers and other Labrador enthusiasts they know. Reaching non-members and pet owners is the main objective of this event and we as the committee do not have the information to reach wider than the club membership and our own personal contacts. We need our breeder members to help us or then at least supply us with a list of names we can add to our distribution list. We need to grow our club and this is one very good way of doing just that.

The LRKC once again shared some sessions in the Gundog Stand at WODAC. Not really sure how this benefits the club but the breed is exhibited there and perhaps I underestimate the promotional value to the general public. Please bring your ideas to us to make more of this event.

Genevieve is still driving the LRKC Health Project – her account, as published in the Lab Lines, of what is done and the collaborative efforts with veterinary professionals speak for itself. The dedicated breeder will take note of this and be open to the facts published for example about risk factors for hip dysplasia. Thank you Genevieve also for this initiative and for your continued drive to keep us informed as best we can.

I want to make mention in my report of the loss of one of our truly great members in the history of this club, Miss June Trautmann. June has really done a lot for this club, she could truly be called a Patron of the LRKC and Labrador Retrievers and we will miss her dearly. I was privileged to have inherited from her all her dog books and other dog paraphernalia. Believe me this is truly a treasure and I intend to keep this as part of the LRKC heritage when I reached my due date.

Sadly the number of Labradors in need is ever growing and I cannot imagine what would have happened if we did not have the Labrador Rescue doing such an incredible job of helping those dogs in need. I want to urge members to support these people in whatever way they can. At the moment they are requesting help to inspect prospective new homes – please let Jane Hoar and Ruth Bots know should you be able to and have the interest to support them in this task.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

Thank you from the bottom of my heart to every committee member. I will not even try to list what every person has done for the club during 2016. All I can say to the club is, we should be glad to have such a team, passionate about the breed and passionate about the club. To the office bearers for their special tasks, thank you so much Kevin, Genevieve and Dwayne, not to mention our very active President who is also a member of the committee – Jane thank you for all the many small things you do, not to mention the big things and thank you for the special support you are giving to me as chairman. Thank you to Mercia (and Gerhard although he was not a committee member during 2017) for your hard work especially when it comes to the Field Trials. Also, huge appreciation especially to Francois and Angelique, without whom putting together Field Trials will be impossible.

My last thoughts:

In conclusion I want to add: As a club we really do only two things – we hold events to demonstrate what our breed is all about and capable of (shows and field trials) and we share information on public domain about the breed in South Africa. In my humble opinion at the heart of what we do, doesn't matter what type of event we organize or bit of information we publish, should always be one goal and that is to further the interest of Labradors in this country. It is too easy in a competitive world to dream up great ambitions and work on satisfying huge egos. Although competition is an excellent driving force we should never forget that the sport, be it shows or field trials, should serve the breed and the breed should never serve the sport we participate in. With that in mind, we should ask ourselves - are we serving the interest of Labrador Retrievers when we judge, work our dogs, show or dogs, breed our dogs, sell our dogs, care for our dogs, and dare I say criticise, or compete against our fellow members?

Perhaps we should once again set ourselves goals that will be in the interest of Labradors in South Africa. Let's set a target such as growing our club membership by 50% over the next two years. There are many other goals we can set for ourselves – reducing the incidence of hip- and elbow dysplasia, eliminating PRA and EIC, breeding true Labrador coat and an otter tail, still with the ability to retrieve. Those to me are all in the interest of the breed and not the individual. As members of the same club we should work together and support each other to achieve that – that which is in the interest of Labradors in South Africa.

Thank you all,

Renier Jansen van Vuuren
LRKC Chairman