

ROSE MARY CONNER – INCUMBENT RECORDING SECRETARY

I have been a GCA member since 1998. Attending seven GCA Specialties in the past five years, I have exhibited at every Eastern Specialty since 1996, and, as GCA's current Recording Secretary, also attended the past two Western Specialties. Since 1998, my specific volunteer commitment to supporting the Eastern has been the Specialty luncheon. Since election to office in 2000, I have attended every board meeting. I strongly endorse a key object of our Constitution, the acceptance of the standard of our breed as approved by the AKC as the only standard by which Greyhounds shall be judged. Thus, I cannot support an open AKC Greyhound Stud Book. I believe that to do otherwise is in conflict with the Constitution. Nor would I support any change to our fine old breed standard.

Today's AKC Parent Breed Club Board demands more than just depth of breed experience and force of personality. It requires a team of people with varied experiences and skills, but all capable of working together purposefully and with civility. In recognition of this need to develop new skills, the AKC is sponsoring its first Parent Club Conference for selected officers from 139 Parent Clubs in October. Forum topics include club management, communications, media in judges' education, in addition to the "eternal" issues the current board has also begun to address: standards, membership, constitution and bylaws, specialties, fund raising, communications, volunteers, committees, education, rescue, stud book, health. It is my honor to have been invited to be a panelist on the Communications session at this upcoming Conference, speaking on goal setting, planning, and follow up.

When this current board was elected, there were two primary issues the membership asked us to address: (1) the stud book and (2) voting and operational conduct. My skills and experience are in the areas of organization, planning, management training, research, process, strategy development, and business writing. It's what I've done professionally for 35 years. My contribution to the current board team has been to identify and recommend solutions to GCA operational black holes and inconsistencies, thus freeing up the breed and issue experts to make their valuable contributions to these projects and enabling us to build a strong cross-functional team. When considering sensitive issues in a professional way, one has to anticipate emotional pushback. It is a time for civility and strength of purpose, not a leap toward libel.

All boards are responsible for good faith representation of the membership majority, and its decisions are, in turn, based on a board majority rule. Accepted business practice says that once a board decision is made, all must speak with one voice. Board policy is to not discuss its business on external internet lists. Thus a board member with individual goals and agendas is less likely to be a productive board member. Two invaluable resources guided us in our search for operational excellence: the AKC and GCA's core documents. All AKC Parent Breed Clubs are subject to the rules, regulations, and guidelines of the AKC, our ultimate authority. This board has consulted with it on any major decisions or challenges (voting practices, bylaws amendments, membership) and followed its advice scrupulously. Any action of the board is guided by the mandates of the GCA Constitution, Bylaws, Ethical Standards, Standing Rules, and Policies. RROR guides our conduct when the documents above are silent on an issue. At times, the commitment to consistency in abiding by our core documents may conflict with "the way we've always done it," but, in turn, it also commits us to equal due diligence and respect for any issue, whether or not we agree with it. In the face of urgings to dismiss it out of hand, we spent a great deal of time ensuring correct procedure on a membership ballot of a proposed constitutional amendment whose passage would have negated AKC's guidelines for conducting business. The membership rejected this amendment 89-17.

Examples of my efforts to increase our operational effectiveness include a template which I developed, now used for all motions and votes by the board. A report-out of each is sent to all board members and to the newsletter for publishing. Believing that GCA's operational history should not be lost, I have personally compiled for my own information a Board Book organized by sections of our bylaws and filled with the information needed to guide us as a club, past, present, and future. It's very much a work in progress, but it's already four inches thick. And there's a separate book for membership.

I have old-fashioned values and they have served me well. I have always worked from my home in order to be there for my children and animals. My first summer job was in the West Wing of the White House. Upon graduation from Smith College, I worked in publishing at McGraw-Hill and Random House, lucky enough to work with such diverse giants as John Updike, Norman Mailer, Truman Capote, Julia Child, and Andy Warhol. Since 1966, I have worked for the American Management Association, a not-for-profit management education association very similar to the AKC in size and scope. My current position at AMA is Director of Marketing Strategy and Databases. I have created, developed, and managed marketing strategies now producing over fifty million dollars annually. I have experience in all areas of non-profit management and marketing. I have also consulted in these areas for such non-profits as hospitals, universities, and The Jockey Club, as well as for such for-profit companies as Pepsi Cola. As a volunteer, I have served as President of the Princeton Smith College Club, Officer (membership) of the Eastern Dressage and Combined Training Association, on the Program Committee for Direct Mail Days in New York, speaker at many Direct Marketing Conferences, and head of volunteers (over 300) for the United States Equestrian Team's Festival of Champions (an Olympic final qualifier).

Personally, I live on a farm in NJ in a 1725 farmhouse. I share my life, home, and bed with four Greyhounds including two young males I bred (Amwell Ridge). My son is an IBM engineer, and my daughter is a Pharmacia companion animal and equine rep (also long-listed for the US Three-Day Eventing squad in the Atlanta Olympics). Thank you