

Bearded Collies

It's Your Club

The Bearded Collie Club of America's rescue program has been in existence for nearly 25 years. Over this lengthy span, the program has grown in number of volunteers and in financial backing. Today's program reports that much fewer dogs are in need of being rescued and that in fact, there is a waiting list of potential new owners.

Looking at where this national program is today reflects all the changes in our society. Use of the Internet has made correspondence time faster, cheaper, and more efficient; geographically, Beardie ownership has shifted greatly, and the public's current interest in small breeds (AKA "accessories") and designer dogs has helped decrease the number of Beardies being produced by puppy mills and ending up in shelters.

With all these changes, a few facts hold true even after 25 years:

—The BCCA's rescue program is and has been financially and emotionally supported by a majority of the BCCA membership.

—As with most breed clubs, the program has spawned passionate controversy in rescue policy building over the years.

—Since the program's inception, club members have been financing the rescue of Beardies that are primarily the products of puppy mills and backyard breeders, not bred by members of the sport. (This is something some other parent clubs choose not to do.)

The world of breed rescue isn't for the faint of heart. Everyone involved has an opinion and is passionate about Beardies, and some are even passionate about the club. This mixture can brew and bubble into a boil. In the end however, the program is owned by the club's membership. The program's development and its success or failure are completely dependent upon what the membership wants the program to be.

With our new slate of BCCA officers and board members, review of this and other programs will surely take place. Now is a good time for the general membership to also

think about the goals of all the club's various committees. Are they serving the preservation and integrity of the breed? Can you contribute time to one of the committees?

As you pack for the national specialty in Maine this year, think about the future of the club and the breed. Approach your officers and board members at the show, and talk with them about your ideas for the club or ways that you can help particular committees. Just as the Beardie rescue program has become a strongly supported entity, with a vast network of volunteers across the country, other programs can also expand and be supported by our breed-loving membership.

Final note: When you approach officers and board members at the national specialty, keep in mind that they are busy at the event and may not remember you or your ideas after the show. A friendly e-mail after the show may be a good reminder to these hard-working volunteers who are committed to serving our breed.

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