

The Bulldog World Congress

and Our Threatened Breed Standards

By Elizabeth Hugo-Milam

Elizabeth Hugo-Milam is a second-generation "Bulldogger" who, along with her parents Frank and Norma Hugo, is the breeder and exhibitor of the internationally regarded Hug-O-Bull program. An AKC judge, she is a member of the Bulldog Club of America's Judges Education Committee and Chairman of its Special Health Committee. Elizabeth was invaluable in providing the Bulldog content of my book, Solving the Mysteries of Breed Type, and has over the years been my most valued Bulldog mentor. —Rick Beauchamp

For more than a year and a half I had been looking forward to judging the specialty in conjunction with the first Bulldog World Congress, hosted by the Hungarian Bulldog Section in conjunction with the FCI European event in Budapest. What a spectacular city!

The concept of this Congress was the work of popular judge Stephan Sinko from Slovenia. Considering the issues facing show dogs in general and brachycephalic breeds in particular, the timing couldn't have been better. I attended the first meeting of the Congress on Friday evening as an observer, with Bulldoggers from Germany, Spain, Cypress, England, Israel, Hungary, Denmark, Slovenia and Russia. Discussions centered around creation of the committee for the protection of the breed standard worldwide, and future meetings and shows.

Bulldog health is extremely important to me personally, and I wanted to present

ideas about health testing and breeding selection to breeders from the other countries. There is a mistaken notion that our breed is inherently unhealthy by virtue of its conformation. I feel a paradigm shift needs to occur to change that notion to an image of a vibrant and healthy breed that meets all expectations of our 100-plus-year-old standard.

The standard does not need to change, but the excuse given that they are all "unhealthy anyway" needs to be eliminated, as all it does is permit the breeding of unhealthy dogs for people who expect poor health anyway. Many Bulldog breeders see healthy, beautiful and correct Bulldogs as a common entity, and we feel it is time to spread that positive image and try to eliminate the current perception of poor health from the public consciousness.

JUDGING THE SHOW

The specialty was judged by a panel of three people, based on a point scale utilized at the Bulldog of the Year competition in England. The judges were Peter New, a Bulldog specialist from England; Christopher Habig, President of Germany's kennel club, the Verband für das Deutsche Hundewessen; and myself. An entry of over 200 Bulldogs had traveled from 20 countries. When Mr. Habig had to leave during the Intermediate Bitch class to catch a plane he was replaced by Chris Carberry, another British specialist who took to the task with his typical good nature and expertise.

All three judges evaluated the entire entry, and as one would imagine this took quite a while. I was curious to see how the process would go as I always imagined this style of judging would tend to favor the more average dogs. The scores were entered into a computer and we found out who won each class at the end of the judging of each sex. The only decision that was made by discussion was for Best of Breed.

Happily I found most of my favorites in winning positions. Most thrilling of all was to find one of my all-time favorite Bulldogs, Ch. Shakira Mystyle, at the show. I first judged her in France where she easily won the National. She then went to the Ocobo/Mystyle kennel in England where she became the first Bulldog bitch, and sec-




Best of Breed Ch. Shakira Mystyle, born in Italy out of a Hungarian-bred bitch and an English sire. Her breeder/owner is Francesca DiLeo.

ond-ever imported Bulldog, to gain an English title. She was challenged at this show by a few gorgeous younger bitches that had a slight edge in condition to the mature (and somewhat chubby) Shakira, but her type is so outstanding that all three judges agreed on her as the winner.

The dog winner, Black Hope Brando, the 2008 Top Dog in Finland, was a powerfully built dog with an outstanding head and front end. He was a good mover, a bit big for my taste, but of very high quality throughout.

I had judged in Europe on several other occasions and truthfully had not been excited about the overall quality of the Bulldogs with just a few exceptions. In Budapest, however, I found very high quality, particularly in bitches. I was impressed in particular by healthy dogs that for the most part were sound breathers; eyes that were good and clear and noses large and open; and no true lameness.

Size was generally excellent, as were heads, with long and flat skulls, correct furrow and good ears. Jaws were outstanding in many cases. Added to that, a nice mix of high-quality bodies and movement made for a very satisfying judging experience. As is the case with Bulldogs in all areas of the world, tail sets and tail shape still need to be improved in many of the dogs. With that said, the number of dogs excelling in this area was pleasantly high.

I believe the Congress and companion show will be held in Bratislava next year with the FCI all-breed event. We are already planning to attend. 



Black Hope Brando, bred by Helena, Ari and Jiri Hyvonen and owned by Tarja Jarvinen. Pictured left to right are Stephan Sinko, Peter New, handler Ari Hyvonen, Elizabeth Milam and Christopher Habig.