

## June 2015 Report - Detailed Membership Survey Summary Results All-Breed Delegate Committee - Best Practices Sub Committee

### All-Breed Delegate Committee - Best Practices Sub Committee

**(Cathy Rubens, Chair; Margaret DiCorleto, Nancy Fisk; John Ronald, Ann Wallin, Peggy Wampold)**

The Best Practices sub-committee of the AKC Delegate All-Breed Clubs Committee was formed in 2014 to gather information and develop protocols that will help clubs of various sizes function more productively in different areas. As this will be an electronic presentation, any future additions or revisions can be incorporated.

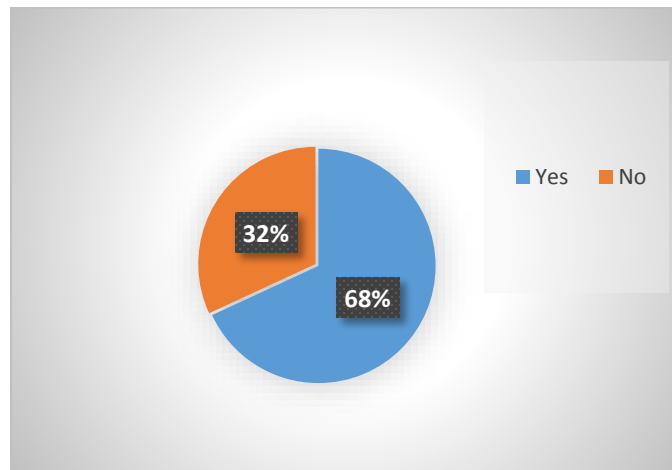
The 2014 survey was sent to over 800 club presidents, secretaries and delegates and resulted in 879 responses and over 100 pages of input!

We have prepared this summary report below and have incorporated information into the Best Practices document.

Please feel free to send any comments and suggestions to [Cathy.Rubens@gmail.com](mailto:Cathy.Rubens@gmail.com).

#### 1. Mission Statements:

When asked about club mission statements, it appeared that 68% do have what officers consider a mission statement:



#### 2. Mission Statements Language:

The mission statements usually included:

- further the advancement of all dogs, particularly purebred dogs
- promote the sport of dog shows and performance events
- encourage sportsman-like competition
- educate our members and the public (a handful included veterinarians, judges, owners and breeders, handlers) about responsible ownership, humane and efficient training and breeding of dogs

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- encourage and facilitate responsible dog ownership and/or advocate for protection and well-being of all dogs
- hold events to guidelines of American Kennel Club

Some mission statements also mentioned:

- working with legislators and local communities, serving as a resource on dog related issues
- opposing agendas of radical factions that fail to promote the welfare of canines and seek to ban breeding of all domesticated animals
- supporting therapy, local police K-9 units, search & rescue, service dog groups, assistance programs, rescue and shelter dogs
- promoting dogs as loyal family companions
- urge members and breeders to accept the standard of the AKC breeds as the only standard of excellence and be the guardians for the preservation of their respective breeds
- advocate humane genetic research
- voluntary spay and neuter for non-breeding animals

Some had contemporary emotional qualities:

- Through personal example and unselfish expenditures of time and knowledge our members provide the dog-loving community with training opportunities, education, and exposure to the sport of pure bred dogs.
- As mentors and friends to dog breeders, dog trainers, and dog lovers, we strive to promote ethical stewardship within the pure bred dog fancy and responsible dog ownership for all.
- bequests to such charitable or civic organizations
- encourage the human canine bond to deepen owners' relationships with their dogs
- help canines live longer, happier and healthier lives
- educate the general public with dog friendly, positive training methods in order to deepen owners' relationships with their dogs, as well as to make dogs valued members of the family and the community
- share our enjoyment of what is truly "Man's Best Friend"
- foster the mutual social and recreational interests of its members

### **Other suggested mission statements:**

An organization of individuals whose hobby is the participation in the Sport of Purebred Dogs. The club works to:

Advance the study, breeding, exhibiting and care of purebred dogs through public service, support of like-minded organizations and public education.

Promote and protect the AKC breeds and AKC dog activities in local area and the surrounding area by working with legislators and local communities and serving as a resource on dog related issues.

Participate in community activities with our public education information booth to educate the general public in all aspects of responsible dog ownership and the Sport of Purebred Dogs.

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### Other suggestions of mission statements continued:

Supply information to the public on AKC breeds and activities in our local community and nationally.

Host annual sanctioned events and competitions that welcome AKC breeds.

Run show-handling, agility and obedience classes that welcome all dogs.

Sponsor a variety of seminars and clinics that are open to the public."

Fulfill all requirements of the American Kennel Club necessary to become a licensed or member club.

Serve the breeders and owners of purebred canines recognized by AKC (American Kennel Club) by conducting sanctioned matches, shows and trials in Conformation, Obedience, Rally, Agility, etc. and encouragement of sportsmanlike competition at these events. To promote member participation in planning, setup, conduction of and any follow-up of these events.

Provide education to the public about "Responsible Dog Ownership. Use our Bark in the Park event as a means to teach pet owners how to raise their animals responsibly through obedience training, proper exercise and nutrition and regular veterinary care. Invite other all-breed clubs and specialty clubs to participate in our events for "meet the breed" exhibits so that the public can learn the characteristics of the different breeds through demonstrations, clinics, Canine Good Citizenship testing, AKC and your Kennel Club information booths and other public service opportunities.

Stay informed about local, regional and national proposals that might in any way affect the dog fancy or pet owners as a whole so that we can effectively educate our members, the general public and public officials as to AKC and your local Kennel Club's positions on such matters.

Educate members on different aspects of dog show events through classes (conformation, rally obedience) and/or seminars.

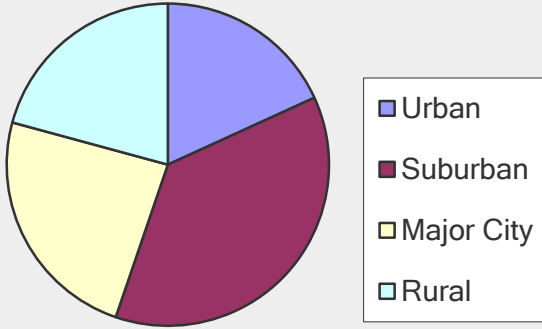
Provide social and networking community for those of similar interests.

Encourage your membership to impart their valuable canine knowledge by promoting responsible breeding, humane and efficient training, and involvement of both the membership and general public in as many aspects of the canine experience as possible.

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### 3. Area of clubs:

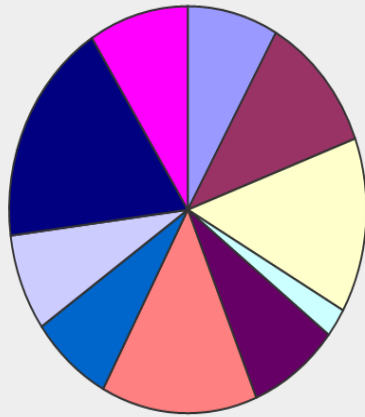
Indicate the location of your club.



| Answer Options         | Response Percent |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Urban                  | 18.2%            |
| Suburban               | 37.1%            |
| Major City             | 24.0%            |
| Rural                  | 20.8%            |
| Other (please specify) |                  |

### 4. Regional Location of clubs:

Where is your club located?

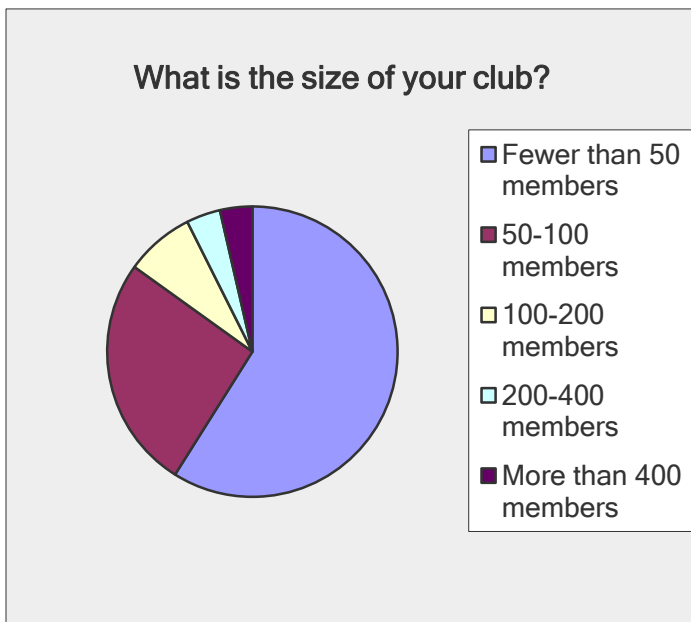


|   |
|---|
| ■ Northeast (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)                  |
| ■ Mid-Atlantic (NY, NJ, PA)                           |
| □ South Atlantic (DE, MD, DC, WV, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL) |
| □ East South Central (KY, TN, MS, AL)                 |
| ■ West South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX)                 |
| ■ East North Central (OH, IN, MI, IL, WI)             |
| ■ West North Central (MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS)     |
| □ Mountain West (MT, ID, WY, NV, UT, CO, AZ, NM)      |
| ■ Pacific West (WA, OR, CA, AK, HI)                   |
| ■ US & ITS TERRITORIES ( Parent Club Delegates)       |

| Answer Options                                      | %     |
|---|-------|
| Northeast (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)                  | 8.2%  |
| Mid-Atlantic (NY, NJ, PA)                           | 11.1% |
| South Atlantic (DE, MD, DC, WV, VA, NC, SC, GA, FL) | 13.9% |
| East South Central (KY, TN, MS, AL)                 | 2.3%  |
| West South Central (AR, LA, OK, TX)                 | 8.2%  |
| East North Central (OH, IN, MI, IL, WI)             | 14.1% |
| West North Central (MN, IA, MO, ND, SD, NE, KS)     | 7.4%  |
| Mountain West (MT, ID, WY, NV, UT, CO, AZ, NM)      | 7.7%  |
| Pacific West (WA, OR, CA, AK, HI)                   | 18.0% |
| US & ITS TERRITORIES ( Parent Club Delegates)       | 9.0%  |

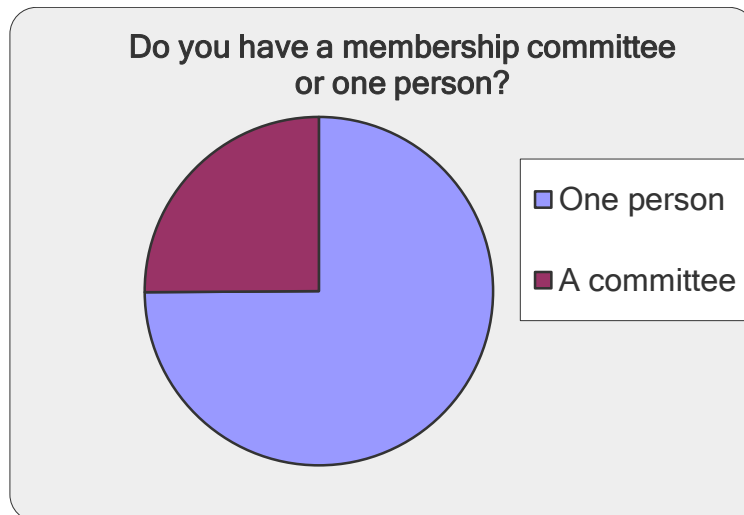
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### 5. Size of clubs:



| Answer Options        | Response Percent |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Fewer than 50 members | 59.0%            |
| 50-100 members        | 26.0%            |
| 100-200 members       | 7.7%             |
| 200-400 members       | 3.8%             |
| More than 400 members | 3.6%             |

### 6. Membership Committee/Person: (75%, 25%)



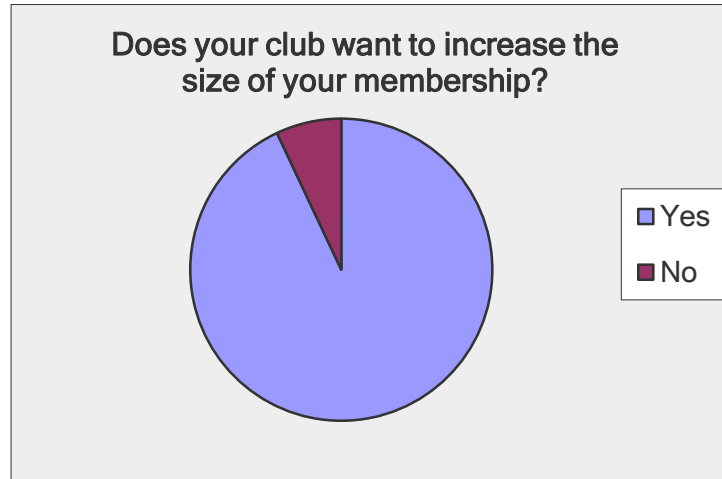
The majority of clubs have one person in charge of membership. Some of the applications are reviewed by the board.

Some clubs do have requirements: e.g. applicants must attend two meetings and work at least two club events. The application is read at every meeting then presented to the board. In order to avoid embarrassment to a potential member if a member objects to a potential member, he or she must put their objections in writing and sign it, then present it to the board, not speak out at a meeting. The board votes on the application and sends the application forward to the membership for voting by secret ballot.

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Another suggestion would be for a club member to act as a mentor to the potential new member during the application process.

### 7. Increase Membership Desire (93%, 7%):



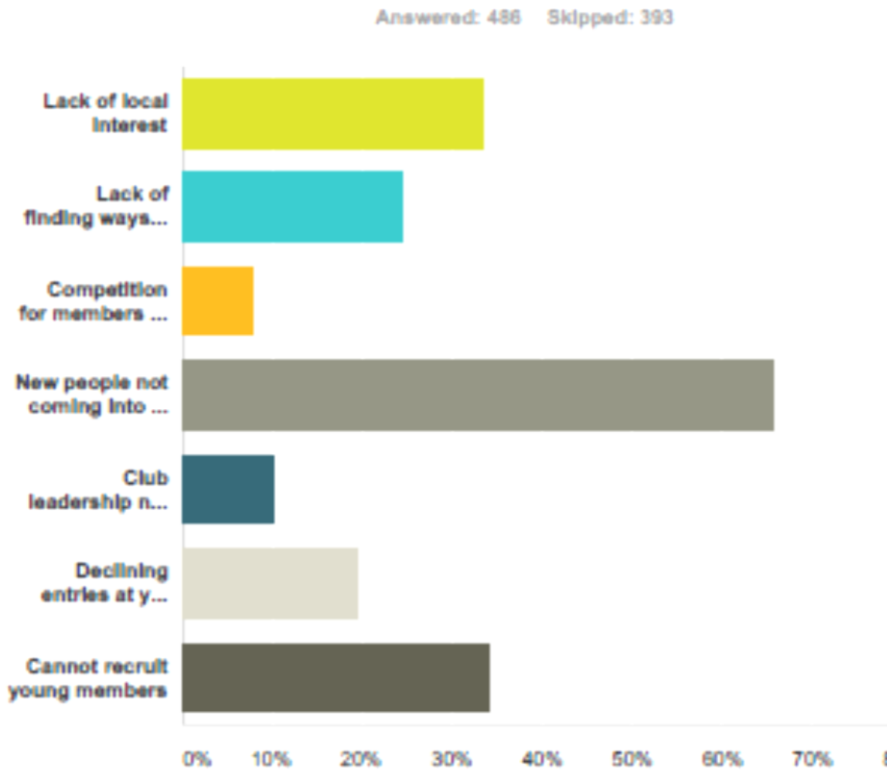
### 8. Increase membership Issues (65%, 35%):



93% of clubs responding want to increase membership and 2/3 of clubs reported having problems attracting new members. Reasons vary from aging membership to other activities in which families may be engaged.. The Recommended Best Practices Report will include ideas from the over 800 responses. Our survey results indicated that many clubs would like to attract new members and would like to know about ways to encourage new member participation. Most clubs do not have a problem retaining members.

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### 9. Obstacles Attracting New Members



Main problems for attracting new members: new people not coming into the sport and young people not interested. Also too hard to join and meetings too far away.

People don't want to work.

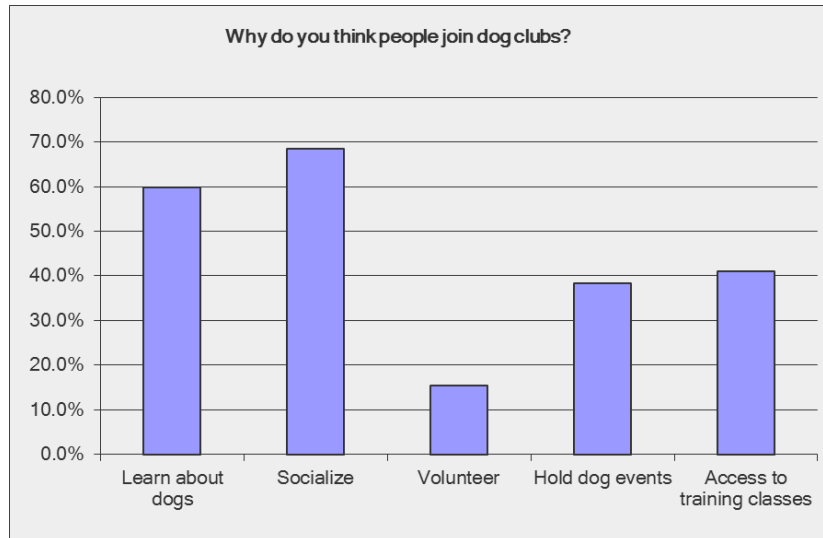
The largest response was new people not coming into the sport, followed by cannot recruit young members and lack of interest.

Several responders mention that people do not want to work, or only interested in showing their dogs. Clubs that do not have a training facility feel this is valuable in attracting new members.

| Answer Options  | Response Percent |
|---|------------------|
| Lack of local interest                                | 33.5%            |
| Lack of finding ways to recruit new members           | 24.5%            |
| Competition for members in your area                  | 8.0%             |
| New people not coming into the sport of purebred dogs | 65.8%            |
| Club leadership not making this a priority            | 10.3%            |
| Declining entries at your show                        | 19.3%            |
| Cannot recruit young members                          | 34.2%            |
| Other (please specify)                                |                  |

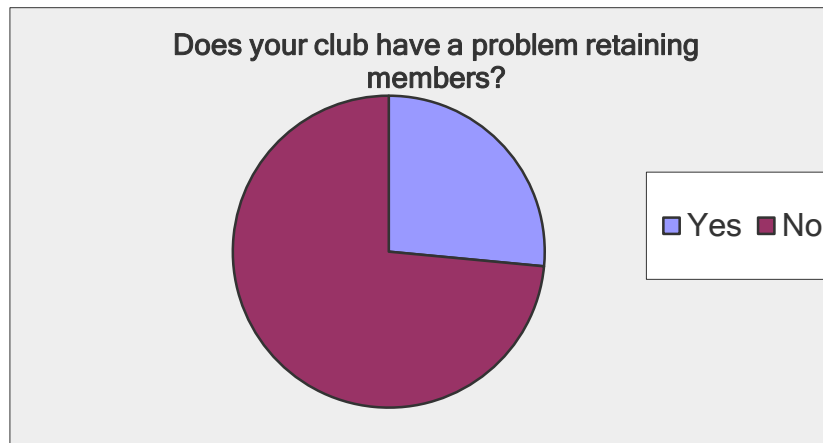
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### 10. Why do you think people join dog clubs?



Main reasons are to socialize and learn about dogs. For clubs looking to increase membership more social and education activities may help. Various comments reflect belief that some people join for personal gain or prestige such as members' ability to vote on judges, advertise puppies or win records and promote their kennel. Members' access to use of training equipment, access to training classes and training areas may encourage membership.

### 11. Retaining Members (74%, 26%):



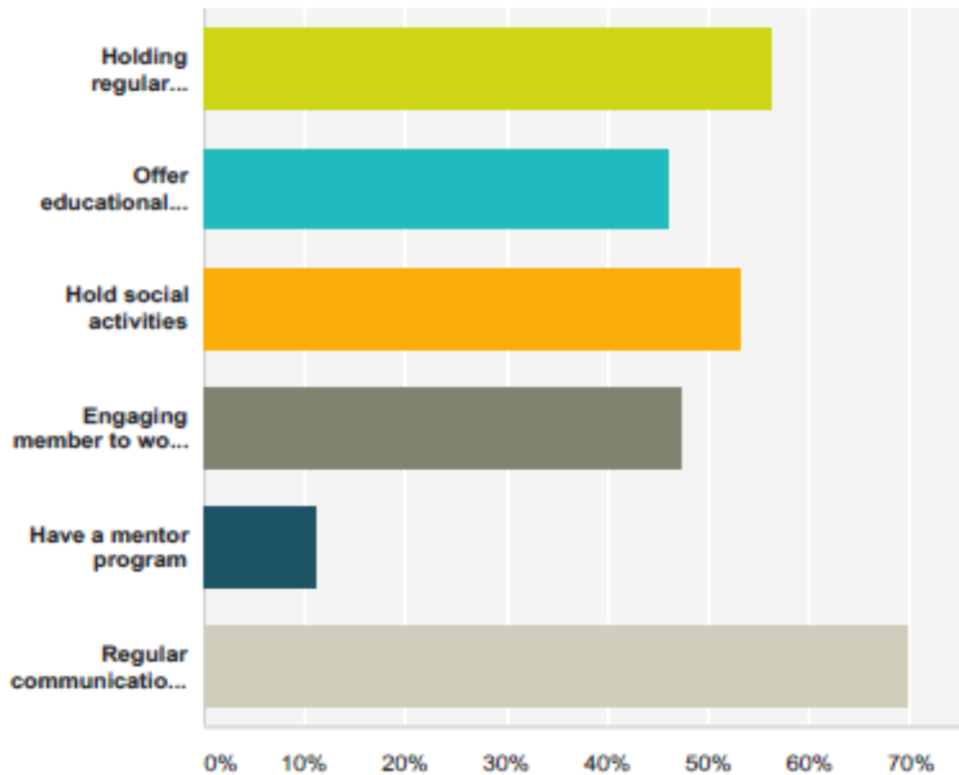


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### 12. Activities that Retain Members:

| Answer Options   | Response Percent |
|--|------------------|
| Holding regular meetings                                   | 56.2%            |
| Offer educational events                                   | 46.2%            |
| Hold social activities                                     | 53.3%            |
| Engaging member to work at events                          | 47.3%            |
| Have a mentor program                                      | 11.2%            |
| Regular communication with members i.e. newsletter, emails | 69.6%            |

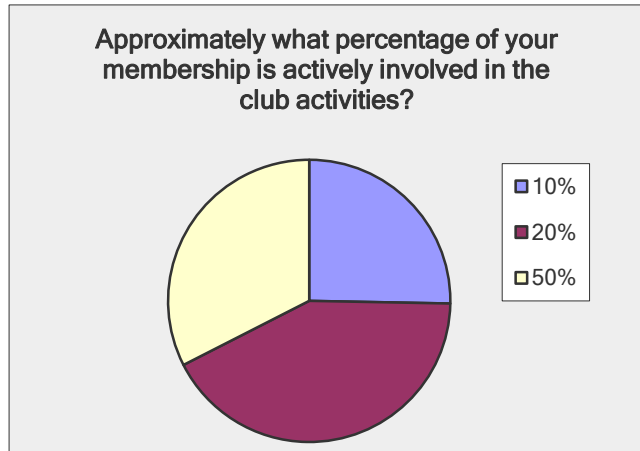
Answered: 537 Skipped: 342



- Although retaining members did not appear to be a major issue for many clubs, it was identified that regular communication by email, newsletter, and regular meetings aided in keeping members.
- Also by holding regular meetings and social activities and educational events, offering training.
- Maintain a positive club environment. Negativity and friction drive away members.
- Assign a club member to act as a mentor to the potential new member during the application process or for the first year to support their integration into membership.
- People join clubs to learn. Share knowledge to keep members involved e.g. seminars, programs, speakers, panel discussions, and newsletters.
- Membership is sometimes lost because club members are not allowed to show at their own club's shows. Consider some agreement/compromise regarding working and showing at club events.

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### 13. Member involvement:

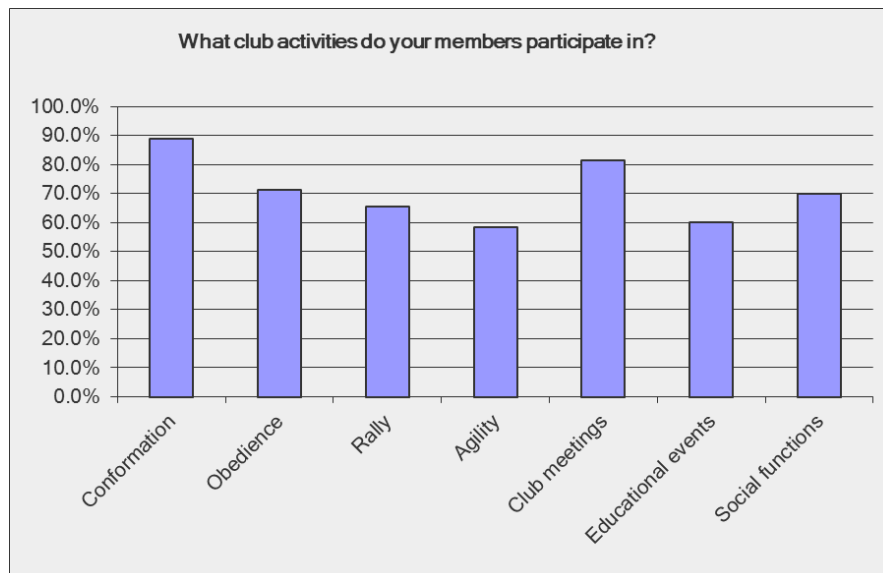


| Answer Options | Response Percent |
|----------------|------------------|
| 10%            | 25.3%            |
| 20%            | 42.2%            |
| 50%            | 32.5%            |

Suggestions to motivate members to increase their participation in club activities.

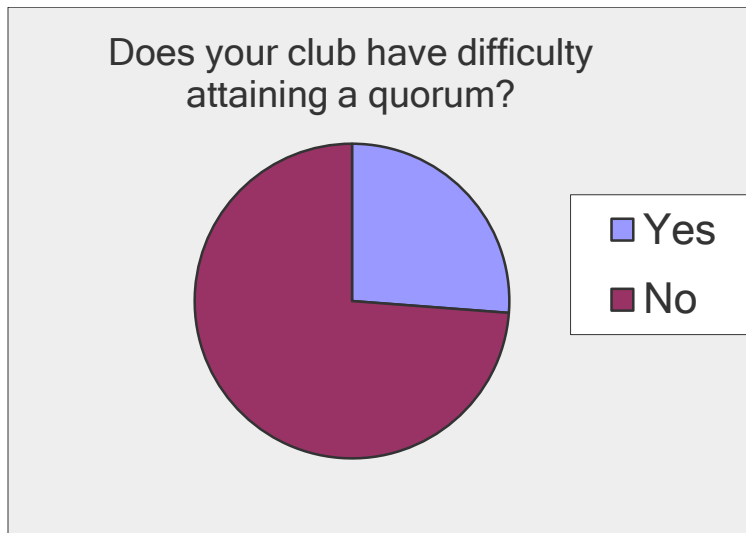
- Some clubs do have requirements: e.g. people must attend two meetings and work two events to:
  1. become a member, or
  2. as a member to participate in any rewards the club may offer.
- Offer incentives:
  - Discount on classes
  - Participation in celebration dinner
  - Get awards at annual banquet
  - Trips as a team for educational events (dog shows, seminars, training camps, etc.)

### 14. Member Activities:

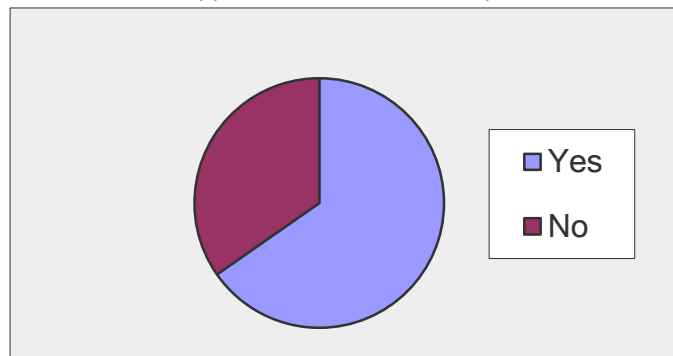


### 15. Quorum Attainment: (26%, 74%)

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16. Does your club offer different Types of Membership: (65%, 35%)



17. What Different Types of Membership are Offered in your By Laws:

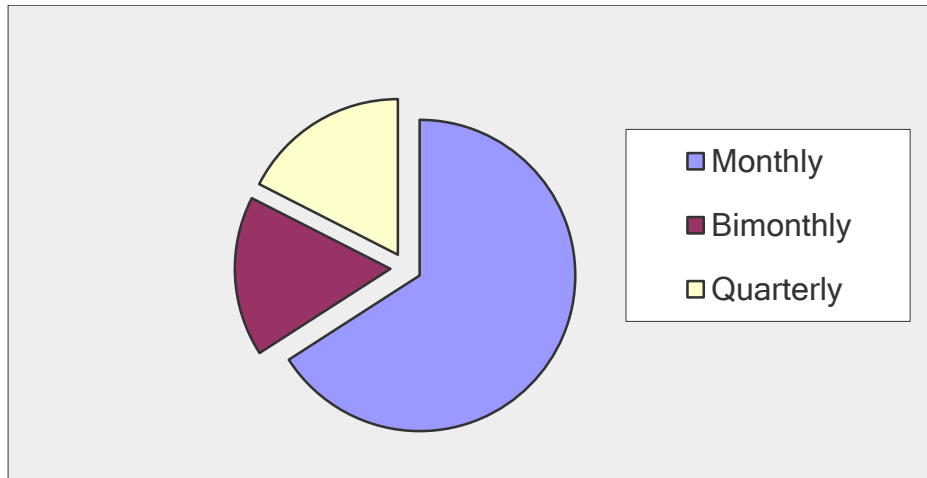
|  |  |                       |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| Membership types stipulated in your current bylaws | Junior or Youth Member                       | Foreign               |
| Regular (full)                                     | Honorary Household (full at discounted rate) | Senior                |
| Associate (non-voting; cannot hold office)         | Lifetime                                     | Affiliate New Owner   |
|  | Emeritus Lifetime                            | Spousal               |
|  |  | Local and out of area |
|  |  | Subscriber            |

Clubs should to review/revise their membership criteria as stipulated in their current bylaws.

18. How Often does your club have meetings:

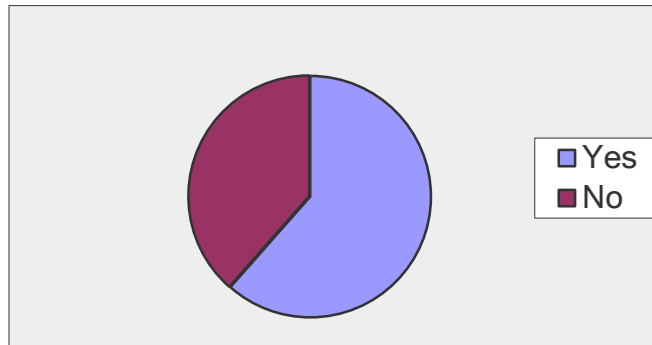
| Answer Options | Response Percent |
|----------------|------------------|
| Monthly        | 65.9%            |
| Bimonthly      | 16.6%            |
| Quarterly      | 17.5%            |

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Some clubs like to have flexibility re. meeting format e.g. telecom meetings and varied locations. (Those issues are governed by state statute and your constitution and by-laws, not The American Kennel Club.)

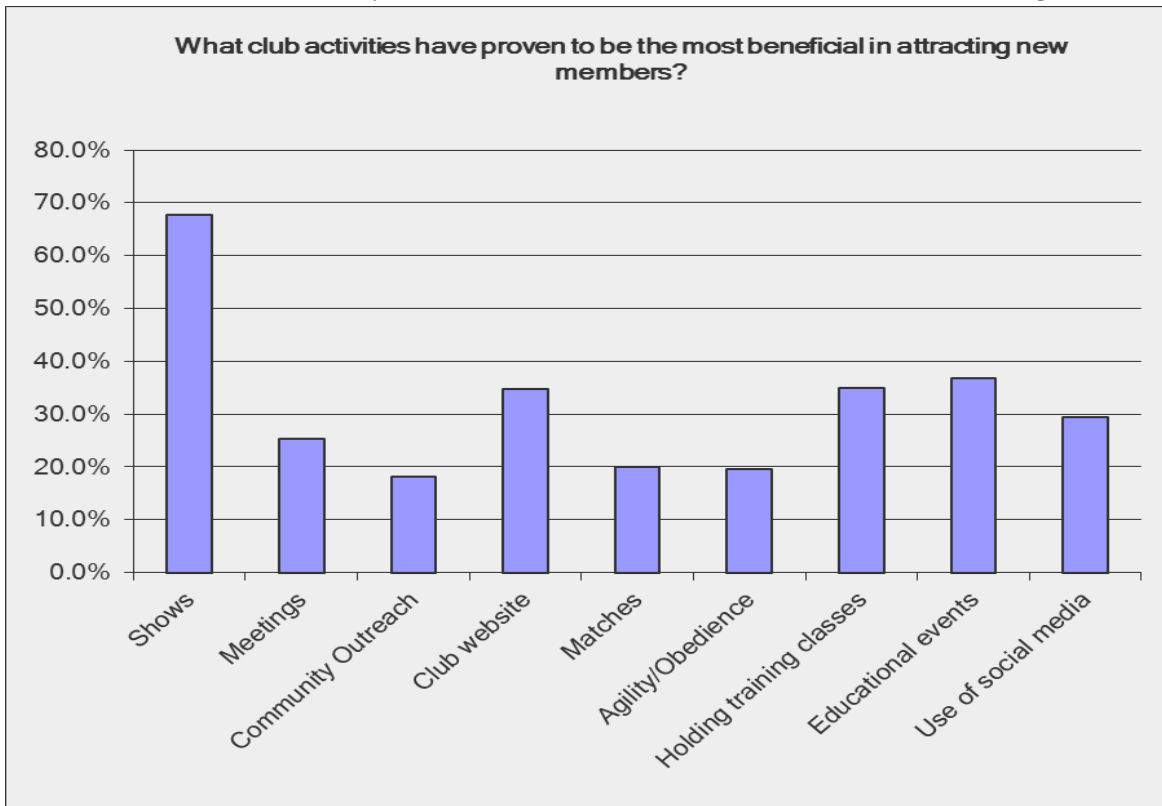
19. Do you invite the public to meetings? (62%, 38%)



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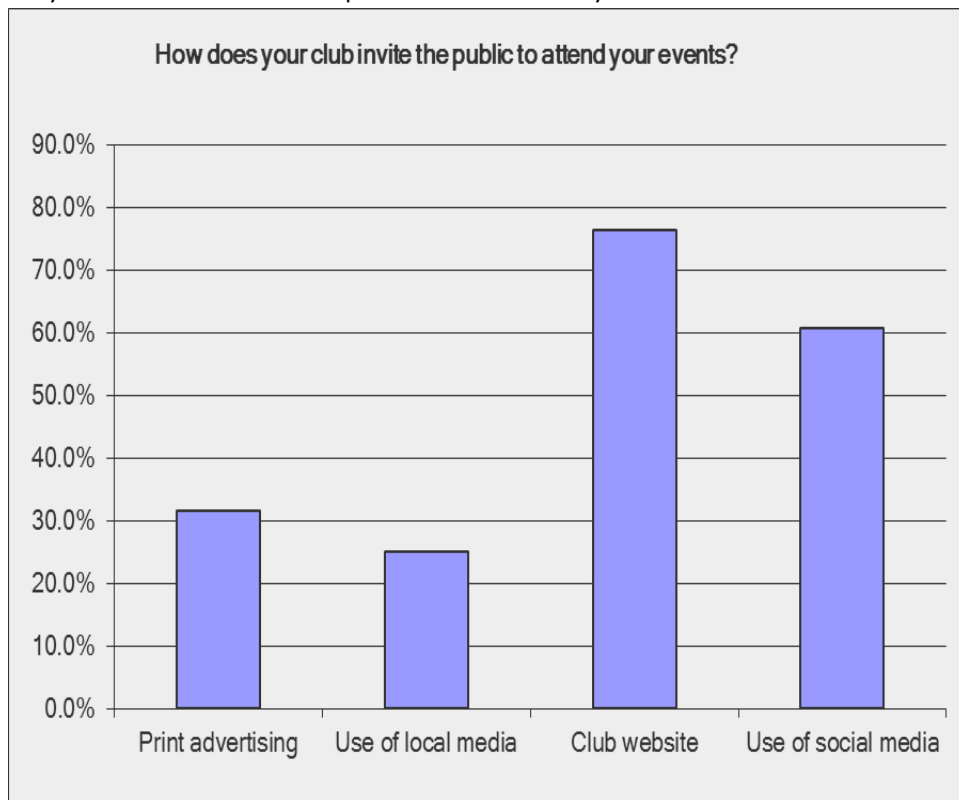
20. What club activities have proven to be the most beneficial in attracting new members:



- Personal invitations to friends and new puppy owners
- community events were found to be valuable in attracting new members for the club
- Dog shows seem to be the best way to attract new members.
- When a club's show is outside its territory, clubs need to be creative in attracting new members e.g. use of social media, educational events, Meet the Breeds, matches, advertising, connecting with vets, pet food stores, and rescue events.
- It could be beneficial to hold and advertise events which can be held at a library, community building or park which already has foot traffic for the population you are targeting.
- Ask what your club can offer new members, and what benefits are people looking to gain by joining your club.

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21. How does your club invite the public to attend your events?

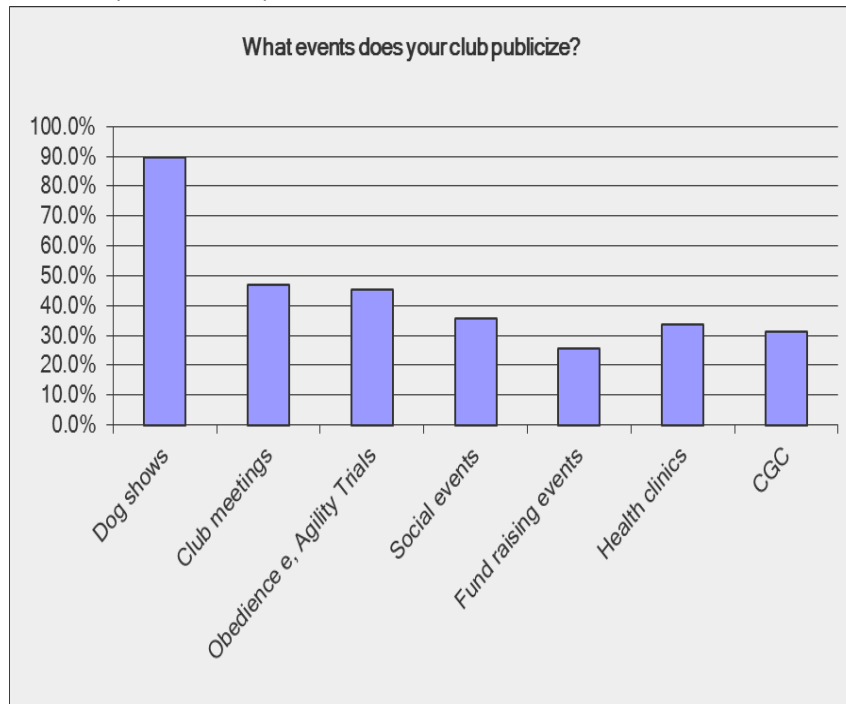


Other suggestions included:

- Word of mouth was perhaps the most frequently mentioned way to invite people to your event.
- Chamber of Commerce was another avenue mentioned.
- Ads used on PBS radio and television
- Listing events on community calendars
- Invite other dog clubs in the area to your events
- Participate in a pet expo
- Distribute flyers at training centers, vet offices, schools and other local community facilities
- Use of Superintendent publicity
- AKC email blasts

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### 22. What events does your club publicize?



#### Other Events:

Sieger Show

Judges' Education/Breed Study or ringside mentoring

Performance event demos

Informal Q&A and chats at club functions

Lure coursing

Matches

Tracking Tests & Seminars

Obedience classes

Educational classes/events/seminars etc. Traveling Educational Booth

Field trials and Hunt tests, Challenge Hunts

Barn Hunts

Herding trials

Rattlesnake avoidance clinics

Picnics

Companion event demos

Doggie Fun Days

Coursing Ability Test

Training classes which include puppy conformation handling, obedience and agility

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Therapy Dog Evaluations

All About Dogs Day

Show tours; seminars; Responsible Dog Ownership Day booth.

Earthdog tests

Microchip clinics

Temperament Tests

Meet the Breeds

AKC Pet Reunite

Retriever demonstrations

Health clinics

Race meets

Dog Related Activities - walks to benefit health issues

Education booth at local community events

Parades

Agility

Fun Day

Donation through a Charitable Trust

K-9 Bullet/Stab Proof Vests for Police K-9s

Donation of Oxygen Resuscitation Kits for Small Animals

Donation of Heat Sensor Units for Police K-9 Vehicles

Also Promote:

Purebred dogs and the well-being of all dogs

Responsible breeding practices of pure-bred dogs

Public education

Good Sportsmanship

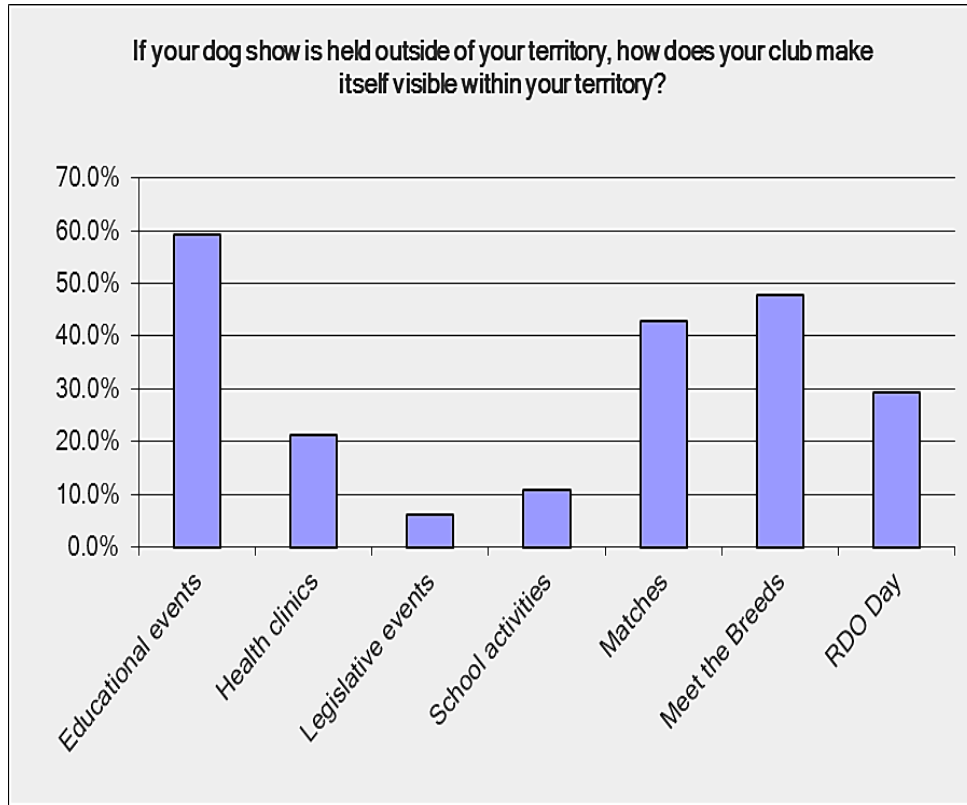
Knowledge of AKC, all of its activities and what it stands for by holding licensed and sanctioned events and public education

Active involvement in legislative issues pertaining to animals



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23. If your dog show is held outside of your territory, how does your club make itself visible within your territory?

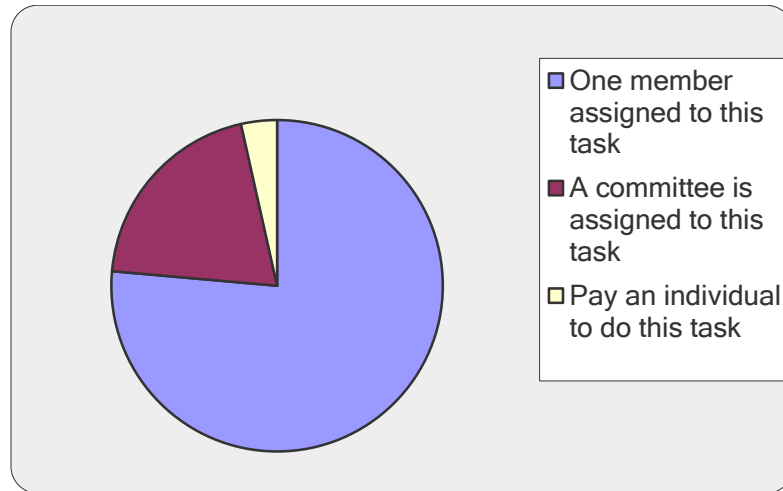


24. If your club uses social media, what method do you use to keep up with posting information, photos, etc. on a regular basis?

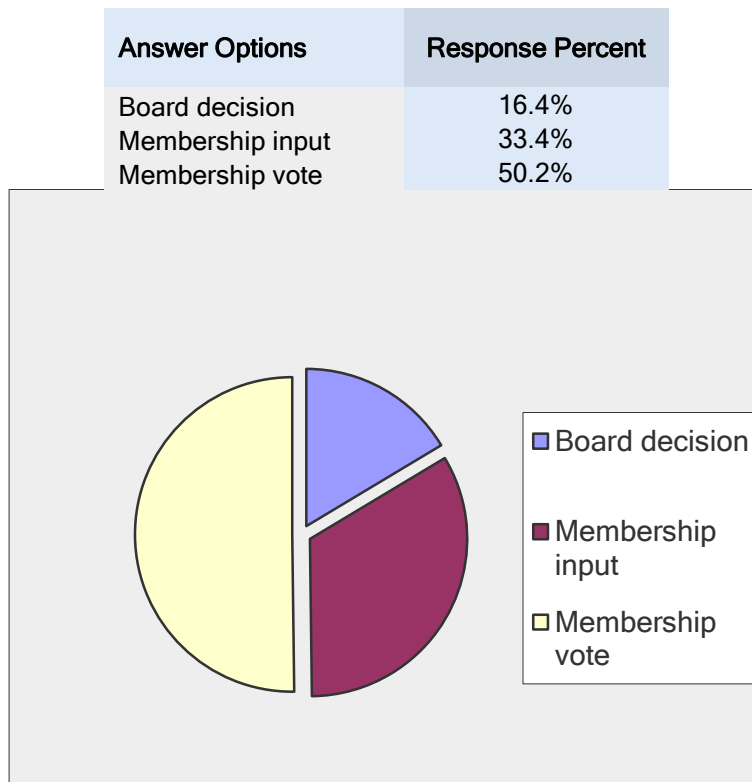
| Answer Options                       | Response Percent |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| One member assigned to this task     | 76.4%            |
| A committee is assigned to this task | 20.1%            |
| Pay an individual to do this task    | 3.5%             |

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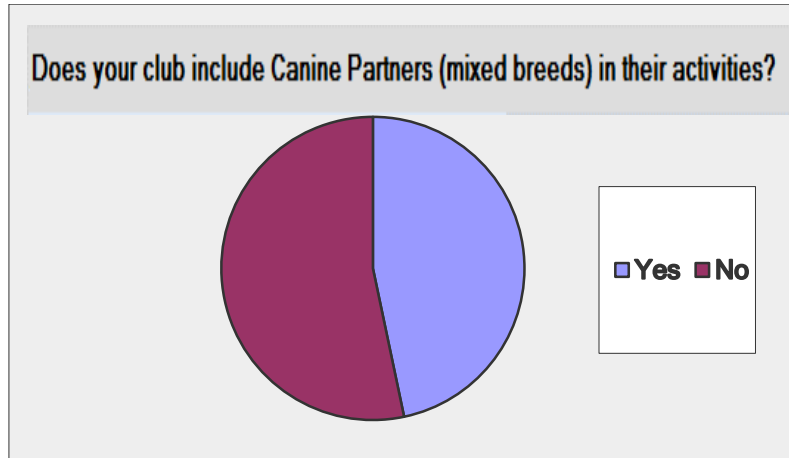
25. How does your club incorporate membership desires in to club decisions?



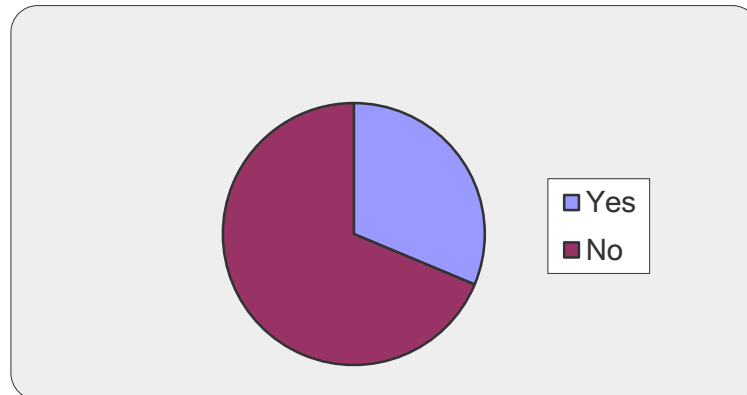
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26. Does your club include Canine Partners (mixed breeds) in their activities? (yes 46%; no 53%)



27. Has the inclusion of Canine Partners (mixed breeds) in your club's activities resulted in new members joining your club? (69%, 31%)



28. Any other ideas or suggestions related to membership?

- Several comments reflect the importance of being nice to new people and to pet owners. Mentor newcomers and making them feel an integral part of a group. Some clubs have a member-mentoring program to address this. We need to be open to new people, new ideas and new breeds. Club should be welcoming to all dog owners that want to join.
- We must make this FUN. People have limited time and must have a reason to come to meetings and participate in functions.
- Social events should be promoted.
- Clubs should do things to be visible in the community e.g. donate dog food and supplies to shelters, provide special equipment for police dogs, etc.
- Breeders should encourage puppy buyers to join clubs.

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- Recognize member's accomplishments through awards at meetings and club banquets.
- Offer club members a chance to earn free/reduced price training classes by putting in a certain amount of volunteer hours.
- Hold seminars, workshops and educational activities, matches.
- Offer mini training sessions at meetings
- Have a clear and encouraging path to membership
- Reach out to the 4-H population and their parents
- Sponsor clinics for junior exhibitors
- Involvement in community activities
- Ensure positive leadership
- Invite legislators to meetings to discuss their positions.
- Offer top member awards to encourage members to work. This award will come from nominations from the floor and be voted on by other members; the award will be offered to the person who has gone above and beyond when needed to work in the club
- Keep a Log to record member hours of service; establish a rewards system for service.
- Sponsor Program ideas: Reps, inspectors, steward clubs, veterinarians, chiropractors, animal control officers, shelters, holistic vets, food companies. AKC has numerous presentations available free for the asking.
- Extend opportunities to PET owners that want to socialize with like people.
- Update your website to attract younger members.
- Hold grooming seminars several times a year. Presenting a variety of specialized breed grooming increases knowledge of other breeds.
- Get involved in community events, such as parades, local fairs, etc. Work with other groups.
- Try including other activities at your events such as Barn Hunt or Dock Diving to attract new members with varied interests.
- Clubs keep "visible" in the community by funding many different local projects, e.g., making regular donations of dog food to "Feed America", supporting canine health research, donating to the Police Dept. to support its canine officers, donating to Toys for Tots, etc. Many clubs like to be known as an organization that helps the community and is the "go to" organization for dog information.
- Club business cards emphasize "dedicated to responsible dog ownership".
- Some clubs find that diversifying into conformation, obedience, rally, agility, hunt tests, herding, tracking, and CGC attracts more dog enthusiasts.
- Network with local shelters and breed rescues and encouraging people that adopt by offering a free or reduced price membership to those that adopt.

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- Reach out to local dog owners by obtaining their contact information from town and county dog licensing offices.