

DCA Membership Ballot Cover Letter - 2006

May 25, 2006

Dear DCA Member,

Enclosed is a membership ballot to consider reversing a 1984 vote regarding the future breeding and testing of the Dalmatian-Pointer Backcross dogs. Here is a brief explanation of why we are voting.

Dalmatians are known for their unique uric acid metabolism, where uric acid is not broken down to allantoin (as occurs in essentially all other mammals except humans). This leads to Dalmatian's high uric acid excretion in the urine, which in turn leads to a high rate of urinary tract stone formation. In 1973, Dr. Robert Schaible bred a Pointer to a Dalmatian, and continued breeding the progeny to other Dalmatians as part of an experimental project. The stated goal was to potentially eliminate the unique Dalmatian uric acid metabolism genetic defect by introducing Pointer genetic material into the Dal gene pool.

By 1980, five generations had been bred, and some of the progeny looked like Dalmatians but had (normal canine) low uric acid. With the approval of the DCA Board, AKC registered two puppies from the backcross project. Because considerable controversy followed, both within and outside of DCA, AKC then decided to not register any of the progeny from those dogs.

The Dalmatian Club of America membership was deeply divided by this issue, and strong emotions ran rampant on both sides. In August 1984, after an energetic discussion at the DCA Annual Meeting, a membership ballot voted on two questions regarding this issue. The first question concerned future AKC registration, and will not be dealt with right now. With the second question, 52% of those voting said, "I am not in favor of continuing the testing and breeding of the Dalmatian-Pointer backcrosses." Subsequently DCA has abided by the membership mandate, and no official support has been given.

Recently there has been renewed interest in the backcross project, and more breeders have become involved in continuing the line. The DCA Board has discussed this at the last three board meetings, heard a presentation from involved breeders, and examined some of the recent progeny. There have been reports in the Spotter and a discussion at the last DCA General Membership Meeting.

The DCA Board believes that it is now time to re-evaluate the 1984 decision of the membership by way of this ballot. To improve the well-being of our dogs, we want to be able to fully investigate and discuss all aspects of this project as well as other research projects. To do this, we need to lift the restriction on continuing the testing and breeding of the backcross dogs.

The Board unanimously recommends a vote **IN FAVOR** of continuing the testing and breeding of the Dalmatian-Pointer Backcrosses.

Please take part in this very important business of your Club.

J. Charles Garvin, M.D.
President, Dalmatian Club of America