

GRCI Membership Survey Results

By Jane L. Coen

In December 2014, a membership survey was mailed to all members of the Golden Retriever Club of Illinois (GRCI). Members were requested to complete the survey and return it to GRCI's Vice President by January 5, 2015. All members who returned the completed survey by the due date and provided their names were entered into a random drawing for a \$100 gift certificate.

19 completed surveys were returned, representing a 27% response rate, which is down considerably from last year's 50% response rate. Of the 19 returned surveys, 16 respondents chose to be entered into the random drawing.

To those of you who returned completed surveys, a very sincere thank you! You provided valuable input, which GRCI's Board will continue to act upon.

A brief summary of the survey results follows.

58% of survey respondents indicated that they participate in obedience, 58% participate in agility, 37% participate in Rally, 21% participate in tracking, 37% participate in field work, 11% participate in dock diving, 53% participate in conformation and 37% participate in pet therapy work. Three respondents participate in nose work, and one respondent serves as a rescue foster home.

Three respondents indicated that they would like to get involved with tracking, the most popular area of interest. A smaller number of respondents indicated an interest in getting involved with obedience (1 respondent), agility (2 respondents), rally (2 respondents), dock diving (1 respondent), and pet therapy work (1).

32% of respondents indicated that they would like GRCI to offer Club-sponsored programs, seminars and/or classes related to their areas of interest. 1 respondent would like to be connected with an experienced GRCI member who would be willing to serve as a mentor. 3 respondents would appreciate receiving a list of local clubs, schools or private trainers specializing in their areas of interest.

95% of respondents attended at least one General Meeting during the 2013-2014 Club year, with 47% of respondents attending three to six of the General Meetings. Reasons identified for not attending General Meetings were topped with "Meeting location was too far from my home" (47%) and "meeting time conflicted with other activities" (21%). For those of you who identified either of these reasons, please contact any member of the Board and provide your thoughts on an alternate evening and suggest a meeting location.

The topics of greatest interest for upcoming General Meetings were: Health problems in Golden Retrievers (74%), Preventative care to maintain a Golden's health (53%), Groom the Golden with hands on experience (53%), Current best practices regarding inoculating dogs (53%), Caring for an aging Golden (42%), and an Obedience/Rally Judge's View of AKC's *Obedience/Rally Regulations*, Conformation Basics, and Tracking Basics (37%). There was interest to a lesser degree in Agility Basics, overview of obedience competition, Field Basics, Rally Basics and Breeding Golden Retrievers. The Board will consider this input in planning future General Meeting and other types of programs.

It was wonderful to find that we have some members with expertise in a various areas who have indicated a willingness to plan and deliver a program at a General Meeting. Several members

indicated a willingness to serve as a mentor to other members in their respective areas of expertise: Obedience (Hal Axelrod, Helen Borosak, Jane Coen and Ruth Smith), Agility (Helen Borosak, Sandy Foster, Betty Smith and Randy Johnson), Rally (Jane Coen), Tracking (Nancy Einwich), Field work (Ruth Smith), Conformation (Cathy Williams), Pet Therapy (Randy Johnson), Breeding Goldens (Sandy Foster and Randy Johnson), and Nosework (Cathy Williams).

The vast majority of respondents indicated that they have actively supported GRCI over the years, with 53% indicating they have served on the Board, 84% indicating they have volunteered at Club events and 47% indicating they have volunteered at GRCI's Public Education events.

95% of respondents indicated that they are very (74%) or generally (21%) satisfied with GRCI's *Golden Moments* newsletter. Suggestions for enhancing the newsletter included more member brags, more regular columns, and adding a Q&A section on addressing behavioral/training problems.

100% of respondents indicated they had visited GRCI's new website, but only 68% indicated they had set up a Member Account on the website to access the Members Only section. Suggestions for enhancing the website included keeping information more current and posting pictures of club events.

84% of respondents indicated that the Club kept them well informed over the last year, with 16% indicating there were times they did not feel well informed.

The vast majority of respondents indicated their number one preferred method of communication with the Club was through e-mail.

Regarding GRCI's Public Education and Breeders Referral Programs, 16% indicated they were very satisfied with the programs, 37% indicated they were generally satisfied, and 26 indicated they were dissatisfied. 16% indicated they were unfamiliar with the programs. Suggestions for improving the programs included reinstating the Resource List and posting the name of a contact person on the website who could answer questions.

General suggestions for how GRCI can better meet the needs of members included offering more agility events at McCook, offering more activities to get members involved, offering more seminars followed up with training group classes, rotating club meeting locations so southern members can attend, rotating club meeting nights, scheduling some club meetings on Saturday or Sunday during the day, and offering more general interest events and member benefits. One respondent complimented GRCI on offering so many nice programs, e.g., CCA, field seminar, obedience/agility drop-in sessions.

In closing, the random drawing \$100 gift certificate will be awarded at GRCI's February 2015 General Meeting. The winner will be notified in advance of the meeting.

Please continue to share your input and suggestions. The Board and the Club are very interested in your feedback.