



Holiday Greetings to all IWCA members!

As this difficult year winds down, it is time to reflect on our accomplishments towards our mission: that being *the protection of the Irish wolfhound*. In many ways, our club seems to have lost focus of this mission. Frustratingly, the board found itself spending more time on internal club issues rather than those directly affecting our hounds. As the team leader of a new board of strong personalities, I am trying to help these disparate personalities work together towards our common goal. The board itself is working on building relationships which will allow it to perform its duties professionally, courteously and respectfully. We must all learn to safely share our opinions, disagree if necessary, and yet still find common ground to move forward in efforts to help our hounds. We just need a little help and encouragement to get back on course.

Understanding that we all joined this club with the same purpose in mind: to safeguard the breed we all love helps us in our efforts. Please consider this if you are asked to serve on the board, volunteer your time and expertise with upcoming club events and support the different committees' work. One way I try to stay focused is to ask myself: Will my actions best serve the breed, advance the interests and fulfill the intended purpose of the Irish Wolfhound Club of America? I encourage each of you to do the same. *Together*, we can find solutions.

Nevertheless, some committees are moving forward successfully. The Education committee has developed criteria for a breed information contact list which was approved by the board. They have updated the judges and public education materials on the website as well as conducted several judges' seminars and manned public education booths. The health committee, working in collaboration with the IWF, is busy collecting blood samples for Broad Institute's Osteosarcoma study; more information about this study is forthcoming. The 2012 Specialty show committee is working hard to organize a memorable and fun filled event, complete with a live auction benefiting the hounds, for all. The IWF will once again be sponsoring health testing and will co-sponsor the health seminars with the IWCA! Specialty updates and complete show information is available on the club's website. I look forward to seeing everyone at the 2012 National Specialty.

As always, I am available to the membership to listen to your concerns and suggestions. I always welcome input. My holiday wish and desire for all members, their families and hounds is that of health and serenity. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Holidays and a very Happy New Year to all!!!

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