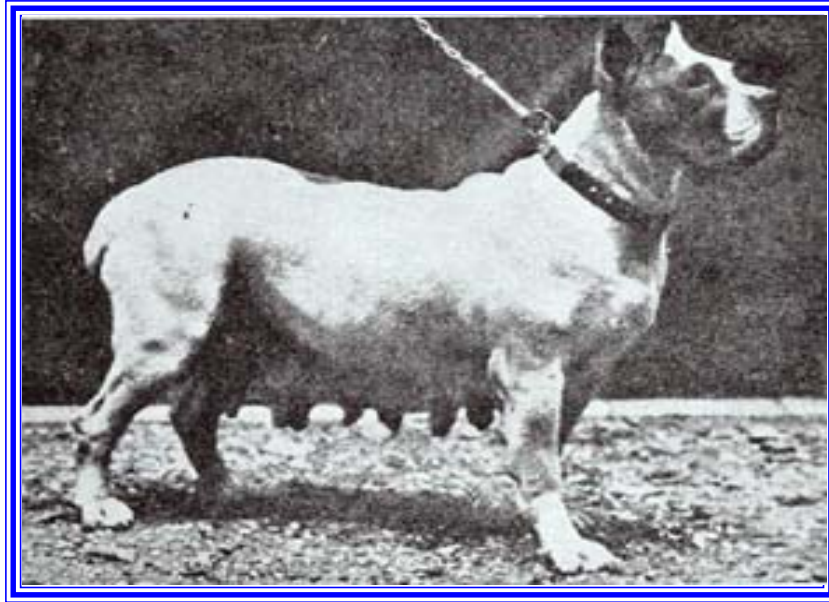


The White Boxer 2003



Meta von der Passage, from Jack Wagner's book "The Boxer" she is regarded as the mother of our breed.

In 1976 I did my first paper on the white Boxer, entitled "What's wrong with the white Boxer?". At that time members of the American Boxer Club and members of its member Clubs were constrained by the ABC Constitution, as per its 1980 revision, in which Article VI, Discipline, Section 3 read,

"Breeding inimical to the Boxer. The registration with the American Kennel Club, or the sale, or the placement, by any member, of any Boxer with white ground color, or entirely white, or any color other than fawn or brindle, or the registration, placement or sale of a litter by a dog, or out of a bitch, as described as above, shall be cause for forfeiture of membership. White markings are allowed, but must not exceed one third of the ground color."

This effectively gave us two choices of action when we had white puppies; you could either kill them or keep them, yourself. True, you knew the rules before joining the ABC and nobody begged you to join, but, that was the way things were.

It was widely known that white dogs were used in production of our breed and, yes, flash was well liked. Yet, otherwise normal people freely said that the white Boxer was defective and that it carried adverse genes. They seemed unable to comprehend that all puppies in a litter carry the same genetic background and that the manifestation of more white hairs than are allowed in the Boxer Standard does not confer a unique heritage upon the white ones. My paper dwelt on this theme and was regarded, by some, as heretical.

The ABC's stricture applied to members of member Clubs and, if a Club member ignored it, the Club and all its members were at risk to lose their ABC membership. *We* even printed the ABC's stance on the back of *our* membership applications so that applicants, to join our Club, knew their obligations.



To give you an idea of the climate consider these :-

There was a TV commercial showing a white Boxer on a patterned red carpet, advertising these rugs. A Club member wrote to the firm's owner, chastising him. *It was his pet.*

A new Boxer magazine was published which was an attractive production with some stimulating articles. They printed a picture of a litter containing a white puppy and it caused an uproar and killed their magazine.

A member of a member Club vocally espoused the recognition of white Boxers. Other members of her Club wrote indignant letters to the ABC. and, after a telephone meeting, the ABC Board of Directors arbitrarily took away her ABC membership. None of those who protested chose to put up their \$10.00 and file charges with the ABC, which, probably, would have been sustained. As it was, she had recourse to the civil courts and had that forfeiture overturned, at big cost to ABC.

In the 1994 revision of ABC's Constitution & By-Laws, at the American Kennel Club's urging, that section on discipline was removed. From thereon., all such material is contained in the American Boxer Club's Code of Ethics, in milder form. This remained true in the 2002 revision although the Code, itself, has not been upgraded since 1994. ABC has had a committee for that purpose but it's not known if it is active or if input, from active breeders, is sought or acceptable.

About 1993, AKC introduced the concept of limited registration whereby dogs so declared would be registered but none of their get would be eligible for AKC registration, unless the breeder, later, agreed to change the limited registration to a full one. *I* thought that that would be a solution but a referendum, by ABC, found it unacceptable to ABC members.

Nonetheless, there has been a steady movement for us to try that approach.



Cameo



An interesting side note is that a Boxer which scored High in Trial at our National Specialty is white and has an **Indefinite Listing Privilege** AKC registration number, due to our strictures on registering white Boxers. To get such a number, owners have to jump through many hoops. AKC first applies a \$25.00 fee, then requires two color photographs of the dog plus a veterinary certification that the dog has been spayed.

Dedicated owners will do this burdensome procedure, but, should we make it necessary? *I think that it's time for us to update our thinking!* In fact, *I think that, before many more years have gone, we'll feel obliged to include white Boxers in our conformation shows. Either that, or we'll have to abandon breeding for flash.* Times have changed and, yes, public opinion does have some force. Limited registration would allow white Boxers to compete readily in performance events and, implicitly, their get may not be registered.



The American Boxer Club has modified its stand by publishing an article, on the white Boxer, on its web site, by Ann Gilbert and Bob Conrad. It also appears in our web site. Unfortunately it is marred by the statement, [“The ABC has never condoned or encouraged the culling of white puppies.”](#) This is untrue, witness the quoted extract from their pre-1980 Constitution and By-Laws. Both writers were approached to void that statement and did not reply. Neither did ABC choose to elide it.

Now, as to the defects of the white Boxer. They share the genetic heritage of all our Boxers and we know, only too well, how heavily they are burdened with some of those inherited conditions which came from our breed's earliest days. The white Boxer is at one with all Boxers in that respect; his additional white hairs do not excuse him from such problems. A purist, or a politically correct mope, would say *him or her* but I find that convention entirely too cumbersome.

However, the white Boxer has some extra problems. A true albino, one without pigment, may sunburn and may have visual discomfort since his irises have no melanin and are pink.. Checks, those with some colored zones, and the mismarks are more likely to be deaf since their spiral cochleae, organs of the inner ear, don't have the color granules that are needed for hearing. I've wondered if our more flashy Boxers have an increased incidence of deafness; it would be interesting to know. Oddly enough, as the white Boxer ages, more and more dark patches appear; they're mostly limited to the skin proper, rather than the haircoat. I'm sure that we've noticed this happening in our other Boxers giving a dappled effect to their formerly pure white markings.

Those white Boxers which are deaf need special teaching with hand signals and are always at an increased risk of harm.

I've had my share of white puppies and I have killed them. Euthanised, if that euphemism makes you feel

better. Up until the nineties, I was obliged to, to stay in ABC's good graces. I've never felt good about it, but, it resolved the problem and I had the skills and resources. I have continued to do so as I consider that it's bad practice to give any Boxer away; few have an appreciation of that which costs them nothing. Selling them doesn't seem right and I'd rather kill them than see them abandoned, desolate, on the highway. Living in the country, we see the results of those who bring their animals to run free or to acquire loving homes. To become roadkill is their kindest fate; starvation is more apt to happen to them.



30.

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