

Why I will vote "yes" on the ballot:

As a research scientist, I have a great interest in the Backcross Project. As the owner of two overt stone formers, I have an even greater interest in it. Although many believe that with proper management, we can avoid having stone formation in our Dals, I had one of the unlucky ones that, after changing our management strategy because one of our rescues blocked, still became a stone former and blocked three times. Despite all our best efforts, we had a second stone former.

Dr. Robert Schaible has a dream of ridding the Dalmatian breed of urinary stone disease. He started his project and continued it when all but a few abandoned all efforts to support his work. I believe he has shown that we can successfully incorporate the LUA gene into our breed.

As a scientist, I believe in numbers and statistics. I believe that the LUA Dals ARE Dalmatians, not mutts, crossbreeds, or hybrids. In the F12 generation they are only 0.02% Pointer and 99.98% Dalmatian. With careful selection, they have been able to pass on the LUA gene while preserving the Dalmatian "look." At the 2008 National Specialty, I was able to meet several of the LUA Dals and see all of them in the LUA Dal parade. Most of them were no different from what is seen in the AKC ring today.

With the recent advances in genetic research, we can even identify whether a dog is homozygous for the dominant U20(UU) or heterozygous (Uu). With this knowledge, we can proceed much faster in incorporating the LUA gene into the genetic pool. We have the opportunity to defeat or at least strike a damaging blow to this condition. Over 30 years has passed since this project was begun. It is time to begin discussing what is necessary to get these dogs registered with the AKC; to determine what needs to be done so that registration can occur and these dogs can be recognized for what they are: Dalmatians.

I will vote yes on the ballot proposal.

Julie Stillman
River Road Dalmatians
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