

Templeton woman gathering top dogs around

By Lynne Klaft CORRESPONDENT

TEMPLETON— Virginia T. Rowland is on the show committee of the prestigious Bay Colony Cluster Dog Show, and will be coordinating special event demonstrations and organizing the public service booths this year. “The Bay Colony show has been held for many years and attracts dogs from all over the country. We will have many top dogs coming, as it is the end of the year, and owners will want to earn as many points as they can for ranking purposes,” said Ms. Rowland.

One of the nation’s largest dog events, the Bay Colony Cluster Dog Show will be held at the Bayside Exposition Center in Boston Dec. 6 to 9, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. The dog show will showcase an average of 2,500 pedigree pooches each day, competing for “Best in Show” honors and AKC titles after winning in their respective breeds and groups.

Sponsored by Pedigree brand dog foods, the dog show is organized and run by volunteers from three prestigious AKC dog clubs: Eastern Dog Club, Ladies’ Dog Club and the Middlesex County Kennel Club, and will feature four days of agility trials by the Yankee Golden Retriever Club.

Ms. Rowland owns and breeds French bulldogs and Bullmastiffs, and has been a member of the Ladies’ Dog Club more than 30 years. She will be judging French bulldogs and the Junior Showmanship categories Friday, Dec. 7, and is chairman of the Obedience competitions that will also be held Friday and Saturday, Dec. 8.

“On Saturday (Dec. 8) and Sunday (Dec. 9), we will have special event demonstrations in Ring 15. Rescue groups will introduce dogs that have been adopted in a special parade,” said Ms. Rowland. “Tara Kennedy of the U.S. Customs Services will be bringing Apache, a beagle that has been trained to find food in luggage and who works at Logan Airport. This will be his debut, as Tara had a female named Lily who has since retired after 12 years of service,” said Ms. Rowland, who added that the Boston Police Department will also be doing a demonstration with its German shepherds who specialize in crowd control and drug sniffing.

There will also be educational exhibits including the NEADS assistance dogs, American Kennel Club, Pedigree’s Select-a-Dog computer, the MSPCA, Purebred Dog Breeders referral service, Animal Rescue League of Boston, 4-H Clubs, Guiding Eyes for the Blind, Canine Companions for Independence, Pets & People and New England breed rescue clubs.

As president of the Massachusetts Federation of Dog Clubs, Ms. Rowland is involved in the education of the public concerning any local and federal legislation, good and bad, that may affect dog owners.

“We have filed a bill that will make it illegal for a homeowner’s insurance company not to sell insurance to dog owners because of the breed that they may own, for instance, a German shepherd or a Rottweiler. “Many state representatives have signed on, but it will be very hard to pass our bill, which is House Bill 957. “Our Web site, www.MassFedDogs.org, has comprehensive information on all legislations that have been introduced at the local and state level and which will impact all dog owners. Dog owners should keep themselves informed, as they may lose their rights,” said Ms. Rowland.

Dog owners can contact the organization if they hear that their towns may be considering rewriting dog ordinances.

“The AKC will be at our dog show, and will have excellent materials for new dog owners, the responsibilities of dog ownership, information on many different breeds, and will help people with any questions they may have,” she added. “Prospective dog owners should consult with a reputable breeder or a breed rescue group, people who are knowledgeable about an individual dog’s temperament,” said Ms. Rowland.

Show attendees will have the opportunity to “Meet the Breeds” in Ring 15 at 2 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, and can meet and pat dogs, and speak to owners. The Bay Colony Dog Show is a registered nonprofit organization with ticket proceeds benefiting charities such as the Scholarship Fund at Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine, breeder referral services and Angell Memorial Animal Hospital.

Admission is \$12 for adults and seniors, and \$7 for children. Parking is \$12 and tickets are available at the Bayside box office only. To find out what breed is showing and at what time and where, visit www.baycolonydogshow.com for ring schedules and directions. The show’s recorded event hotline is (508) 533-1153. The public may not bring their pet dogs to the show.

