

Collie Club of America

Standard Review Committee 2009

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THE COLLIE STANDARD

Rough

General Character

The Collie is a lithe, strong, responsive, active dog, carrying no useless timber, standing naturally straight and firm. The deep, moderately wide chest shows strength, the sloping shoulders and well-bent hocks indicate speed and grace, and the face shows high intelligence. The Collie presents an impressive, proud picture of true balance, each part being in harmonious proportion to every other part and to the whole. Except for the technical description that is essential to this Standard and without which no Standard for the guidance of breeders and judges is adequate, it could be stated simply that no part of the Collie ever seems to be out of proportion to any other part. Timidity, frailness, sullenness, viciousness, lack of animation, cumbersome appearance and lack of over-all balance impair the general character.

Head

The head properties are of great importance. When considered in proportion to the size of the dog the head is inclined to lightness and never appears massive. A heavy-headed dog lacks the necessary bright, alert, full-of-sense look that contributes so greatly to expression. Both in front and profile view the head bears a general resemblance to a well-blunted lean wedge, being smooth and clean in outline and nicely balanced in proportion. On the sides it tapers gradually and smoothly from the ears to the end of the black nose, without being flared out in backskull (cheeky) or pinched in muzzle (snipy). In profile view the top of the backskull and the top of the muzzle lie in two approximately parallel, straight planes of equal length, divided by a very slight but perceptible stop or break. A mid-point between the inside corners of the eyes (which is the center of a correctly placed stop) is the center of balance in length of head.

The end of the smooth, well-rounded muzzle is blunt but not square. The underjaw is strong, clean-cut and the depth of skull from the brow to the under part of the jaw is not excessive. The teeth are of good size, meeting in a scissors bite. Overshot or undershot jaws are undesirable, the latter being more severely penalized. There is a very slight prominence of the eyebrows. The backskull is flat, without receding either laterally or backward and the occipital bone is not highly peaked. The proper width of backskull necessarily depends upon the combined length of skull and muzzle and the width of the backskull is less than its length. Thus the correct width varies with the individual and is dependent upon the extent to which it is supported by length of muzzle. Because of the importance of the head characteristics, prominent head faults are very severely penalized.

Eyes

Because of the combination of the flat skull, the arched eyebrows, the slight stop and the rounded muzzle, the foreface must be chiseled to form a receptacle for the eyes and they are necessarily placed obliquely to give them the required forward outlook. Except for the blue merles, they are required to be matched in color. They are almond-shaped, of medium size and never properly appear to be large or prominent. The color is dark and the eye does not show a yellow ring or a sufficiently prominent haw to affect the dog's expression. The eyes have a clear, bright appearance, expressing intelligent inquisitiveness, particularly when the ears are drawn up and the dog is on the alert. In blue merles, dark brown eyes are preferable, but either or both eyes may be merle or china in color without specific penalty. A large, round, full eye seriously detracts from the desired sweet expression. Eye faults are heavily penalized.

Ears

The ears are in proportion to the size of the head and, if they are carried properly and unquestionably break naturally, are seldom too small. Large ears usually cannot be lifted correctly off the head, and even if lifted, they will be out of proportion to the size of the head. When in repose the ears are folded lengthwise and thrown back into the frill. On the alert they are drawn well up on the backskull and are carried about three-quarters erect, with about one-fourth of the ear tipping or breaking forward. A dog with prick ears or low ears cannot show true expression and is penalized accordingly.

Neck

The neck is firm, clean, muscular, sinewy and heavily frilled. It is fairly long, carried upright with a slight arch at the nape and imparts a proud, upstanding appearance showing off the frill.

Body

The body is firm, hard and muscular, a trifle long in proportion to the height. The ribs are well-rounded behind the well-sloped shoulders and the chest is deep, extending to the elbows. The back is strong and level, supported by powerful hips and thighs and the croup is sloped to give a well-rounded finish. The loin is powerful and slightly arched. Noticeably fat dogs, or dogs in poor flesh, or with skin disease, or with no undercoat are out of condition and are moderately penalized accordingly.

Legs

The forelegs are straight and muscular, with a fair amount of bone considering the size of the dog. A cumbersome appearance is undesirable. Both narrow and wide placement are penalized. The forearm is moderately fleshy and the pasterns are flexible but without weakness. The hind legs are less fleshy, muscular at the thighs, very sinewy and the hocks and stifles are well bent. A cowhocked dog or a dog with straight stifles is penalized. The comparatively small feet are approximately oval in shape. The soles are well padded and tough, and the toes are well arched and close together. When the Collie is not in motion the legs and feet are judged by allowing the dog to come to a natural stop in a standing position so that both the forelegs and the hind legs are placed well apart, with the feet extending straight forward. Excessive “posing” is undesirable.

Gait

Gait is sound. When the dog is moved at a slow trot toward an observer its straight front legs track comparatively close together at the ground. The front legs are not out at the elbows, do not “crossover,” nor does the dog move with a choppy, pacing or rolling gait. When viewed from the rear the hind legs are straight, tracking comparatively close together at the ground. At a moderate trot the hind legs are powerful and propelling. Viewed from the side the reasonably long, “reaching” stride is smooth and even, keeping the back line firm and level.

As the speed of the gait is increased the Collie single tracks, bringing the front legs inward in a straight line from the shoulder toward the center line of the body and the hind legs inward in a straight line from the hip toward the center line of the body. The gait suggests effortless speed combined with the dog’s herding heritage, requiring it to be capable of changing its direction of travel almost instantaneously.

Tail

The tail is moderately long, the bone reaching to the hock joint or below. It is carried low when the dog is quiet, the end having an upward twist or swirl. When gaited or when the dog is excited it is carried gaily but not over the back.

Coat

The well-fitting, proper-textured coat is the crowning glory of the rough variety of Collie. It is abundant except on the head and legs. The outer coat is straight and harsh to the touch. A soft, open outer coat or a curly outer coat, regardless of quantity is penalized. The undercoat, however, is soft, furry and so close together that it is difficult to see the skin when the hair is parted. The coat is very abundant on the mane and frill. The face or mask is smooth. The forelegs are smooth and well feathered to the back of the pasterns. The hind legs are smooth below the hock joints. Any feathering below the hocks is removed for the show ring. The hair on the tail is very profuse and on the hips it is long and bushy. The texture, quantity and the extent to which the coat “fits the dog” are important points.

Color

The four recognized colors are “Sable and White,” “Tri-color,” “Blue Merle” and “White.” There is no preference among them. The “Sable and White” is predominantly sable (a fawn sable color of varying shades from light gold to dark mahogany) with white markings usually on the chest, neck, legs, feet and the tip of the tail. A blaze may appear on the foreface or backskull or both. The “Tri-color” is predominantly black, carrying white markings as in a “Sable and White” and has tan shadings on and about the head and legs. The “Blue Merle” is a mottled or “marbled” color

predominantly blue-grey and black with white markings as in the “Sable and White” and usually has tan shadings as in the “Tri-color.” The “White” is predominantly white, preferably with sable, tri-color or blue merle markings.

Size

Dogs are from 24 to 26 inches at the shoulder and weigh from 60 to 75 pounds. Bitches are from 22 to 24 inches at the shoulder, weighing from 50 to 65 pounds. An undersize or an oversize Collie is penalized according to the extent to which the dog appears to be undersize or oversize.

Expression

Expression is one of the most important points in considering the relative value of Collies. Expression, like the term character is difficult to define in words. It is not a fixed point as in color, weight or height and it is something the uninitiated can properly understand only by optical illustration. In general, however, it may be said to be the combined product of the shape and balance of the skull and muzzle, the placement, size, shape and color of the eye and the position, size and carriage of the ears. An expression that shows sullenness or which is suggestive of any other breed is entirely foreign. The Collie cannot be judged properly until its expression has been carefully evaluated.

Smooth

The Smooth Variety of Collie is judged by the same Standard as the Rough Variety, except that the references to the quantity and distribution of the coat are not applicable to the Smooth Variety, which has a short, hard, dense, flat coat of good texture, with an abundance of undercoat.

Approved May 10, 1977



Ch. Afterhours Firestorm



Ch. Capella's Masquerade

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Dear District Directors and Board Members,

As chairman of the proposed Standard Review Committee I want to update you on what has transpired to this point and let you know our tentative plans for the future. Let me reiterate that this a committee charged with the task of reviewing the standard, as per AKC recommendations. The specific wording from AKC is: "I recommend that a committee be formed to investigate and assess the situation including surveying the membership and educating the membership in regard to the issue."

First, I think that some background information is in order. After being informed of the situation in which a judge withheld a reserve award from a sable merle Collie I (as Judges Ed. Chairman) immediately called the judge to discuss the matter. It was a lengthy conversation in which the judge told me, among other things, she didn't expect a standard change and that a directive from the Parent Club would certainly be sufficient. The Judges Education Committee began work right away on expanding the existing directive and was told by AKC that our efforts had resulted in "a clear, concise directive for judges."

We then asked that it be published in the next (Dec.) AKC Judges Newsletter that is sent to all AKC judges. The directive is on the CCA website under Judges Education and it is included in the packet that is sent to all new applicants for Collies published in the AKC Gazette. I sent the directive to the judge in question and asked her to please let me know if this clarified the issue for her. To date, we have received no response.

Acting as the contact person speaking with the AKC's breed standard issues staff liason I have learned a lot. First, when asking about establishing an open class for sable merles, we were informed "In that this is not a color with a pattern that can be readily identified, it is not recommended to attempt to establish an additional class." In short, judges are concerned with evaluating phenotype or how the dog "appears" and not all sable merles are identifiable as such. Secondly, when a standard is opened for the revision of one issue any number of special interests wanting other changes may come forth. For instance, we have heard murmurs that there are some people who would like the standard size of Collies changed to be smaller.

Regarding the AKC's recommendation that "It would be prudent of the club to establish a means of educating the breeders" we have developed the following tentative plans:

- 1) Gather statistics and historical information regarding sable merles. Among other things, this would include champions finished, ROM's, CCA winners, etc. Just FYI, so far we have learned that over 200 sable merles have finished their titles since 1990 (and those are registered as sable merles).
- 2) Survey the membership regarding this issue. We will begin with those people who serve as our Breed Mentors. Their having qualified as mentors indicates significant experience, commitment and contribution to the Collie (the mentor application with qualifications is on the CCA website.) We also plan to send an in depth questionnaire to a diverse group of twelve individuals for their input, with the intent of sharing their responses with the membership at large. This group will include successful long time and current breeders, a veterinarian who is a Collie breeder, and a geneticist who is a long time Collie breeder. We are hoping that the following will accept our invitation to contribute: Nancy Anstruther, Dr. Cindi Bossart, Mike Cheatham, Marcy Fine, Jim Frederiksen, Tim Garrison, Amy Gau, Marcia Keller, Barb Linder, Glen Twiford, Adria Weiner, and Dorothy Welsh.
- 3) Consult with a geneticist to clarify the mode of inheritance of the merle gene and to clarify any color/pattern issues concerning the sable merle.
- 4) Consult with a veterinarian concerning health ramifications regarding the sable merle. It is high time that any misinformation or misconceptions concerning this issue be cleared up.
- 5) We propose that a program which includes the educational information that we have gathered be held on Tuesday afternoon, April 7, 2009 at the CCA in Springfield. We have obtained permission to use the same room where the Breeders Education seminar will be held that morning.

As a committee we feel strongly about an informed, educated membership. This subject requires careful thought and is not to be taken lightly. Rational, intelligent discussion rather than emotional polarization is our choice of how to proceed.

Tom Coen, Chairman



CCA JUDGES' EDUCATION DIRECTIVE ON JUDGING THE SABLE MERLE COLLIE

The Collie Standard recognizes four colors: "Sable and White," "Tri-Color," "Blue Merle" and "White." Sable Merles appear sable but may exhibit varying degrees of the merling pattern.

Quality, rather than color or pattern, is of foremost importance in judging the Collie. The Standard's emphasis on overall balance, head properties and expression is clear and should always take precedence over color.

Ideally, the Sable Merle should have dark eyes, matched in color. If the eyes are not dark and matched in color, the Sable Merle should be penalized (not excused or disqualified) to the degree that the expression is affected.

The Standard states, "Expression is one of the most important points in considering the relative value of Collies" and "The Collie cannot be judged properly until its expression has been carefully evaluated." It further states "Eye faults are heavily penalized."

Collie Club of America
Judges Education Committee
Thomas W. Coen, Chairman
John G. Buddie
Judie Evans
Marcia Keller



AKC RULES AND GUIDELINES FOR REVISING STANDARDS

AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB • PEACHTREE CITY, GEORGIA • JULY 21–22, 2007

2007 AKC PARENT CLUB CONFERENCE

Breed standards are an important part of the ongoing effort to maintain and protect the future of individual breeds. Mari-Beth O'Neill explained the process by which Parent Clubs develop, and both the clubs and the AKC, approve changes in standards.

In 1987, when the AKC established a common format for breed standards, approximately one third of the Parent Clubs opted out of a process that they saw as an infringement on their ability to formulate and describe their breeds. Although one of the first objectives was to eliminate point scales in breed standards, this system became one of the first concessions when some club members objected. In November 2006, the AKC revised guidelines for writing and revising breed standards. The process of revising a standard begins with the formation of a breed standard committee to review existing provisions, solicit updates, and listen to members' concerns about where the breed is going. O'Neill emphasized that the breed standard defines "perfection for the breed, not the common denominator." When debates go on and compromises are made, she said she sometimes fears that members "are leaving what is excellence and what you really want the epitome of the breed to be. We all strive to breed the perfect dog, and we need a definition of what that is to be." O'Neill recommended small standard committees of no more than three members, and urged clubs to contact her office as early in the process as possible. Committee recommendations are reviewed by AKC staff, and then submitted for board approval before they can go out to club members for balloting. Clubs have full authority to decide whether the review process will deal with just one aspect of a standard or focus more broadly.

O'Neill recalled her own experience with the Manchester Terrier, in which the introduction of a blue at a breed show triggered a near-unanimous vote in favor of a disqualification for colors other than black and tan. "There's almost always somebody who votes against," whether the objection has to do with the scope of a revision or the grammar and spelling in the document. She said it is up to Parent Clubs to control the revision process through effective communications, using member newsletters, websites, and annual meeting presentations to make everyone aware of the process before ballots circulate.

"You want to be able to protect yourselves from people who say they never knew you were doing this," but it is also important to explain the rationale behind a change, O'Neill said. Balloting must comply with constitution and bylaw requirements, usually the same ones that apply to mail votes for club officers. Some clubs have learned from experience that ballots sent just prior to membership renewals can create confusion with the renewal process. O'Neill said that balloting must also inform members that a five-year moratorium on standard revisions will take effect once a change has been approved.

After balloting is complete, the results are resubmitted to AKC staff and the board, published in the Secretary's Page of the Gazette for comment, then submitted for final approval. When the process concludes, the club receives final notification, and the AKC establishes an effective date approximately three months later to allow time for the standard to be reprinted. The AKC takes responsibility for mailing the new standard with an explanation of the revisions to judges.

Janet Jackson

There are three essential ingredients for any Parent Club considering a change in its breed standard, Janet Jackson said: the club's own constitution, the guidelines covered in O'Neill's presentation, and Mari-Beth O'Neill herself. She described O'Neill as "a student of history" who is dedicated to helping AKC members preserve the heritage of their breeds.

The Yorkshire Terrier Club began its most recent standard revision process with a question about a possible disqualification for long tails. "Little did we know that things were happening out there rapidly," Jackson said, "to the extent that long tails wouldn't be the main issue in a few more years, because colors were coming."

In 1999, the club received its first complaint about a breeder producing Parti-Colored Yorkshire Terriers in California. Club representatives followed up with the AKC and received assurances that the standard allowed four color choices—black and tan, black and gold, blue and tan, blue and gold—with no provision for markings.

By the time a second complaint surfaced five years later, Jackson said, the AKC had adopted DNA registration

and was no longer prepared to deny registration on color alone. Meanwhile, the club was tracking the introduction of an expensive new “designer” breed that was said to be a mutation from the Yorkshire Terrier, with features that never showed up in the purebred dogs.

The club raised no objection when the AKC was asked to recognize the new breed, requesting only that “Yorkshire” not be included in the breed name. All new breeds come from crossing established ones, Jackson explained, so “if their pedigrees are sufficient to satisfy the AKC, we’re all for it.” However, the experience led to a unanimous motion at the Yorkshire Terrier Club’s 2006 annual meeting supporting a disqualification for Parti- Colors or any other departure from established coloring. Members passed a second unanimous motion against opening any other aspect of the standard to review.

The three-member review committee encountered just one problem with wording. In common with the Kerry Blue Terrier, Yorkshire Terriers are born black and take on their adult coloring over time. A disqualification in the Kerry Blue Terrier standard states that dogs must be blue by the age of 18 months, but some of the best-colored Yorkshire Terriers don’t turn until age two. It was difficult to find wording acceptable to AKC without addressing the age at which dogs must be blue. The goal was not to change the original description of color but to address the ‘new’ colors.”

Once that issue had been addressed, Jackson said, the club board unanimously approved the revised standard and the subsequent process was very smooth. The standard was submitted to AKC staff in mid-December, approved by the AKC Board in January, balloted immediately, and approved by 87% of members in a vote that closed March 1. The vote received final AKC approval in July, and will take effect in October. Meanwhile, the club is preparing a PowerPoint presentation to show judges how the Yorkshire Terrier’s coloring evolves over time.

Linda Friedow

The American Belgian Tervuren Club began a full view of its breed standard after its May, 2003 National Specialty. The Judge’s Ed committee had heard comments expressing confusion with certain parts of the existing standard, particularly color, teeth and white. Linda Friedow said participants in the club’s nine-member review committee included “a couple of fairly controversial people,” because “I thought it was beneficial to hear what they were saying in the context of the committee, rather than talking behind our backs.”

The club notified members of the review, set up a website

to collect comments and concerns, and allowed six months for members to send input and suggested wording. The club ended up with seven major changes in wording, along with a general effort to simplify the text and turn some negative descriptions to positives. Heeding advice from the first two AKC Parent Club Conferences, Friedow said the committee also looked at spelling, grammar, and punctuation, knowing that “if you submit it misspelled and it’s approved that way, you live with it for five years.” That decision raised flags at the balloting stage, with some members complaining that the language updates had been thrown in to confuse the review process.

The review took 18 months, with a deep and sometimes heated discussion within the committee. “They were willing to work at this, and to keep working at it,” Friedow said. By May 2006, the club was ready for balloting, and hired an independent firm to oversee the mailing to about 1,100 members. The ballot was announced in club publications and via the membership e-mail “Announce List”. While the words “Official Ballot” appeared on the envelope in large type, the envelopes did not include the club logo, which led to some confusion surrounding the balloting process. The club and the AKC worked together to assure that everyone could vote, while verifying that no one had voted twice.

The new standard was approved, but a couple of disgruntled club members later complained about the process to the AKC board, bypassing the AKC staff. “My phone was ringing, my e-mail was full,” Friedow said, and rumors began to circulate about the integrity of the vote. Although the new standard received AKC approval in the end, O’Neill said the experience had demonstrated the importance of clearly marked envelopes when using independent balloting companies.

Peggy Wolfe

The United States Neapolitan Mastiff Club of America first wrote its standard in the AKC format in 1995 (nine years before breed recognition), revised it in 2001 when the breed was moved into the Miscellaneous Class and made minor revisions again in 2004 when the breed was moved into Working Group.

To write a standard from scratch, “You have to start with a philosophy of what you’re going to be doing,” Wolfe said. “Our very firm philosophy and we all agreed upon this, was that we wanted the standard in America to describe the same dog that is described by the standard in Italy.” The problem was that there were at least four different versions of Italian or FCI standards for the breed. “They’re all a little tiny bit different,” she told participants. “You have people here who say, ‘that’s not what the Italians

say.’ And you say, ‘which Italians?’” Then it turned out that some aspects of the Italian standard were said even by the Italian experts to be incorrect, so the club’s three-member committee agreed to factor in the changes that seemed likely to occur.

Through the process of developing its standard, the breed acquired two very important acknowledgements: a letter from the AKC stating that the original standard was presented in an accepted format and would have been approved for an AKC breed, and correspondence from a key Italian official confirming that the two countries’ standards describe the same dog. “That was a huge benefit in educating our people and our judges,” Wolfe said.

The standard went through minor revisions in 2001. Three years later, when the Mastino was up for full recognition, the AKC board requested the removal of the disqualification for “lack of appearance of massiveness” and a revision of a specific reference to the breed’s temperament. The disqualification was replaced with the statement that “absence of massiveness shall be so severely penalized as to eliminate from competition.” Wolfe said the new language made sense as a way to prevent puppies and young dogs from winning awards if they have not achieved full massiveness, without disqualifying them from competition.

The lesson from the Neapolitan Mastiff experience is that “the biggest problem in standards is words,” she said. “What we’re trying to do with the standard is explain a visual understanding in words.” With judges trying to learn and understand 12 breeds at once, there is a strong temptation for them to want a standard meaning of key terminology like “massive,” “moderate,” or “full dentition,” when they appear in different standards. This is problematic since the authors of the different standards may not have meant exactly the same thing when they used those words. Nowadays we are all affected when other breeds attempt to clarify words or meanings in their standards too. Wolfe said, “I want to thank the Rottweiler people for helping us redefine the meaning of the word ‘is.’”

Questions and Discussion

A participant asked about the listing of colors and a dog’s certification of registration. O’Neill said the AKC asks applicants to send photos when coloring is not standard.

O’Neill told participants that the Parent Club owns the breed standard and controls its use through copyright. The AKC copies standards for educational purposes, referring requests for wider publishing to Parent Clubs for approval.

A participant said her breed had amended its standard several years ago to include a brindle coat as well as the pre-existing tricolor, and is now seeing the emergence of a “trindle.” A contingent of club members supported an amendment to recognize brindle-coated tris, but the AKC advised that the issue could be addressed through judge education. O’Neill said the club could decide the issue on its own authority.

Temperament standards and the requirement for two descended testicles are included in the rules applied to dog shows and need not be included in breed standards, O’Neill said. Provisions for temperament and aggression toward other dogs vary widely, reflecting differences in the purposes and functions of different breeds.

A participant described the extensive judge education effort her club had undertaken to fully explain the standard for the salt-and-pepper coat that is unique to its particular breed. O’Neill acknowledged that Parent Club representatives might face a frustrating trade-off between accepting inconsistent championship decisions or overwhelming judges with too much information.

A participant asked what breeds are doing to revise their standards language on docking and cropping. O’Neill said that while the practice is only permitted in the western hemisphere, responsible owners must have the right to choose whether to dock or crop their dogs.

“What we do with our standards is almost irrelevant at this point,” she said. “We have to fight for our rights throughout the country.”

A participant expressed concern about attempts to improve rare breeds by adding stock that appears similar but is not the same. He asked whether the AKC had considered protecting bloodlines by defining breeds by genetic history as well as appearance. O’Neill said the organization will continue expanding breed recognition through DNA; however, the science is still a few years away from the ability to identify a specific breed.

Participants discussed whether published breed standards should be used with a broader audience as well as judges. “It’s for the breeders and the puppy buyers and for everyone,” a participant said. “It’s a blueprint for our breed.” O’Neill said it is up to Parent Clubs to educate prospective buyers.

A judge said each breed should have two standards: one for judges and one for breeders. He noted that many clubs hold separate educational programs for the two groups. “That’s a wonderful thing that we all ought to take under advisement,” he said, “but to put some of these things into a judges’ breed standard won’t make sense.”

GENETICS AND SCIENCE OF THE MERLE GENE

Tim Garrison

M, merle. This is another dilution gene. Although merle is generally treated as a dominant gene, it is in fact an incomplete dominant. An mm dog is normal color (no merling). An Mm dog is merled. But an MM dog has much more white than is normal for the breed and may have hearing loss, vision problems including small or missing eyes, and possible infertility (Little). Sable merles can be distinguished from sables with varying amounts of difficulty. The merling is clearly visible at birth, but may fade to little more than a possible slight mottling of ear tips as an adult. Eyes of an Mm dog are sometimes blue or merled (brown and blue segments in the eye.)

It is possible that merle is a “fragile” gene, with M having a relatively high probability of mutating back to m. (Schaible) The observed pattern would then be the result of some clones of melanocytes having suffered such a back mutation to mm while they are migrating to their final site in the skin, producing the black patches, while others remained Mm. This hypothesis also explains why a double merle to black breeding occasionally produces a black puppy, the proposed back mutation in this case occurring in a germ cell. On the other hand, the observed blacks from this type of breeding may actually be cryptic merles - genetically Mm, but with the random black patches covering virtually all of the coat.

Merle is a part of the pattern of ragged black spots seen in the harlequin Great Dane and possibly the harlequins seen in Collies and Shetland Sheepdogs. There appears to be an additional gene or modified merle gene which removes the dilute pigment, leaving the “blue” area clear white.

The merle gene, denoted as a dominant M, is in fact an incomplete dominant gene. It exists as a separate color modifying allele. The action of a single copy of the merle gene is to dilute (modify) the expression of melanin (black pigment) in an incomplete pattern resulting in a marbled effect. If a dog has a black (melanistic) background color it will be gray and black marbled, a blue merle. The eye color will sometimes be blue or merled (brown and blue segments). If two copies of the gene are present the background is further diluted to white and the black patches to varying shades of gray and black, a double dilute or “homozygous” merle. Homozygous merles “MAY” have varying degrees of hearing loss and vision problems including severe microphthalmia. The merle gene has little

or no dilution effect on pheomelanin (tan pigment), so when present on a sable background will have varying degrees of expression. Sable merles can be distinguished from sables with varying amounts of difficulty. In general, the merling is clearly visible at birth, but may fade to little more than slight mottling of ear tips on an adult dogs. The eye color on a sable merle will sometimes be blue or merled (brown and blue segments).

Kim Schive

Sable is a color. Sable merle is one of three sable genotypes that may affect the appearance of the sable color.

The pure-for-sable genotype (two sable genes) may produce a sable color ranging from pale lemon or straw to red. The tri-factored Collie, which carries a gene for tri-color along with a gene for sable, is usually a darker sable, with coat shading ranging from walnut to mahogany. A sable-merle Collie (one gene for merle in addition to one or two genes for sable) is often a lighter shade of sable and may or may not exhibit the merling pattern to varying degrees.

All three genotypes produce dogs that are clearly sable in color. A knowledgeable observer may be able to guess a sable dog’s genotype, but only DNA testing or breeding results can make a definitive identification of genotype. However, the identification of dogs as sable merles has to do with breeding, not with showing, and hence does not concern judges who are evaluating a dog’s phenotype.

The standard does not mention sable merle or tri-factoring because both are simply variants of the sable color. AKC registration forms do allow sable merles to be identified as such, because doubling up on the merle factor may cause health problems and is not generally desirable. The standard describes the range of shades that may be observed in sable Collies. It does not mention sable merle or tri-factored sable, because the coloration produced by both of these sable genotypes is included in the range of shades already specified for the sable color.

Because doubling up on the merle factor may cause health problems in the offspring, including impairments of sight and hearing, such matings are usually avoided.

BREEDING MERLES - HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS

Cindi Bossart, VMD

Chairman CCA Health Committee

THE TRUTH ABOUT SABLE MERLES

Sable merle Collies are healthy. The merling gene, inherited from one parent, does not cause any health problems.

They live just as long as pure for sables or tri-factored sables (sables with a tri gene or “mahogany sable”). They are, in fact, phenotypically sables with varying degrees of obvious merling. Some sable merles show very little merling. They are genotypically sable with a merling gene.

Sable merles should not be bred to another sable merle or a blue merle as there is a chance of doubling up on the merle gene. Doubling on the merle gene in any breeding whether it is blue merle to blue merle or blue merle to sable merle or sable merle to sable merle, can result in deaf and/or blind offspring.

When registering a sable merle puppy, the AKC registration form must indicate that the puppy is a sable merle. This is especially important for those puppies that show very little merling so the puppy if bred later can be bred properly.

David E. Hansen, DVM, FAVD, Dip. AVDC

The following are my thoughts, comments and experiences with sable merle collies, as a veterinarian for 21 years and as a collie breeder for 19 years. I want to stress that these are strictly my personal thoughts on the subject.

The merle gene is a dilution gene. A short search of the veterinary medicine databases reveals no health issues specifically for sable merle collies. Sable merles are no more likely to have health problems than any other color collie. Likewise they are just as susceptible to the health issues that are in our breed. There is the same concern as with blue merles, that if any 2 merles (sable or blue) are bred, there may be some offspring that are double dilute (merle genes from both parents) and there are serious health problems with these. Sable merles are not always obvious as they mature, so I personally believe that they should be registered as sable merles with the AKC, so if sold it is clear that the collie is a sable merle to avoid misunderstandings.



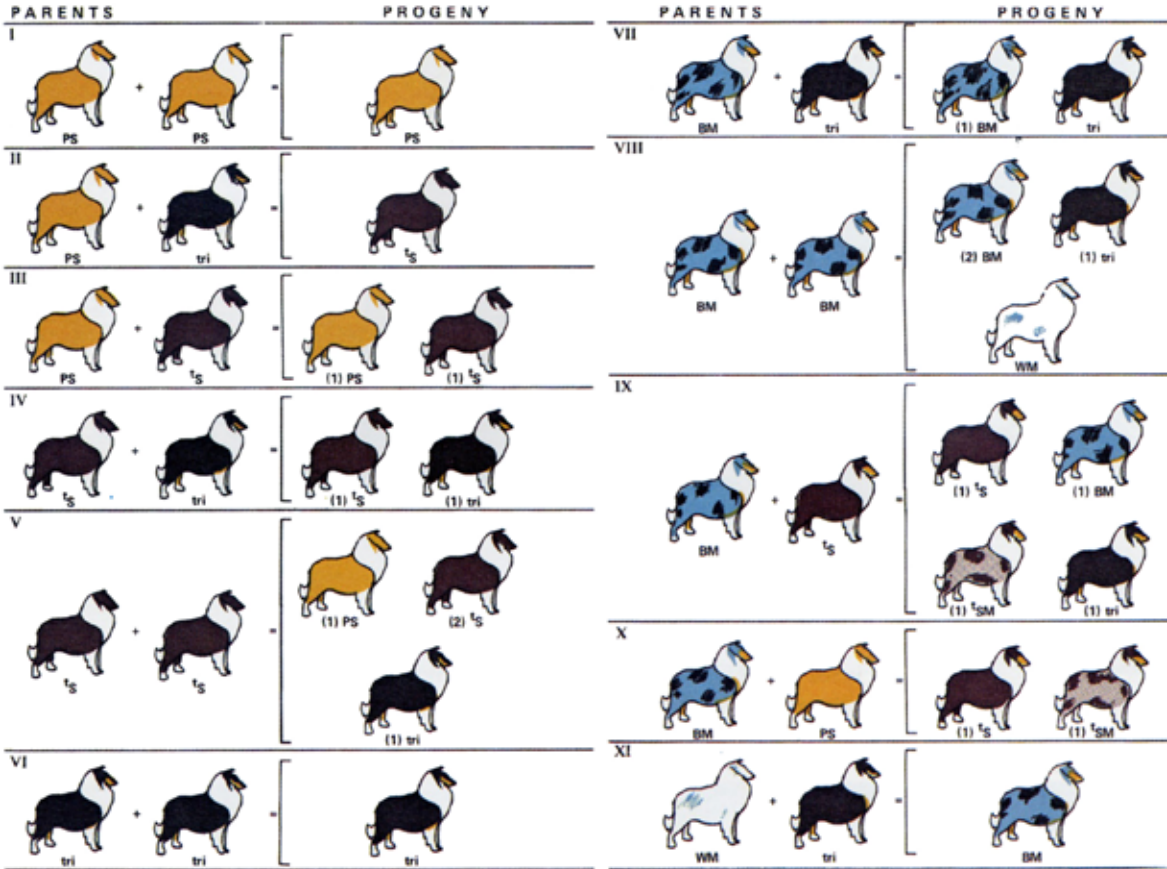


Fig. 1. Parent/Progeny Chart, part one.

S - Sable • Dominant over tricolor. Shadings may run from straw through red to dark mahogany.

PS - Pure Sable • Usually a clear shade of straw or orange red with dark masking or fringes. These individuals carry no tricolor gene and can produce only sable color regardless of what color is combined with them (Charts I, II, III, X, XIV, XVI, XIX)

^tS - Trifactored Sable • Sable Collies carrying the tricolor gene in conjunction with the dominant sable gene. Usually (but not always) a dark orange to a very dark mahogany in color with dark masking and fringes (Charts II, III, IV, V, IX)

tri - Tricolor • Recessive to sable. Black Collies with white and tan markings on sides of muzzle, above eyes, sides of cheeks, chest and inner margins of legs (Charts II, IV, VI, VII, XI, XII, XV, XVII)

M - Merle • A dominant dilution gene which in combination with sable or tri genes produces merled Collies.

BM - Blue Merle. Bluish gray with black splotching, carrying sable markings in the same pattern as the tricolor. Color results from the interaction of the dominant dilution gene (M) with the tricolor gene (t). (Charts VII, VIII, IX, X, XVIII)

SM - Sable Merle. Sable spotted Collies. Color results from the interaction of the dominant dilution gene (M) on the sable color. At birth, all sable merles exhibit a bluish tinge on tail and muzzle which disappears in a few weeks. Brownish merling on body or head may or may not remain at maturity, and thus these individuals, if they have dark eyes can be mistaken for a “normal” sable. However, many sable merles inherit blue or blue flecked eyes, a sure sign of a merle.

PSM - Pure Sable Merle. Usually a light or even “washed out” sable at birth with brown merling. At maturity, quite often these Collies lost their merling and coat color become a clearer red. No tricolor gene is present in their makeup (Chart XV)

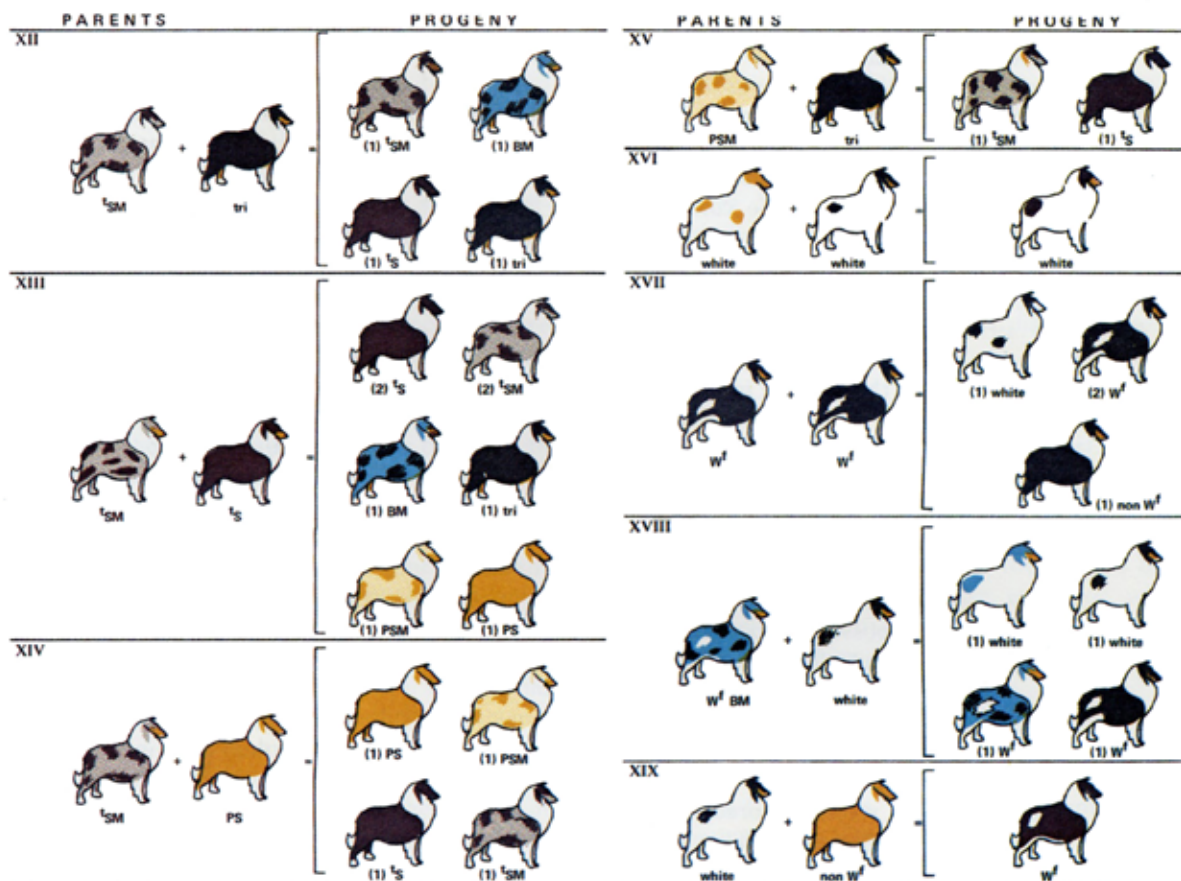


Fig. 2. Parent/Progeny Chart, part two.

Reprinted from Collie Concept by Mrs. George H. Roos, Jr. © 1982

^tSM - Trifactored Sable Merle. Usually a darker sable color than the PSM with dark brown merling which quite frequently is still visible at maturity. The tricolor gene is present in conjunction with the sable and merle gene. (Charts XII, XIII, XIV)

w - White • These Collies are the results of a cross between either two white parents or white factored parents. Color is carried on a recessive gene (w) and is inherited independently of sable, tri or blue merle and may occur in combination with any of them. A blue headed white is just as sound and normal a Collie as the tri or sable headed white. These are not to be confused with the white merle whose "white" color results from the double dominant dilution merle gene, whereas the white color of a blue headed white results from the recessive gene (ww) and its blue color from the normal interaction of the merle gene with tricolor. (Charts XVI, XVIII)

w^f - White factored • Colored dogs usually with large white frill, heavy white tail tip, possibly a body splash of

white hairs and white extending upward from hind feet over stifle to meet the white underbody. (Charts XVII, XVIII)

non w^f - Non white factored • Regular colored collies not carrying the recessive white factor (Chart XIX)

WM • White Merle (defective white), resulting from the combination of two merled parents. These Collies inherit the dominant dilution gene (M) from both parents. Thus, color is diminished almost to the vanishing point by the gene in duplex. They are almost white in appearance and may or may not have a few merling spots. Eyes, if present, are pale blue, skin including the eyelids, lip, nose and pads are pigmentless except within an area of merling, hearing and sight severely impaired. These are commonly destroyed at birth. If a white merle is raised to maturity and is from a BM to BM cross, it can be bred to a tricolor and will produce 100% blue merles. (Charts VIII, XI) This is not true of white merles carrying the PS genes or the ^tS genes when bred to a tri.

EVOLUTION OF COLOR RECOGNITION IN THE COLLIE STANDARD

Gayle Kaye

The very first standard (which was basically the English standard) stated “colour immaterial”. This was adopted when the club was formed in 1886.

The standard amended in 1897 stated: “COLOR - Immaterial, although a richly colored or nicely marked dog has undoubtedly a considerable amount of weight with judges-the black and tan with white frill and collar, or the still more showy sable with perfect white markings will generally win, other things being equal.”

The revised Standard circa 1918 stated: “COLOR - Immaterial, although a richly colored or nicely marked dog has undoubtedly a considerable amount of weight with judges-the black and tan with white frill and collar, or the still more showy sable with perfect white markings will generally win, other things being equal.”

The Standard revision of 1950 stated:

COLOR

The four recognized colors are Sable and White, Tricolor, Blue Merle, and White. There is no preference among them. The Sable and White is predominantly sable (a fawn sable color of varying shades from light gold to dark mahogany) with white markings usually on the chest, neck, legs, feet and the tip of the tail. A blaze may appear on the foreface or backskull or both. The Tricolor is predominantly black, carrying white markings as in a

sable and white and has tan shadings on and about the head and legs. The Blue Merle is a mottled or marbled color, predominantly blue-gray and black with white markings as in the Sable and White and usually has tan shadings as in the Tricolor. The White is predominantly White, preferably with sable or tricolor markings. Blue merle coloring is undesirable in whites.”

The current Standard approved in 1977 states:

COLOR

The four recognized colors are Sable and White, Tri-color, Blue Merle, and White. There is no preference among them. The Sable and White is predominantly sable (a fawn sable color of varying shades from light gold to dark mahogany) with white markings usually on the chest, neck, legs, feet and the tip of the tail. A blaze may appear on the foreface or backskull or both. The Tri-color is predominantly black, carrying white markings as in a sable and white and has tan shadings on and about the head and legs. The Blue Merle is a mottled or marbled color, predominantly blue-grey and black with white markings as in the Sable and White and usually has tan shadings as in the Tri-color. The White is predominantly white, with sable, tri-color or blue merle markings.”

It’s interesting to note that neither BM or whites were mentioned until the 1950 Standard was done!

Ch. Countryview Camouflage



SABLE MERLE CHAMPIONS

	DOG'S NAME	V S	YR	SIRE	DAM
1	Hertzville Headstone	R D	1935	Lodestone Landmark	Hertzvilel Blue Harebell
2	Cul Mor's Aillse	S B	1969	Cul Mor's Marcus Antonius	Cul Mor's Birken Shaw
3	Briarhill's Dawn of Wintara	R B	1974	Tartanside The Gladiator	Briarhill's Quicksilver
4	Sudbury's Fools Gold, CD	S B	1974	Strathmoor's Macduff	Sudbury's Fleur De Lis
5	Asil Who's Who	R D	1980	Glen Hill Ravette Review	Asil Sunshower
6	Braetana Let It Shine	R B	1981	Glenecho Set The Style	Braetana Vera Blue
7	Wayside's After The Gold Rush	R B	1981	Wayside Grand Slam	Two Jay's Silver Fire
8	Dandenong's Impossible Dream	R D	1983	Bravo's Oso Rojo	Robmar Dandenong's Crystal
9	Kings Valley Flock Tender	S B	1983	Kings Valley Blue Enchanter	Jancada Tender O'Kings Valley
10	Kings Valley Tender Portrait	S B	1983	The Pied Piper of Kings Valley	Jancada Tender O'Kings Valley
11	Candray Cimmaroon of Anlorr	R B	1985	Candray Damien Bleu	Candray Sunkist
12	Candray Constellation	R D	1986	Candray Hi Vu Tradition	Candray Marigold
13	Enchanter's Pantomime	R B	1986	Tartanside Th Critics Choice	Enchanter's Winter Dreams
14	Alliance's Mr. Ewing	R D	1986	Alliance's Mr. Nick	Jak's Susy Que
15	Gambit Dawn On The Horizon	R B	1987	Gambit's The Dragon's Roar	Spring Blue Mist of Dawn
16	Glenorka Cherann's Champale	R B	1987	Celestial's Midnight Blue	Brandwyne Sparkling Wine
17	Amberhill Chips of Gold	R D	1987	Chelsea Silver Reflection	Amberbill Bouquet of Chelsea
18	Wickmere Noblesse Oblige	R B	1988	Wickmere Special Bulletin	Wickmere Shot In The Dark
19	Cherann's Roclane Chardonnay	S B	1989	Cherann's U Smooth Talker You	Glenorka Cherann's Champale
20	Clarion Spellbound Solid Gold	R D	1989	Paradice's Along Came Jones	The Meadows Slightly Silver
21	Clarion Against All Odds	R D	1989	Mainstay Sultan Of Xanadu	Mellowlaze Touch O'Velvet
22	Hi-Crest Ultralight	R B	1989	Milas High Light	Hi-Crest Silk N Silver
23	Kimberlee The Great Pretender	R D	1989	Asil Who's Who	Marnus More Promise
24	Ladyvale Pale Rider	R D	1989	Windrift's Blue Knight	Pebblebrook Stardust Memories
25	L'il Swiss Peaches and Cream	S B	1989	Dorelaine The Blue Max	L'il Swiss Sarah Lee
26	Two Jays Second Chance	R D	1989	Two Jay's Silver Frost	Two Jay's Windrush
27	The Meadows Simply Smashing	R D	1989	Caralot's The Meadows Edge	The Meadows Especially Blue
28	Bluestone Sister Moth	S B	1990	Ballochmyle's Spring Poppy	Golden Crowns Azure Ribbon
29	Braegate's Summer Blonde	R B	1990	Braegate's In The Blues	Incandescent Rose Royce
30	Capella's Masquerade	S B	1990	Cherann's U Smooth Talker You	Alcor Disguised
31	Davishall Days Of Gold	S D	1990	Con-te Davishall Slew Of Gold	Davishall Sunrise
32	Glen Corry Perry's Danielle	R B	1990	Perry's Sundather Tradition	Glen Corry's Windchime
33	Kalarama's Calico Classic	S D	1990	Kalarama's Classic Keepsake CD	Haurand's Sunamor Elegance
34	Rob Mar's Golden Reserve	S D	1990	Raptorvale Golden Autumn	Rob Mar's A Chance To Remember
35	Roc-Lane High Calibre	S B	1990	Cherann's U Smooth Talker You	Roc-lane's Violet's Are Blue
36	Alcor Disguised	R B	1991	Alcor Mistaken Identity	Keokuk's Outspoken Lady
37	Charmant's On Gossamer Wings	S B	1991	Charmant's All That Jazz	Charmant's Show Biz Lizzy
38	El Solo's Delta Starr	R B	1991	El Solo's Top Priority	Starr's Uptown Girl
39	Lisara's Honoroll Debut	S B	1991	Aryggeth Lisara Liaison	Lisara Is Chasing Rainbows
40	Perry's Sundather Tradition	R D	1991	Paradice's Along Came Jones	Clarion Capella
41	Mar-k's Made Of Honor	S B	1992	Bar-k's Halston Original	Warwick Faerie Stockings
42	Portrait Sand Dragon	S D	1992	Mountainpride's Winterbound	Maramet Dream Along
43	Sage Brush Mardi Gras Bluff	S D	1992	Sage Brush Mardi Gras	Maple Bluffs Sunny Girl
44	Sage Brush Sunrise Serenade	S B	1992	Sage Brush Mardi Gras	Maple Bluffs Sunny Girl
45	Alcor Pen Name	R D	1993	Perry's Sundather Tradition	Alcor True Identity

	DOG'S NAME	V	S	YR	SIRE	DAM
46	Carol-kay's All That Glitters	R	D	1993	Napier's Dangerous Liaison	Hi Vu Krystal Klear
47	Kayloma's I'm Just A Lil Dear	S	B	1993	Hollicoves Almasi Joe	Kayloma's Copy Kat
48	Society Elite Penrose Chance	R	D	1993	Cinderella's One For The Road	Kimberlee Essence Of Spring
49	Tallywood Th'spirit Sings	R	B	1993	Fury's The Spirit Of Legends	Tamalyn Tallywood Treat
50	Wolf Manor Totally Blonde	S	B	1993	Wolf Manor Gentle King	Wolf Manor Special Achiever
51	Afterhours Firestorm	R	D	1994	Gaelicglen's Wind Whistler	Afterhours Blonde Ambition
52	Fantasy's Shining Through	R	D	1994	Vennessee Sculptured In Blue	Fantasy's True To The Master
53	Merrytime Fire Cracker	S	D	1994	Lisara's Merrytime Rainmaker	Riverain Firestorm
54	Millcreek's Corner Of The Son	R	D	1995	Millcreek's Corner Of The Sky	Millcreek's Golden Destiny
55	Touchstone's Willowind Rising	R	B	1995	Clarion Cream Ale	Hollyoak's Willowind Vixen
56	Merrytime Irish Cream	S	B	1996	Lisara Quest	Riverain Firestorm
57	Sunnymede's Dreamworks	S	B	1996	Tartanside Preview	Sunnymede's Jessie
58	Tallywood Spirituality	R	B	1996	Gambit's Restless State	Tallywood Th' Spirit Sings
59	Ballochmyles Forever Spring	R	B	1997	Perry's Sundather Tradition	Overland Dark Image
60	Calavar The Midas Touch	R	D	1997	Tartanside Preview	Calavar Lily Of Th'mary Mc Clan
61	Clarion Marmalade Skies	R	B	1997	Clarion World Class	Clarion Winning Colors
62	Kayloma's I'm Just A Lil Bare	S	B	1997	Kayloma's Xcalibur	Kayloma's I'm Just A Lil Dear
63	Overland Endless Summer	R	B	1997	Overland True Lies	Overland Intuition
64	Two Jays Summertime Blues	R	B	1997	Pinewynd's Sparkling Brut	Joyland's Follow That Dream
65	Blossomhill Wherefor Artthou	R	D	1998	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Blossom Hill Day Dream
66	Countryview Camouflage	R	D	1998	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Countryview Colorful
67	Long Acre's Bronze Icon	R	D	1998	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Long Acres Design By Fantasy
68	Sage Brush Sparkling Rose	R	B	1998	Clarion Cream Ale	Sage Brush Desert Lilli
69	Accent's Sweet Tina	R	B	1999	Accent's Shining Through	Accent's Accentuation
70	Alcor Clear Title	R	D	1999	Alcor Pen Name	Alcor Midnight Clear
71	Blossom Hill Barely Bronze	S	D	1999	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Blossom Hill Day Dream
72	Edenrock Wildflower	R	B	1999	Edenrock Replayed In Gold	Edenrock Moonmist Mirage
73	Hickory Withe Diamoand Dance	R	D	1999	Bama's Apparent Legend	Diamoand's Summer Breeze
74	Merlleen's Golden Eagle	S	D	1999	Hollyoaks Some Gave All	Westwend's Paper Angel
75	Overland Summer Blonde	R	B	1999	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Overland Endless Summer
76	Reniah Shertom Suthrn Comfrt	S	D	1999	Pinewynd's Sparkling Brut	Joyland's Song Of The South
77	Blossom Hill Softly Bronze	S	B	2000	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Blossom Hill Day Dream
78	Lochwynde Illusion	R	B	2000	Tartanside Capital Gain	Lochwynde's Ice Dancer
79	Overland Deep River Impulse	R	D	2000	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Overland Endless Summer
80	Overland Summertime	R	B	2000	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Overland Endless Summer
81	OverlandSummer Classic	R	D	2000	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Overland Endless Summer
82	Seneca's In The Arms Of An Angel	R	B	2000	Sylvan's In Dress Blues	Westriver's Seneca Breeze
83	Alcor Endless Love	R	B	2001	Alcor Pen Name	Alcor Love Potion
84	Capella's Party Animal	S	D	2001	Reniah Shertom Suthrn Comfrt	Capella's Garden Party
85	Cherann's Somethin' About Nothing	S	D	2001	Cherann's Long Kiss Goodnight	Cherann's About that Kiss
86	Clarion When Worlds Collide	R	D	2001	Clarion World Class	Heatherri-Clarion Silver Springs
87	Gambit's Trick of Light	R	D	2001	Afterhours Color of the Wind	Gambit's Playing With Fire
88	Kayloma's Neo Matrix of Bliss	S	D	2001	Hollicove Almasi Skywalker	Kayloma's I'm Just a Lil Bare
89	Kingsmark Statesman	R	D	2001	Gambit's Restless State	Kingsmark Fire and Ice
90	Klondike Thunder Struck	R	D	2001	Cbr's Royal Edition	Klondike's Irish Cream

	DOG'S NAME	V	S	YR	SIRE	DAM
91	L'Gacy The Fire Within	S	D	2001	L'Gacy Great Expectations	Cherann Penny Forur Thoughts
92	Limerick's Opalescent	R	B	2001	Tartanside Illumination	Tartanside Limerick's Debut
93	Lorimar's Surprise! Surprise!	S	B	2001	Row-Bar's Southern Heritage	Overland Exclamation
94	Overland Fortune Cookie	R	B	2001	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Overland Intuition
95	Pembroke Bare Naked Lady	S	B	2001	Elsinores Hot Pants	Pembroke Strawberry Wine
96	Provenhill's Capture the Sun	R	D	2001	Orion's Sundance	Provenhill Elsinore Raindance
97	Younghavens Ima Striptease	S	B	2001	Younghaven's Prototype	Younghaven Ima Slick Chic Too
98	Belle Bete's Face The Music	S	B	2002	Belle Bete's Heartbreak Kid	Belle Betes Hot Summer Dream
99	Capella Wolfsong Serenade	S	B	2002	Reniah Shertom Suthrn Comfrt	Capella's Garden Party
100	Capella's Dream Gift	R	B	2002	Alcor Clear Title	Lisara Slick Chic
101	Clarion Confection III	R	B	2002	The Meadow's Classique White	Clarion Dreamscape
102	Clarion Tallywood Millennium	R	D	2002	Gambit's A Hurricane Brew'n	Clarion Dreamscape
103	Divine's Take 'Em by Storm	S	B	2002	Con-Te State of Affairs	Schaladon's Crown Jewel
104	Donnybrooke's Snowfire	R	D	2002	Blue Daze Gold Sovereign	Blue Daze Ice Princess
105	Edenrock Special Forces	S	D	2002	Edenrock Code of Honor	Edenrock Windchimes
106	Gillespie The Naked Chef	S	D	2002	Gillespie's Thief of Hearts	Raptorvale Black Swan
107	Hi-Crest Tangerine Dream	R	B	2002	Clarion World Class	Hi-Crest Ultraviolet
108	Kayloma's Topflight	S	D	2002	Hollicove Almasi Skywalker	Kayloma's I'm Just a Lil Bare
109	Mandalay's Run for the Sun	S	D	2002	Capella's Midnight Blues	Kilkerrans Mandalay Tempest
110	Mystery's A Hero's Welcome	S	D	2002	Mystery's Intrepid	Fantasy's Nobody's Angel
111	Pembroke Crystal Courage	S	B	2002	Bethany's Preacher Man	Pembroke Faux Pas
112	Sazz's Smooth Operator	S	D	2002	Bit O Heaven Bare to th Bone	Lisara's Too Cute to Shoot
113	Scarboroughs Once Upon A Dream	R	B	2002	Walters Jomar Cave Dweller	Scarboroughs Hear No Evil
114	Tallywood Exhilaration	R	D	2002	Gambit's A Hurricane Brew'n	Tallywood Heart Of The Matter
115	Windy Hills Sage	S	D	2002	Oak Knolls Paparazzi	Dawns Amazing Grace Anstett
116	Ainsleigh The Mighty Quinn	S	D	2003	Jjacds Mighty Beau	Ainsleigh Iccapades
117	Clarion Skyview Symmetry	R	B	2003	Gambit's A Hurricane Brew'n	Clarion Let There Be Light
118	Country Pride Emboys' Admiral	S	D	2003	Emboys Blue Viking	Em Boys Scalawag
119	Divine's True Inspiration	S	D	2003	Con-Te State Of Affairs	Divine Inspiration
120	Easterlea's Revelation	R	D	2003	Shenstones Intriguing Too	Westwood Diamond Girl
121	Gambit's Scintillation	R	D	2003	Gambit's Trick Of Light	Gambit's Silverhill Sinsation
122	Glory's Camelot Cowboy	S	D	2003	Capella's Midnight Blues	Glory's Fairy Tale
123	Heatherri Earth Wind And Fire	R	D	2003	Gambit's A Hurricane Brew'n	Clarion Brilliant Disguise
124	Hickory Withe Gold Spinner	R	D	2003	Hickory Withe Diamoand Dance	Pleasant Acres Velvet Touch
125	Highcroft Collector's Item	R	D	2003	Rockwoods Noble Tradition	Highcroft Cashmere Clouds
126	Intrepid Sparkling Topaz	S	B	2003	Pinewynd's Sparkling Brut	Valiant Gossamer Lace
127	Jolee's-Shalee Shadow Of Light	S	D	2003	Gambit's Trick Of Light	Merrytime Shalee Dear Abby
128	Kingsmark Full Disclosure	S	D	2003	Blossom Hill Barely Bronze	Kingsmark Just A Glance Away
129	Kingsmark I'm A Believer	S	B	2003	Blossom Hill Barely Bronze	Kingsmark Just A Glance Away
130	Kingsmark MRS. Peel	S	B	2003	Blossom Hill Barely Bronze	Kingsmark Just A Glance Away
131	Long Acre's Sunrise Icon	S	D	2003	Long Acre's Bronze Icon	Jul-Fire Long Acre Banbury Tart
132	Mandalay's Racing The Wind	S	B	2003	Corjalin's Return To Glory	Corjalin's Silverfire
133	Millknock Honeycomb	R	B	2003	Twin City Secret Ambition	Millknock Sparks Will Fly
134	Mystic In Your Dreams	R	D	2003	The Meadow's Carry The Dream	Green Acres Snicker Doodle
135	Mystic Raincrow's Khaki Rose	S	B	2003	Mystic In Your Dreams	Mystic The Meadows Summer Brook

	DOG'S NAME	V S	YR	SIRE	DAM
136	Overland Indian Summer	R B	2003	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Overland Endless Summer
137	Overland Summer Romance	R B	2003	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Overland Endless Summer
138	Provenhill's Heart Of Gold	S B	2003	Fantasy Mariner Anchorman	Provenhill Elsinore Raindance
139	Spruce Meadow's Merled Skies	S B	2003	Spruce Medo's Solo Performance	Spruce Meadow's Morning Haze
140	Tallywood Heart Of The Matter	R B	2003	Gambit's Feel The Heat	Tallywood State Of The Heart
141	Twin City Point Of Grace	R B	2003	Long Acre's Bronze Icon	Twin City Sacred Emotion
142	Westwood's Shades of Grandeur	R D	2003	Thornacre's Grand Stand	Westwood Glamour Girl
143	Cherann's Somethin' So L'Gac	S D	2004	Cherann's Somethin' So Right	Cherann Penny Forur Thoughts
144	Classique Dare Devil	S D	2004	Heatherri Let It Be	Classique Legacy Lives On
145	Crispin Book Of Secrets	R D	2004	Crispin Braveheart	Lochwynde's Ice Dancer
146	Deep River's Comfort And Joy	S B	2004	Overland Storm Tracker	Deep Rivers Barely Blue
147	Divine's First Preference	S D	2004	Vennessee's Something Special	Divine's Take 'Em By Storm
148	Kings Valley Sweet Justice	S B	2004	Kings Valley Joint Venture	Kings Valley Quicken
149	L'Gacy Start The Fire	S D	2004	L'Gacy The Fire Within	Osage L'Gacy Sweet Memories
150	Milen's Osage Indian Summer	R B	2004	Kelmar Milen's Power Play	Cherann's Constant Craving
151	Overland Blonde Ambition	R B	2004	Overland Gathering Storm	Overland Summer Blonde
152	Overland Cecile	R B	2004	Overland Gathering Storm	Overland Summer Blonde
153	Sollis Honor Guard	S D	2004	Sollis Flashback	Sollis Sweet Anthem
154	Talans Sir Lancelot	S D	2004	Edenrock Of Ages	Laricos Streaker
155	Thornacre Stolen Thunder	R D	2004	Wilshire Thornacre Showboat	Overland Indian Summer
156	Deep River's Bow And Arrow	S D	2005	Deep River Younghaven Alliance	Deep River's Bare Hugs
157	Edenrock Party At Pinemead	R B	2005	Edenrock Mask Of Zorro	Edenrock Windchimes
158	Fantasy's Illusion	R B	2005	Fantasys Wayside Legacy	Fantasy's Chasing Clouds
159	Hollicove You Light Up My Life	S B	2005	Keepsake Legacy At Hollicove	Kayloma's Kharisma
160	Jag-View Painted Sandstone	S B	2005	Bo-Dandy's Rock Solid	Jag-View Reflection Of Heaven
161	Kayloma Stockland Aim'n High	S B	2005	Hollicove Almasi Skywalker	Kayloma's I'm Just A Lil Bare
162	L'Gacy Easy Come Easy Go	S D	2005	Cherann's Somethin' So L'Gac	L'Gacy Gemstone
163	Long Acre's Coming Up Roses	R B	2005	Fantasy's Bronze Talisman	Long Acre's Pewter Angel
164	Moonwind Simply The Best	R D	2005	Gillespie's Thief Of Hearts	Raptorvale Black Swan
165	Overland Crofter Playmate	R B	2005	Overland Gathering Storm	Overland Summer Blonde
166	Overland Storm Tracker	R D	2005	Overland Summer Storm	Overland Pearl Of Wisdom
167	Prairiepine Strawberry Wine	R B	2005	Prairiepine's Northern Lights	Prairiepine Amazing Harmony
168	Rased Moonshadow	R D	2005	Countryview Camouflage	Rased Brilliant Starr
169	Southland's Ellis Island	R B	2005	Southland's Bowen Island	Southland's Seabrook
170	Tir Nan' Og Sage Moon	S B	2005	Clarion When Worlds Collide	Richeline Maeve McDoogle
171	Tremont Sun-Sational	S B	2005	Blossom Hill Barely Bronze	Tremont Nobody's Surprised
172	Emperor's Golden Sands	S B	2006	Larico's City Slicker	Emperor's Princess
173	Fantasy's Sassy Sensation	R B	2006	Fantasy's Bronze Sensation	Fantasy's Key To My Heart
174	Insync's Space Cowboy	R D	2006	Gambit's Jagged Edge	Silverhill's Abiding Faith
175	L'Gacy I'm Buzzed	S D	2006	Cherann's Somethin' So L'Gac	L'Gacy Gemstone
176	Millknock's Snap Back	R B	2006	Galatean Time In A Bottle	Millknock Honeycomb
177	Silvermor Whats A Guy Gotta Do	S D	2006	Mysticthemedowssimplsilver	Silvermor Shesa Fine Girl
178	Stardust Just One Look	S B	2006	Gillespie's Thief Of Hearts	Hobby's Tapestry Tradition
179	Wooded Hills Throw Me A Kiss	S D	2006	Wooded Hills Shoot Me A Look	Woodedhills Fairest Of-M-All
180	Ainsleigh Mighty Cool Force	R D	2007	Jjaeds Mighty Beau	Ainsleigh Icecapades

	DOG'S NAME	V S YR	SIRE	DAM
181	Clarion Mellow Yellow	R B 2007	Clarion Paint It Black	Clarion Let There Be Light
182	Contempo's D' Liteful	R B 2007	Overland 'N Contempo's Impulse	Timeless Autumn Gold
183	Deep River Northshields Soleil	S B 2007	Deep River's Solid Stock	Deep River's Comfort And Joy
184	Deep River Watch Captain	S D 2007	Deep River's Solid Stock	Deep River's Comfort And Joy
185	Demuir's Light Of Grace	R B 2007	Gambit's Trick Of Light	Kara Christo Point Of Grace
186	Fantasy's Angel By My Side	R B 2007	Fantasy's All Fired Up	Long Acre's Edge Of Heaven
187	Glenshire N'Chanter Excalibur	R D 2007	Enchanter's Matinee Idol	Jil Cris Ultimate Benefit
188	Lochwynde Jag-View Xing Jordan	S D 2007	Westwood Aladdin	Jag-View Painted Sandstone
189	Overland Rememberance	R B 2007	Overland In Suspense	Overland Blonde Ambition
190	Rainbow's Here Comes The Sun	S D 2007	Fleur-De-Lis's Secret Weapon	Rainbow's Instant Karma
191	Ravencroft's Galahad	R D 2007	Edenrock Bravos Reign On	Marnus Heart Of Gold
192	Sandmoor Duke Of Earl	R D 2007	Heatherri Let It Be	Tango's Warrior Princess
193	Southland's Beach Party	R B 2007	Southland's Confederate Gray	Southland's Glorious Rebelle
194	Southland's Beyond The Glory	R D 2007	Southland's Bowen Island	Tapestry Silver Spring
195	Sylvan Argent It's All About Me	R B 2007	Sylvan's Above And Beyond	Argent Hot Hot Hot
196	Travler's Touch Of Magic	S D 2007	Jocan Prism Keno	Travler-Curtacy Heirloom Lace
197	Diamante's Paris Hilton	R B 2008	Overland Red Hot Summer	Rockwoods Traditional Cashmere
198	Divine's White Hot Sensation	S D 2008	Overland Red Hot Summer	Divine's Once In A Blue Moon
199	Headline's Soldier Of Light	R D 2008	Corjalin's The Whitelighter	Hollyoak In Th'Face Of Danger
200	Heatherlyn Edenrock My Girl Too	R B 2008	Edenrock Bravos Reign On	Heatherlyn Edenrock Legacy
201	Hi-Crest Blame It On Rio	R B 2008	Lakefield Love In My Heart Of Liable	Hi-Crest Deja Blu
202	Hi-Crest Sun Showers	R B 2008	Hi-Crest Touch The Sun	Hi-Crest Iridescent
203	Jag-View Sunrapt Sultan	R D 2008	Bo-Dandy's Rock Solid	Jag-View Reflection Of Heaven
204	Kenley's Rising Sun	S B 2008	Corjalin's The Whitelighter	Mandalay's Princess Bride
205	Younghaven Rubyglen Moonmist	S B 2008	Rubyglen's Halfmoon Horizon	Younghaven Ima Slick Chic Too
206	Con-Te Simply Beckoning	B	Con-Te's Contender	Con-Te Xmas Tinsel
207	Enchanter's Pantomime	R B	Tartanside Th Critics Choice	Enchanter's Winter Dreams
208	Schaladon's Stamp of Approval	R D		



Ch. Overland Endless Summer, ROM



Ch. Gambit's Trick of Light, ROM

SELECTED CRITIQUES OF SABLE MERLES IN THE SHOW RING

DOG NAME	WIN	SHOW	DATE	JUDGE	COMMENTS
Ch. Afterhours Firestorm	WD	CCA	1994	Dr. Ted Kjellstrom	My Winners Dog had balance, presence, neck, topline, and correct angulation including bend of pasterns. Side movement effortless and bouyant. Pleasing Collie expression with a "here I am, look at me" attitude.
Ch. Blossom Hill Barely Bronze	BOS	CCA	2001	Al Forthal	This handsome dog is very clean cut in head and body, yet no mistaking his masculinity. He is well-balanced, oozing elegance, showmanship, personality, and eagerness.
Ch. Blossom Hill Barely Bronze	BOS	CCA	2002	Marcia Keller	This is an elegant dog with a good outline. He has a nicely proportioned head and beautiful expression. A showman, he is always there for the judge.
Ch. Clarion Marmalade Skies	RB	CCA	1995	Janet Leek	Clarion Marmalade Skies, owned by Judie Evans, is a real trooper and I bet she'll go down in Collie history as one of the great white bitches! She was a real showman and a pleasure to see. Again, nice expression, balance and movement.
Ch. Capella's Masquerade	WB	CCA	1990	Doris Werdermann	. . . a classic headed 8 month old topped a class of 12. Capella's Masquerade, sired by Ch. Cherann's U Smooth Talker You x Alcor Disguised, was a standout with beautiful neck, front, bogy, balance and eye. Bred by Debbie Price & Susan Joslin (and I am sure joyously owned) by Debbie and Garland Price and Lou Ann Young. A lovely sable-merle that went on to go Winners Bitch and Best of Winners! Incidentally, she was completely devoid of too much height in relation to length; or the alternate.
Ch. Capella's Masquerade	BW	CCA	1990	Bobbee Roos	. . . the smooth baby, Capella's Masquerae received much consideration. What a charmer! Head qualities superb and no coat to camouflage faults, and even through the tedious schedule she didn't let her tender age affect her ring demeanor.
Ch. Deep River's Bow And Arrow	RD	CCA	2005	Barbara Ridgway	When he walked into the ring I knew there had better be good dogs in that class. He was full of attitude; style and he knew how to use his neck. Outstanding expression, very nice body and he showed like a trooper. He also wound up to be my Winners Dog.
Ch. Deep River's Bow And Arrow	BOS	CC of Alabama	2008	Larry Willeford	A mature special with great showmanship and in good condition. I liked his smooth muzzle and finish, and he moved around the ring with attitude.
Ch. Deep River's Bow And Arrow	BV	CC of Alabama	2008	Roz Durham	This male commanded my attention from the first time I saw him. He was well-balanced with a lovely arch of neck, and moved soundly. His head qualities were outstanding, clean all the way back. I especially appreciated his flat, well-finished skull and beautiful eye and expression.

Ch. Fantasy's Sassy Sensation	WB/BW	Ft. Worth CC	2006	Roz Durham	The bitches were the "frosting" in this major entry of Roughs. This feminine light sable stole my heart from the time she walked into her Open class. She was eye-filling in every way, thanks to her soft, sweet expression, a correctly made head, and elegant body lines with flowing side movement, a result of her beautifully balanced body structure.
Ch. Gambit's Scintillation	WD/BOS	CC of N. Cal.	2003	Barbara Schwartz	WD and BOS Rough was a breathtaking sable merle from the 12-18 Month Class, shown by his co-owner Linda Robbins. This dog had a beautiful stylish outline that immediately caught one's attention. He demanded multiple looks. He stood over his legs and owned the ground he stood on. On closer inspection, his detail of head only improves his initial impression. He excelled in skull, stop, balance and length of head, full round well-finished muzzle, and a melting expression.
Ch. Headline's Soldier Of Light	WD	CC of W. PA		Linda Robbins	I knew this was a youngster but was immediately enamored by his bold outline and lovely face. He had a long clean head when viewed from the front and in profile. He had correct shoulder and rear angles and moved with the full gait of a dog with the right body balance. He showed like a million bucks and presented an overall lovely outline. He will be a dog to watch as he grows up.
Ch. Heatherri Earth Wind And Fire	WD/BW	CC of Louisiana		Barb Linder	Beautiful expression and profile. Moved well coming and going. Very showy! Came from a power-packed class.
Ch. Overland Crofter Playmate	WB/BW/BV	East Tenn CC		Betty Abbott	A standout in bitches with her abundant sable merle coat and her strong headpiece, and her movement just could not be denied. She had both great side movement and was excellent coming and going.
Ch. Overland Crofter Playmate	BV	East Tenn CC		Carol Chapman	Indeed, she had the playful attitude that her name implies. Exquisite head detail and expression. Beautiful coat and balance.
Ch. Overland Endless Summer, ROM	RB	CCA	1996	Alice Wharton	A stunning light sable, heavy coated feminine youngster. Lovely outline, good balance, beautiful Collie face, lovely soft eye, excellent head planes with no depth. Truly a picture Collie!
Ch. Perry's Sundather Tradition, ROM					Sire of 21 champions
Ch. Ravencroft's Galahad	RD	CC of N. Cal		Mary Murphy	A lovely young sable merle male. Lovely expression, clean light head. It was a hard choice. Another day he will be a winner. Sired by the Rough BOS.
Ch. Seneca's In The Arms Of An Angel	BOS	CCA	2005	Adria Weiner	The nod went to the mahogany bitch, Ch. Seneca's In The Arms Of An Angel. She also made a beautiful, balanced picture and upon close examination had the light headpiece which I prefer. Head on, her expression is soft and sweet. She can move with the best of them.
Ch. Southland's Beyond The Glory	WD	Central OK CC		Linda Tefelski	This dog commanded the ring when he walked in. A beautiful outline set off by a beautiful coat, pretty face, a full round muzzle. As much as my Best of Breed defined Collie femininity, this boy was all male.

Ch. Southland's Beyond The Glory	BOS/ BOSBB	Central States CC		Martha Ramer	This boy was a move-up on this day. He is a very showy upstanding dog. He catches your eye the minute he walks in the ring. Nice neck and outline, with no depth of head.
Ch. Southland's Beyond The Glory	BV/ BOSBB	Central States CC		Marcia Keller	This dog makes an impressive picture from across the ring, correct outline and fitting coat, and showing a nice profile of head with parallel planes and no depth. His head is lean and clean with good expression.
Ch. Sylvan Argent It's All About Me	W B / BW/ B O S / BOSBB	CC of Georgia	10/2007	Robette Johns	The winner of my 12-18 Months bitch class was perfectly named. From the moment she walked into the class, it was all about her. Type, balance, style and showmanship were not in short supply with this bitch. Her head was beautifully balanced muzzle to skull, no depth, long, lean and clean, with a flat and acceptable skull for her age. She was sound on the down and back with better than average side gait. I would say she was handled to perfection, because every time I looked at this bitch, she was presenting herself to me as if she were the only one in the ring. Her side gait and overall balance were strong enough to make her my choice for Best of Opposite Sex to the Variety and Breed. I understand this win finished her.
Ch. Wayside After The Gold Rush	WB/BW	CCA	1981	Dr. Richard Greathouse	I will mention that my winners bitch was a beautiful sable and white bitch from the Bred-by Exhibitor Class who showed classic type and headpiece and was a young fresh bitch ready and in full bloom to go winners.



Ch. Wayside After The Gold Rush

SURVEY OF COLLIE CLUB OF AMERICA BREED MENTORS



The Collie Club of America Standard Review Committee has been charged with the task of collecting information and data from a variety of sources regarding the current discussion on the sable merle. We have tried to select a solid cross section of breeders, exhibitors, and judges whose opinions differ on the subject, but who have had enough hands on experience dealing with the sable merle to add credibility to their replies. We ask you to please look over the following list of questions and answer them to the best of your ability. These questions come from a widespread audience of people who are seeking informative insights into this topic.

Respondents who have judged the national specialty are indicated by asterisk.



Ch. Perry's Sundather Tradition, ROM

1. *How long have you been a member of the CCA? When did you whelp your first litter? As a breeder have you had experience with sable merle Collies? If so, please elaborate.*
2. *Are you currently licensed to judge Collies or have you had experience judging Collies? If yes, please elaborate.*
3. *Have you attended and/or exhibited at the CCA National specialty? If yes, please elaborate.*
4. *In regard to the Collie standard, do you hold it as a standard of perfection (or the ideal) or do you think of it as a standard of acceptability? Please explain.*
5. *Has the way that you perceive the Collie standard changed over your years of experience in Collies? If yes, please elaborate.*
6. *What are your feelings about sable merles in the Open Sable Class?*
7. *If you are a judge, and judging the Open sable and white class, how much importance would you place on any merle patterning or shadings on a quality entry?*
8. *In your opinion is sable merle a color or a genotype? Please explain.*
9. *How much importance do you think the authors of the standard placed on color?*
10. *Do you think that the founders of the breed/authors of the standard were picturing sable dogs with blue eyes as a possibility when they created the "ideal" mental image that they described in writing?*
11. *Would any language in the standard differentiating the sable merle from sable (with or without the reference to the 'requirement' for two dark eyes) have altered any decision you have made to retain and/or exhibit any individual as a part of a breeding program?*
12. *Do you perceive there is a lack of integrity or deficit of knowledge in the identification of sable merles?*
13. *If you are leaning toward a change in the standard what would be the benefit to the breed? If you are leaning toward keeping the standard as it is please explain your reasoning?*
14. *If you are in favor of a standard change please cite specifically the language in the standard that supports your position as to the revision of the standard. For instance, if you believe the standard provides an umbrella under which the sable merle is implicitly recognized, what parts of the standard describe a sable merle as an individual that meets the ideal of the standard? What language revisions would you propose to make it clearer?*
15. *As a judge of many breeds I know that it causes great concern when a parent club alters an old, tried and true standard. One must ask why.*
 - A. *Will this change make the standard more understandable and ageless?*
 - B. *How will it affect the future of the breed?*
 - C. *Is this in the best long term interest of this breed?*
 - D. *Is this an issue which must be addressed at this point to protect the essence of the breed?*
16. *Do you believe that collie breeders in the past, or today, deliberately made a breeding in hopes that the best puppy in the litter would be a sable merle? Should your answer to that question have any impact on the notion of changing the standard?*
17. *If the standard is changed to include sable merles as a recognized color, do you think it might result in having blue or merle eyed sable collies being commonplace in the future? How do you feel about that?*
18. *And most recently, a well known and successful handler brought the following to our attention: "If we revisit the sable merle question, do we intend to also do something about explaining the other "odd" colors, ie. harlequin blues, cryptic blues, maltese, bi-blues, etc.? I actually have more judges question these colors than the sable merles. Judges are clearly confused now with the sable merle question being brought forward again. I have had any number ask me (pointing at a certain dog) if this was a sable merle. More times than not, it is Not a sable merle, just a shaded sable. Then they ask me how to tell?"*
Having read this question, do we need to consider addressing these other colors by helping to educate judges? How do you suggest we accomplish this? How do we undo the confusion that exists among judges concerning sable merles? Do we want color to be a priority in the judging of Collies?

Betty Abbott, Abbeyhill

1. Since Fall of 1964. May 12, 1962. Yes In 1967, we had one sable merle in a litter from a champion blue merle dog who lived locally. The eyecheck showed that the S/M was blind. She was euthanized at about 5 months old. We also had a litter in 1999 in which there were three sable merles, all of which were beautiful. One was sold for showing, one was kept for showing and one was to be placed as a companion. I never bred them because of another health issue that occurred in the whole litter, but the one I did keep for showing, was so beautiful and my experience with some judges who saw him, was that they were insulting to me and the dog, saying unkind things about his color, and my personal handling skills of the dog. Though this dog died suddenly before he was 4 years old, he had gathered 10 points including a major before that, all owner-handled from the bred-by class. If I were younger, I would make such a mating again with no qualms whatsoever, the sable merles are beautiful. It was determined why the health issue occurred and that would not happen again.

2. Yes I am. I have been fully approved for Collies and Australian Shepherds since 1996 and Shetland Sheepdogs since about 1999. I have judged and given Best of Variety and Best of Breed to several Sable Merle Collies, bitches mostly since most of the time the bitches are superior to the dogs. The color the Collies is immaterial to me, as long as they fit the standard, have correct planes of head, expression, and are sound in movement. Color or any shading of color serves only to enhance the other beautiful qualities. I have judged at both Specialty shows and all breed shows, always with the same attitude. The best Collie there should win.

Have you attended and/or exhibited at the CCA National specialty? Yes If yes, please elaborate. I have both attended and shown at and paid handlers to show for us at National Specialties. One smooth of ours received an award of merit in 1993. At another national, I showed my Sable Merle, again in the bred-by class, only to be denied a position in any cut. When other people come to you saying "What happened?, why didn't he place?", it makes you wonder what the judge was looking for, since he did not keep any sable merles at all for further consideration.

3. It is a guideline to perfection (the ideal) for me, It is critical for me to follow it to the qualities of the breed, however I also believe that there can be highly superior individuals of a color that is not recognized. This color, Sable Merle, can be so breathtakingly beautiful to the point of demanding acceptance in a high ranking position.

It seems to me that it is so detrimental to the breed in this day and time to virtually eliminate this beautiful color, and I would have it to be recognized as legitimate, if you will. I do not feel that any aspect of this beautiful breed should just be "acceptable", since dedicated knowledgeable breeders can produce Collies that are far superior to that mediocre level.

4. Yes, simply because I finally had knowledgeable people explaining the fine points of the breed to me. I never had that before, did most of my early "education" on my own, which of course, without guidance, was somewhat flawed/lacking. With that guidance and the trust of some prominent breeders, I was able to buy and breed to some extremely superior dogs.

5. I am not sure, I never showed mine in the sable class because I knew what color he was, and named him such that everyone would know what he was from the name. Open sable would be a class I suppose for the S/Ms but I would prefer seeing them in either a "Merle" class or their own "Sable Merle" class.

6. Probably NONE other than the same importance I would put on a Blue Merle, markings on the face that could severely alter the expression. The other qualities of the individual are so much more important in judging.

7. It is not for any judge to make decisions on genetics while judging. There are far more other genetic issues that occur that a judge cannot possibly be aware of, and this beautiful coloring or shading on the sable merle Collie should not be considered, other than affecting the expression.

8. Probably a lot, but back then the breeders were not well versed on color clarity, richness, heredity, and other aspects of color that we are aware of today. (And I don't mean out of a bottle.). The availability to dogs known for one quality or another in the breed was so limited, and the dangers of shipping were very high, that it was probably a "make do with what you can get to" situation for breeders, even if they might have known of some great producer somewhere. Even in the '60's shipping a bitch by train was risky, some got lost forever, some were lost to the extent they lost the litter they might have been carrying, and other detrimental situations.

7. Probably not, no more than picturing blue merles with blue eyes, but that seems to be a fact of life in the breed, and should the standard read that the eye description for Sable Merles is the same as for Blue Merles, that certainly would be more than acceptable to me. A brown eyed Sable Merle is equally as beautiful as a brown eyed Sable. Should the blue eyes be so odd as to diminish the

beauty, sweetness and correctness of the Collie expression, then that particular individual should not be awarded any more than a sable who has a round, or light or misplaced harsh eye.

8. NO, only other qualities of the dog would have made any difference..... BECAUSE, those blue eyes, may or may not exhibit themselves at all. The three we had, had dark brown eyes, all three, and the sire was blue merle with a blue fleck in one brown eye.

9. Today, with what breeders know, hopefully they would have the integrity to be truthful on the registrations. Any sable merle (or any other color) sold or placed as a companion should be spayed/neutered/Limited Registration which would automatically prevent those without the knowledge of S/Ms and their genetics, from using them for breeding. I can only hope that the integrity is instilled in them by their mentors, or by common sense.

10. Other than the tricolor, the sable merle is the most versatile color available to us, and when used with knowledge, that facet of the breed can benefit all breeders by having those Collies in the gene pool.

11. The portion of the standard which addresses color, "The Sable and White is predominantly Sable (a fawn sable color of varying shades from light gold to dark mahogany) with white markings usually on the head, chest, neck, feet and the tip of the tail." What language revisions would you propose to make it clearer? Without changing the standard, per se, I would suggest putting an addendum at the end of the color portion concerning the judging of the Sable Merle and stating the eye color preference, the same as the eye description for the Blue Merle, (Dark brown preferred)

15. a. I think it will bring the Collie into the 21st Century officially.

b. With breeders of integrity, it should be a boon for the gene pool(s) and offer a greater selection of wonderful breeding animals.

c. Obviously, I do think so.

d. Keeping in mind that I have not suggested CHANGING the standard, I still believe that the beauty, essence if you will, will only be enhanced, a great benefit from a small addition to the Standard.

16. Knowledgeable breeders...absolutely NOT, but should it occur in a litter that was known to have that possibility, and it be a superior individual, this dog could and should be used to great advantage. Should your answer to that question have any impact on the notion of changing the standard? Only to the extent of an adden-

dum, which I truly think will satisfy breeders, exhibitors, judges, everyone.

17. If they are correct with the standard, why not. Any breeder who does not want to deal with blue eyes in a beautiful dog, can have it spayed or neutered and let it go as a companion, or just not breed Sable Merles. Believe me, there are people out there who don't care what color those eyes are, they just want a sweet loving Collie.

21. No it should be of no consequence at all.... beautiful, correct Collies are just that. There will always be mutations of color as with any other physical traits in the dog/ Collie/animal. Those mutations of color can be delegated to the companion placement, unless or until the Standard recognizes "Any color". The 1970's Australian Shepherd Standard for the Australian Shepherd Club of American recognized "any color of eye in any recognized color of dog". Not so far off the wall.

Best wishes in this very worthwhile endeavor.

Mary Benedict - Long Acre

1. Member since 1986 and my first litter was whelped in 1987. I have done many (>10) blue to sable breedings and have gotten everything from no sable merles to blue eyed sable merles. I have finished a number of them, some with blue in the eyes, some with two brown eyes. None with two blue eyes.

2. Currently a licensed judge.

3. I haven't missed a CCA since my first one in Atlanta in 1987.

4. Standard of perfection – what you want to create as a breeder.

5. My understanding of the collie standard has changed (improved, deepened) over the years. I have always believed it represented the ideal collie.

6. I have no problem with them in Open Sable, BBE or American bred.

7. None – many sable merles are totally cryptic. Many "normal" sables have odd gradations of coloring. I would only take color into account as a last factor if it were truly distracting.

8. Both.

9. No idea.

10. Yes – that's why they specifically call it out as a fault.

11. Nope. You almost always have to fault expression in a blue eyed sable merle – but it's the degree of fault as with any other fault.

12. Yes, but I don't think it's that important. There are much more serious issues in the matter of judges (and breeder) education that aren't being addressed than this one.

13. Leave it as is – it explains the issue fully. Judge the dogs based on VIRTUES first and it will take care of itself.

14. I think it's clear as written.

15. I think it's clear as written.

16. I don't think anyone hopes for a blue eyed sable merle when they do a breeding. They can be valuable to a breeding program but if they have blue eyes the value is diminished since they tend to produce the blue eyes more frequently.

17. Yuck! The standard today doesn't exclude sable merles – unless they have blue eyes!

18. Color should be totally unimportant – judges need to focus on virtues, stop looking at shaded sable coats for stripes, and let this go. It's a very minor issue. Judge the dog on it's relative merit. Penalize blue eyes in a sable face. Doesn't seem that complicated, does it.

Cindi Bossart, VMD, Argent

1. 20 yrs. First litter 18 years ago.

2. I am not a collie judge but have judged numerous large sweepstakes.

3. For twenty years in the classes and as specials. Won CCA 2005 Best of Breed

4. Ideal. It is what we strive to achieve in our breeding programs.

5. NO. The standard is constant.

6. Sable merles are sables with a merling gene just as trifactored sables are sables with a tri gene.

7. The overall balance and expression is most important. The merling gene would only play a part. If it has a blue eye that detracts severely from expression then the expression should be penalized.

8. Genotype. The color is sable with a merling gene.

9. Minimal compared to head, structure, and expression.

10. No. It is highly suggested that the eyes be brown. The most stress is on expression.

11. No. I have shown and bred sable merles only if the eyes do not detract from expression.

12. Breeders should register the sable merle according to

the colors on the AKC registration form. The knowledge is there. It has to be done correctly.

13. No changes. The standard clearly describes a sable.

14. No changes needed please.

15. a. NO b. It will cause more misunderstanding. c. NO d. NO

16. The standard does not need to be changed. YES.

17. The standard already addresses these issues and does not need to be changed.

18. YES. EDUCATION. NO. Color is not a priority in our standard. Next will be concerns about pewter blues, dark blues, cryptic blues, red sables, trifactored sables, etc. Sable merles are sable with a merling gene. They are not RED MERLES as in the Australian Shepherd. Our standard stresses balance, structure and expression..... not color.

*Dan Cardoza, Countryview**

1. I have been a member of CCA for 27 years. My first experience with sable merles was when I bred my blue bitch, Ch Countryview Colorful, ROM to Ch. Fantasy's Bronze Talisman, ROM. This resulted in my first sable merle champion, Ch Countryview Camouflage.

2. I am licensed to judge Collies... I got my license in 1999

3. I have attended and exhibited at many CCA nationals... My first one was in Springfield, MA back in 1982 and have only missed a handful on them since.

4. I hold the Collie standard up to the highest regard. When I pick puppies and when I judge, that mental image is always in my head. So yes, it is the standard of perfection.

5. Yes, it has changed over the years. Things that I didn't pay much attention to were brought to my attention by many breed mentors. I guess you live and LEARN.

6. I'm perfectly fine with having sable merles in the open sable class.

7. What does it matter ... I place NO importance on shading. Finding a dog with the utmost virtues is so much more important than the color of the dog's coat shading.

8. I think it's both. Showing a sable merle is one thing - but breeding it and selecting who to breed it to is a whole other issue.

9. I think its personal opinion... I think everyone had their favorite color.
10. NO!
11. No
12. It depends on who you talk too. There are many times, I couldn't tell a sable merle from a sable. It's all in the shading and color on it.
13. I feel the standard should be left alone. The standard should be held in high regard. Just because you decided to breed your blue bitch or dog to a sable, because you can't find a tri to breed it to, is NOT our standard's problem, it's YOUR problem. This breed is in big trouble. We are losing type, eye set and expression also not to mention the lack of proper front assembly, and no one cares.
14. Not in favor
15. a. No b. If we decide to change it... what's next to change? c. No d. No, there are more important things this breed needs.
16. NO They made choices to breed certain dogs together, we all hope that we don't get sable merles, but it happens, so you take responsible for it. When you drive a car going 50 in a 30, you'll get a speeding ticket for it. It doesn't mean you have to change the speed limit so you can drive faster.
17. If this standard is changed to recognize sable merles with blue eyes, what's next, double dilutes with pink or no eyes!!!!
18. No... Let's face it...it doesn't matter if the standard is changed. There will be judges who will still prefer there favorite colors or others.

John Buddie, Tartanside

1. I joined CCA in 1963, whelping my first litter in '64. I have done three breedings involving sable merles during the ensuing years.
2. No.
3. Yes...since 1963, having won the National in 74,74,76,78,85,91 (winners or higher)
4. I hold it as a standard of perfection...an "ideal" – a mental template of perfection.
5. The only way that the standard has changed for me over the years is in having a greater understanding of what the founders wanted when it was drafted. As I continued to breed through the years, finding what was truly hard to attain, and what the drag of the breed truly was, I had

- greater clarity of understanding, and probably a much greater appreciation for the importance of these words.
6. Since I do not consider them "sables" I do not feel that they should be in that class.
7. I would not classify it as either.
9. I think those who drafted the standard were pretty clear on what they wanted at that time.
10. Since so much emphasis in our standard is placed on both head quality and even more so on EXPRESSION, I believe that they were absolutely clear in what their "IDEAL" was. It leaves room for interpretation, and it leaves room for variation, but the IDEAL remains just that.
11. I have never been afraid to retain a sable merle for breeding. I see nothing wrong with that. I also believe outstanding sable merles will always win – and statistics bear it out. But I personally have never knowingly done a breeding to "get" a sable merle puppy.
12. I sometimes think there is a lack of knowledge in the "appreciation" of a sable merle...not merely "identification." There will always be dogs that are superior – and in this instance, expression and eye color would be important. I don't think that a good quality sable merle should be overlooked simply because of its color – nor do I think it should be elevated in placement either. It should be judged accordingly, keeping the standard as the ideal, and sorting through the rest of the entry.
13. I DO NOT FEEL changing the standard will make any positive changes. At the present time, we certainly have many top quality sable merles finishing. I do not see how changing the standard will accomplish anything.
14. N/A
15. a. NO b. It could, but not necessarily in a positive way. c. I don't believe so. My respect for the founders of our breed, our predecessors who have given us the dogs of today, make me feel that I am simply here to take what they have given me, and protect it. That includes the standard. d. NO
16. If we have an IDEAL, than I believe that should be our goal. Reinventing the Collie is not something to be taken lightly.
17. That is a great fear of mine. For a breed who places so much emphasis on Expression, this would be a terrible thing for our breed.
18. As we continue to see more and more dogs shows every weekend, the overall dog world is in need of more

and more judges. Unfortunately, we are finding many who take collies “as an additional breed” and in many cases, lack the integrity to understand the subtleties and nuances which make our breed so unique. While these people have difficulty grasping the essence of our breed, that would have even more difficulty deciphering color variations that are confusing. On the other hand, if we work on greater EDUCATION of judges, and not of changing our standard, than I feel we can do more to clarify what has become somewhat of a problem.

Jackie Caruso, Devinwood

1. I have been a member of the CCA for 27 years. We have done several breedings that produced sable merles. We did not set out specifically to produce a sable merle however our gene pool consists mainly of sables and we had occasion to use blue merles that had the virtues we wanted to incorporate into our breeding program and so we bred them to our tri factored sables. However, I have to add that both times we had sable merles with blue eyes and we did not keep those puppies for show or breeding.
2. I have judged collie specialty sweepstakes and matches but have not yet applied for my license.
3. With the exception of one or two years I have attended the CCA National since I have been a member (27 years) and we have exhibited at almost all of those nationals.
4. The Collie Standard is a standard of perfection. Our goal, always, should be to breed to that standard of perfection. We cannot change the standard to make just anything acceptable because someone thinks it will make a dog win more easily.
5. No...I have come to understand it better over the years but it has always been about breeding to the standard of perfection.
6. Sable merles can go in the Open Sable Class, the Bred by Class and The American Bred Class
7. I would only place importance on the patterning or shadings if it were so extreme as to distract from the overall appearance of the dog and made it look foreign to collie type in some way.
8. Sable merle is not a color...it is a genotype
9. I think the founders of the standard identified the recognizable colors, and meant for it to remain this way since they talk about color in relation to eye color. I do not think coat color was of great importance but eye color is.
10. Absolutely not. They were very clear about eye color.

11. NO

12. There might be a deficit of knowledge on the part of some only to the extent that some judges think it is a disqualification, but the sable merle does not really have to be identified if the judges understand that they are only to be penalized if the eye color distracts from the expression. If we try to put language in the standard addressing the sable merle or try to make a separate class which I personally am opposed to, these judges are going to spend their time trying to figure out if it is in fact a sable merle, rather than judging the dog.

13. I see no benefit to changing the standard. The standard is a standard of perfection. I see no possible benefit to a standard change regarding sable merles. They are shown, they win, we have a large percentage of sable merle champions, and they are used in breeding programs. Actually I see harm in changing the standard to include language that might alter the description of eye color in the sable merle. When all is said and done, the collie needs to look like a collie.

14. N/A

15. a. NO b. It could -to the detriment of the breed
c. NO d. NO

16. I do not believe that collie breeders deliberately make a breeding to produce a sable merle and the standard should not be changed just because some breeders have produced sable merles and they feel that a standard change will make those dogs win more easily. We need to breed to fit the standard not the other way around.

17. It could happen and if we start having an abundance of sable merles with blue eyes we are going to lose breed type. A blue eyed sable/sable merle with a heavily spotted body coat no longer looks like a collie in my opinion.

18. Color should not be a priority in the judging of collies. I think if judges were educated to understand that the sable merle color is a variation of sable (merled sable) then the coat color should not come into consideration and that would eliminate the confusion. They need to understand that it is all about eye color and how that eye color affects expression and breed type. I think our judges education presentation is very clear about eye and expression in relation to breed type. It really is no different than a tri or sable with light yellow eyes. When we talk about color, it is all about the eye color and expression. As far as these other exotic colors, again, if the dog is so patterned or has big color splotches all over its body that when the judge first looks at it , he has to wonder if it is a collie, then penalize the dog. It is all about type ...a collie should look like a collie not a palomino. Coat

color should not be the issue....clearly some judges find mahogany sables more appealing than washed out pure for sables, and they might take that into consideration in their final evaluation, but it really accounts for very little in that final evaluation, I would think. The coat color of the sable merle is no different...eye and expression, head qualities and breed type (to include structure)....that is what they should concentrate on, not coat color.

*Carol Chapman, Hanover**

1. I have been a member of the CCA since about 1961. Our first litter was born in 1962. We have not personally had a litter with sable merles.
2. I was approved to judge collies over 28 years ago.
3. We have been to over 15 CCA Nationals and have exhibited both class animals as well as specials.
4. Since nothing is perfect (except Jesus Christ), I would say our standard is a written application striving for the ideal collie.
5. I would say I feel pretty much the same except that I put more emphasis on movement than I did in the beginning.
6. I believe the sable merle should be allowed in the sable class - simply change the name of the class to sable & white and sable merle and white.
7. I would put NO importance on color at all.
8. As a judge I consider it a color.
9. I really don't think they meant for color to be something to argue over. I think they meant it as a way to divide classes or best describe what they were looking at.
10. I don't think that even crossed their minds.
11. No.
12. I think it became "hidden" since some individuals dislike the idea.
13. I believe our emphasis should be on quality and healthy animals and we should forget about making a big issue about the sable merle. I think the standard SHOULD include the sable merle as an acceptable color.
14. I think the language is too vague and that leaves the door open for unknowledgeable judges to ignore or excuse the sable merle. It should be rewritten to declare the sable merle as an acceptable color.

15. a. I believe the standard will be more understandable for other than breeder judges. b. A good collie is a good collie regardless of the color and thus would offer its good genes to future generations. c. We need to emphasize good quality and good health in our breeding programs - not wasting our time on worrying about color. d. Yes, it definitely should be addressed as quality collies have been excused or ignored in the show ring.

16. No, I think breeders were looking for the best puppy. We MUST put quality and health first.

17. I don't think that it will become commonplace at all. However, if this should occur, who cares?

18. When puppies are sold to others, the breeder should explain everything about the puppy to the purchaser. With knowledge comes better judgment calls.

As an aside, I remember seeing a dog who as maturity was a mahogany sable, shunned because his coloring was "different". I know for a fact this dog was not a sable merle, but an unknowing person wasn't sure and ignored the dog for a placement.

"Mike" Cheatham, Southland

1. I have been a member of the CCA for almost twenty-four years. My first litter was whelped in 1976 but I did not become seriously involved until several years later. The first collie I purchased to show was a sable merle. From the beginning I have owned, bred, and exhibited sable merles. They have been a significant part of my breeding program and I have shown and finished several over the years.
2. I am not a judge but I have accepted several sweeps assignments. I have also attended several Judges Education Seminars at the CCA and I am part of the mentor program.
3. Yes, I attend and exhibit at our national specialty. Since I became a member of the CCA I have only missed one. Our dogs have been competitive at the CCA over the years. We have received numerous class first and other class placements. We have also owned or bred dogs that were awarded Best Op Rough Puppy, Reserve Winners Bitch, Winners Bitch, Two AOMs, Best American Bred, Best Brood Bitch, Stud Dog second, and Best of Breed.
4. I believe our standard is the standard of perfection. It should be the blueprint breeders follow as they breed and select.
5. Yes, it was concerning this very problem. When I had only been involved for five or six years, the sable merle controversy came up. I didn't understand why this issue

was such a problem. I felt we should just give them their own class. It seemed the only fair and reasonable thing to do at the time.

6. I do not have a problem with the sable merle in the sable class.

7. I am not a judge. If I were judging, the shading and merling would not likely be an issue with my selection.

8. I believe it is a genotype that expresses itself as a color.

9. I think if we encourage the breeding and showing of these dogs but did not go so far as to prohibit either. I believe the standard is ageless. If we decide to change it, will we be improving the future of the collie or just improving the chances of winning with a sable merle?

It is important to them because they specifically named four easily recognized colors. However, they did stop short of having any color disqualifications.

10. No, I do not. Dark eyes are fundamental to correct collie expression. I believe they felt that blue or merled eyes would seriously detract from the desired expression. It is likely that there would be considerable concern that light blue or merled eyes would become too prevalent if the sable merles were considered acceptable.

11. Rarely have I let color influence my choice in breeding and selecting. If I owned an exceptional individual with blue eyes I would certainly add it to my breeding program if I felt it could contribute other outstanding virtues. I would not feel a need to exhibit the individual though. I have shown sable merles with blue flecks in the eye if I felt their other virtues overcame the fact that they were sable merles with some blue in the eyes.

12. I am not really sure about this one. Do people knowingly register them as sables when they are actually sable merles? I suppose there might be an occasion when a breeder doesn't know the puppy is a merle. I never considered that someone would deliberately register one as something it was not.

13. I do not feel a change to our standard is necessary. I do not see that the breed would be any better off. Sable merles are already being widely bred and shown successfully. Occasionally a judge may not know what to do with them. Do we change the standard for just a few? I believe that the judges education programs and the directive can address this.

14. I do not support a standard change.

15. The standard does what it is intended to do. The four colors are stated but there are no color disqualifications. They might not have wanted to encourage the

breeding and showing of these dogs but did not go so far as to prohibit either. I believe the standard is ageless. If we decide to change it will we be improving the future of the Collie or just improving the chances of winning with a sable merle?.

Do we create whatever we want and then change the standard to suit what we breed? Will size, for instance be the next thing some want to change? I fear that once the standard is changed it becomes a weakened document and this is not in the best interest of the breed.

16. It wasn't likely they would have purposefully bred for sable merles in the past. However, I suppose some would today. I have personally hoped for a nice sable merle bitch with dark eyes from time to time! The standard doesn't say we can't breed or show them. I don't think the standard has to be changed to allow us to do what many are already doing.

17. That is exactly what would happen. Even if it wasn't the intent, that would be the result. If the standard is changed to allow sable merles, then it follows that the blue or heavily merled eyes will become more frequently seen. If the eye is light or heavily merled it is going to affect the expression and should be judged as to the extent it is offensive or detrimental. Do we want to see large numbers of collies that look like this? I love sable merles but I sure do not want to see collies with blue eyes steadily on the increase. I think the standard as it is has kept this somewhat in check.

18. I feel the directive can and should be the answer to educating the judges that are confused. All judges do not have a problem when judging the sable merle, yet we are considering changing the standard for them. I think the sable merle coat and eye color can simply be penalized for the effect it has on the overall appearance of the individual. If either is offensive then it should be considered along with the rest of the faults and virtues when evaluating the animal. I do not think that color should be the most important issue of our breed.

Barbara Cleek, Lochlaren

1. Member of the CCA since 1967. Whelped first litter January of 1968. I've had several litters with sable merles in it, the first from a sable/blue breeding in 1979.

2. I am not licensed to judge collies, I have judged several Sweepstakes, CCA tournaments, and most recently the virtues match at Sunnybank.

3. My first CCA was in 1969, since then I have been to 21 Nationals and have exhibited in about 1/2 of them, and ring stewarded at 5 of them.

4. I view the collie standard as a description of the ideal collie and a guideline to help breeders develop a mental image of this collie.

5. I think my “image” of an ideal collie has not changed much over the years, but my appreciation of different virtues has changed as I have gained knowledge on how to develop and maintain certain qualities and/or the difficulties in retaining them.

6. I believe that is where a sable merle should be exhibited. I am opposed to creating another class or putting them with blues. Sable merles are sables and that is where they should be shown.

7. No more than if the color quality is poor or distracting as in a washed out sable, or in Open tri or blue, a rusty tri or blue.

8. Both

9. Behind head qualities, expression, structure, and temperament.

10. As the standard states that for blues also, dark eyes are preferable, I would assume blue eyes were not considered the sought after ideal no matter the color.

11. Breeding program: No. The breedings I have done to produce sable merles were done because what I was hoping to produce by combining the two individuals outweighed the concern I had of producing sable merles. An important breeding of mine in 1981 of a sable merle (Ch Asil’s Who’s Who) to a tri factored sable (Ch Briarhill Clairvoyant) produced two CCA winning tri factored sable champions (Ch Lochlaren Look At Me (class winner) and Ch Lochlaren’s Monkishines (RWB)), “Look At Me” is the great, great, great, great, grandmother of the current multiple CCA winner Ch Rosebank Lochlaren KeepItASecret. “Fallon” would not exist if I had refused to consider a breeding that would produce sable merles.

Exhibition: Yes, but only because of the requirement of dark eyes. A third bitch in that litter was a sable merle with China blue eyes, Lochlaren’s Ramona Qimby. She was exhibited 5 times and she won two BOV’s over multiple champions, and three times placed and ignored at the end of the line. I stopped exhibiting her because of the uproar about her blue eyes. In my opinion she was an exquisite collie bitch with or without the “matching dark eyes”... and I bred her unhesitatingly because of her virtues.

12. I am not personally aware of any deception in the identification of sable merles...or why there should be.

13. I am leaning towards a change in the standard that would mention sable merles as one of the recognized

colors. It is my understanding that the main objection to sable merles was that a breeder might breed two sable merles without realizing the parents both had the merle gene and consequently produce double dilutes. In this day and age I find this reasoning obsolete. The sable merle is the result of legitimate matings and can be a healthy beautiful specimen, with or without dark eyes. If I were to state any concern about blue to sable breedings it would be that some have questioned that through the generations it has an adverse affect on the quality of the blue coat color. It is my observation that the Shetland Sheepdog breeders have been more successful in keeping a clear blue coat than collie breeders and tend to have AOC lines and sable lines. This could be an interesting study for our breed.

14. I see the sable merle implicitly recognized when the standard states that “Except for the blue merles, they should be matched in color.” There would be no reason for this statement if the sable merle did not occur, and could be shown. I would make four changes to the standard: under Color to say ...“The five recognized colors are “Sable and White”, “Tri-color”, “Blue Merle”, Sable Merle, and “White”...The “White” is predominantly white, preferably with sable, tri-color, blue or sable merle markings.” And under Eyes... “In blue and sable merles, dark brown eyes are...”

15. a. yes

b. I don’t think it would affect the future of the breed.

c. Yes

d. No

16. No, I don’t think breeders would have made/or make a breeding specifically hoping for a sable merle, but I know of resulting sable merle puppies kept for breeding as they were the best in the litter. In legitimizing the possibility of blue eyes in the sable merle and treating the color as one of the recognized ones, a breeding could well take place in the future with the hope of a sable merle. I do not find this objectionable.

17. I don’t see a problem here, the standard should state dark eyes are preferable so breeders will tend to keep and exhibit the dark eyed sable merles much as they do today. I don’t know of any breeder who would breed for a blue hoping he/she will have blue eyes.

18. Color should never be a priority in judging a collie. I have never seen a bi-blue collie or a harlequin. I have never heard of one being exhibited. I have seen 2 cryptic blues and have just had and seen only one maltese puppy in over 40 years of breeding and showing. I view these

as rare mutations and are not the same issue as the sable merle. I think including these “odd” colors would bring more confusion than clarification.

I view the question of the sable merles as similar to the blue headed white, which only recently has been recognized. I have observed no negative impact or mass confusion after this standard change.

Nioma Coen, Macdega

1. I've been a member of CCA since 2001. I have had some experience with sable merles as a Sheltie breeder, but have none as a Collie breeder. I've been licensed to judge Collies since 2001 and have judged at all breed and specialty shows all over the US.

2. Yes I exhibited at most CCAs from the late 70's until retirement from handling in 2001. I have attended most CCAs since.

3. There is no satisfaction in achieving that which is merely acceptable. As a breeder, judge or exhibitor, I hold all standards as the ideal of the breed and enjoy the challenge of the reach for perfection. The Collie standard is the template for the perfect Collie.

4. Judging and the Judges Ed program have given me greater clarity and appreciation for the standard. With that clarity has come a higher level of confidence that the standard can be practically applied.

5. I have no problem with sable merles shown in the open sable class.

6/7. Quality always comes first. I haven't seen a top quality Collie who's patterning or shading has been so prominent that it distracted me from its virtue. Wise breeder/exhibitors may have saved me from that disappointment.

8. The sable merle is a genetic condition or genotype that occurs when the merle gene dilutes the sable gene.

9. Deep pigmentation of skin, coat color and eye color are visual components of strength and good health. Though fundamental, these aspects of health and beauty would have been very important to early breeders and the authors of the standard.

10. No

11. No

12. When the early dog men brought their dogs together for evaluation, they brought their very best. The deficit of knowledge or lack of integrity in today's breeders is identifying their dogs as true show quality according to

a standard of perfection instead of a standard of acceptability.

13. The challenge of breeding to a standard of perfection will eliminate the uninspired and keep the visionary breeder striving toward his goal. A change in the standard will give in to the uninspired among us and ultimately serve as a detriment to the breed.

14. N/A

15. N/A a. N/A b. Negatively. c. N/A d. N/A

16. Collie breeders of the past made breedings in hopes that their puppies would be beautiful, healthy and have good temperaments. I don't think they were hoping to get novelties like blue-eyed sables, harlequins, cryptics or any other rare possibilities. Wouldn't they have included those desires in the standard if they wanted those?

17. We will see all range of combination in our Collies if we change our standard. It will take time to get used to these dogs and even more time for breeders to make these novel combinations look like quality Collies.

18. I don't think that color should be a priority in judging Collies.

I think that we need more breeder education. Many in the membership haven't had the advantage of mentoring by successful breeders or an opportunity to learn Collie history thru the eyes of some of our long-time breeders. There is little connection between or breeders of the past and our current breeders.

Judges learn from breeders and a judges ed committee made up of breeders. We need to be sure our members know the standard and the distinction that is show quality if we are to have any hope of improving the breeding and judging of our collies.

Tom Coen, Macdega*

1. I have had extensive experience with sable merles as we have probably done more blue to sable breedings than anyone else in Shelties. We did those breedings because they were the most suitable combination and usually went forward with blues, tris or sables.

I handled a sable merle dog to BB at CCA and a sable merle bitch to RB and have finished numerous sable merle Collie champions, some with brown eyes and some with blue flecks.

2. I judged my first Collie Specialty match in 1967 and after retiring from handling received my judges license in 2001. I was honored to judge Best of Breed at CCA in 2008.

3. I attended and exhibited at my first National in 1964 and have missed only a couple since then. I have had the pleasure of being on the end of the lead of four Best of Breed winners and handled Winners and Reserve multiple times in both sexes, Best American Bred, Best Puppy and Stud Dog Class winner numerous times.

4. To me, the standard defines perfection or the ideal.... it is not a guideline or suggestion of what is acceptable. It is the ultimate goal in terms of type and quality and is uppermost in my mind when planning breedings, handling and judging. It is the ultimate challenge to breed the dog that truly fits the standard, and though probably unattainable, it keeps a true breeder engaged.

5. I know that my understanding of the Collie standard has become clearer and more detailed over the past 45 years. Those exceptional dogs that have exemplified certain virtues called for in the standard have taught me unforgettable lessons on breed type. My respect for the standard and appreciation for hard- to-get qualities have increased with my years of involvement with the Collie.

6. According to the AKC, the judge is evaluating phenotype or how the dog appears, so the sable merle shown in an open class definitely belongs in the Open Sable and White class.

7. General appearance, especially balance, outline and elegance are very important to me. I would place very little to no importance on any merling pattern or shading.

8. Sable merle is a genotype with the merling pattern expressed to varying degrees {sometimes it is almost non-existent and in other cases it can be distracting}. It is because the sable merle is a genotype that there is such confusion and controversy surrounding it.

9. I don't think that color was a priority. Rather, the importance of balance, head properties and expression were and still are clearly stressed in the standard.

10. I don't think so! They were describing the IDEAL and even blue merles were uncommon at that time.

11. No, I am interested in quality first and expression is one of the key qualities. Sable merles that have correct Collie expression have no problem winning. A sable merle of excellent quality that lacks correct expression doesn't need to be shown, but when bred right, can be extremely valuable in a breeding program.

12. For judges, they need to be educated that since they are judging phenotype it is NOT their job to identify sable merles. They need to be educated to judge the whole dog and to value head quality and expression as stated in the standard. The last thing that we want is for color to be a

priority when there is so much else to evaluate. Hopefully, breeders who are working with sable merles have a clear understanding of them AND register them as such.

13. I think that sable merles are a genotype {they are sables with a merle gene} and fit the sable description in the standard as it is. Having said that, I truly wish there was a simple change that could solve this controversy that has been going on for so long....unfortunately it's not so simple.

14. I think that we have an excellent standard as it is.

15. a. No

b. Probably more sable merles will be shown and bred without emphasis on expression. I like Aussies and Siberians but isn't because of their expression.

c. After much thought I don't think so because expression is so much of what makes a Collie a Collie....both in the show ring and as a family pet.

d. No. I feel we need more education of breeders, who are disappearing at a rapid rate, and new judges, who are appearing at a rapid rate.

16. I don't think a knowledgeable Collie breeder would deliberately breed for sable merles. Nor do I think that a knowledgeable Collie breeder would show a sable merle without the sweet, bright expression that the standard calls for.... it's a matter of degree and knowledge of the standard.

17. See answer #15b above.

18. Color should not be a priority in judging the Collie. Judges should be educated to this fact and be encouraged to concentrate on quality.

Connie Dubois, Sylvan

1. Since 1986, 1986. Yes, I have bred approximately ten litters with sable merles resulting. I have exhibited sable merles but on a very limited basis.

2. Not a judge, but have had many sweeps

3. Yes, attended and shown at almost all of them since 1986

4. It is the ideal - description therein describes the perfect representation of a collie.

5. No, the standard has remained constant.

6. Sable merles are sables. They carry a merle gene, the same way the trifactor or mahogany sable carries a tricolor gene. They are sables regardless of genes and thus belong in the open sable class.

7. Would only place importance if it distracted from the overall picture of balance.
8. Is a genotype. As stated before is the same as a tri-factored sable.
9. Minimal importance compared to structure both head, body and expression.
10. No. Expression is heavily stressed in the standard and is the distinguishing characteristic of the breed.
11. Expression is most important. If there was a blue eye that detracted from expression on a sable, I would not show it, ergo, not breed it either. If a sable merle were to have a blue fleck that was not noticeable and did not affect expression, I would show and breed that animal.
12. No, only heavily patterned sable merles can sometimes throw judges. Most judges know a distracting blue eye when they see it.
13. The standard should remain as it is. The sable merle and matching eye color is very clearly mentioned and needs no revision.
14. No standard change, please.
15. a. No. b. Do we want our sables to look like red merle aussies? c. No. d. Yes, but through educational seminars, not changing of the written standard.
16. No. The best advantage to a sable merle is that they are great to have genotypically as they can produce three colors when bred to a tricolor. They also are limiting as you cannot then breed a blue to a sable merle. Also the disadvantage is that a gorgeous sable could be produced with distracting blue eyes and thus not be shown.
17. Yes. Sables should have dark eyes as to not affect expression. The standard should not be changed.
18. Color should not be a priority. Patterning and color shades (pewter blues vs silver blues, light sables compared to dark mahogany, etc) could be discussed at judges seminars, but it all comes down to balance and how it affects the dogs expression and overall appearance. Emphasis should be on head and structural qualities and how those pieces play into the overall picture the animal represents. Basically, "Does it look like a collie which the standard describes?"

Pam Eddy, Sundown

1. I have been a member of CCA for 30 years. I whelped my first litter in 1979 I do believe. I have had sable merles on quite a few different occasions. I have bred all but one of the SM's that I have owned, including one

breeding that I did with a pure for sable bitch to a blue dog. That is not my idea of a great cross of colors but have done it a couple of times as it was the right thing to do with the dogs in question and a tri-color was not available. I have also gotten sable merles with two blue eyes (not just flecks!)

2. No I am not a licensed judge but do have experience with judging quite a few sweepstakes. However I have been an active exhibitor for all of my 30 years in collies.

3. I have attended most of the nationals since 1983 and normally do exhibit if I have a dog that deserves to be there in my opinion.

4. Yes, I do hold our wonderful standard as the definition of the ideal collie. If we do not strive to breed to that instrument then why are we even in this game? I am happy that we have very rarely changed our standard. So many other breeds have changed their standard to accommodate what the current fashion is in the breed rings. I do not think our founders would appreciate that.

5. I would not say that my perception of the standard has changed but I have come over the years to appreciate the harder to achieve virtues of our breed that the standard defines. My eye for a dog is also something that has evolved over the decades (lord has it been that long!). That because of the various mentors and the new insights that they can bring to you. Also attending nationals in various regions and seeing the different types of collies that exist in different parts of our country.

6. On this I am very firm that Sable Merles MUST be in the Open Sable class. The open classes are based on phenotype (a characteristic which is visible, such as color) not genotype (a genetic character which is not visible). I also do NOT believe that we should add another separate color class for these dogs. In these days of declining entries it is just a matter of time before these separated classes will go away and we will only have one open class anyway. I have seen this happen at some all-breed shows already. Perhaps we need color separation at specialty shows only anyway. I know that won't be a popular recommendation but at many shows the entry is small and sometimes a judge is only going over 1 or 2 dogs in a class anyway! Might as well combine it together and give the judge something more to compare. Also many dogs settle better in larger classes. (Of course this is somewhat off the subject).

7. I am not a judge but I can say that if I were the coloring would not effect me except to the point where it interferes with the expression of an entry. I have no problem with blue flecks in the eye but completely blue eyes would be

penalized as they do not have the correct expression called for in our standard.

8. To me sable merle is just a color or phenotype. To me genotype is related more to the physical aspects of the dog such as head and body structure and balance.

9. Ah to just know the answer to this question! The authors were from a time when large breeding kennels were common so I have to assume that lots of color inter-breeding was happening at that time. As they did put in a reference to eyes being matched in color with the exception of blue merles, I truly believe that sable to blue did happen and they did not like the resulting sable merles with blue eyes or blue flecks.

10. Well this is a continuation of what I put above. Yes I do think they did imagine it as they had bred it! Having owned blue eyed sable merles and knowing the hard and rather foreign expression it causes that they would certainly not have considered it ideal. Thus the wording the eyes must be matched in color!!!

11. NO. I also don't believe that our standard actually excludes the sable merle. On the subject of sable it describes sable as from a fawn sable of VARYING shades from light gold to dark mahogany. As they did not exclude the splotchy sable that some sable merles have I believe the standard infers that they are acceptable. (Okay maybe I am bit crazy here). Our standard also does not have a disqualification based on color. In my opinion any judge that excuses or disqualifies based on that is WRONG. Just because our standard does not specify sable merles, cryptic blues etc. it also does not exclude them.

12. On the subject of integrity I can't answer on that but as to deficit of knowledge I would say the breeders very much understand the sable merle color and most would recognize one, even if the lighter pure for sable versions that have almost no spots. On the all breed front though the color is much harder for the average non-collie judge to recognize unless it is has a lot of spotting. Most will still not penalize the dog thankfully. However there are some purists that believe as the standard does not specifically address the color then they won't either. For that we just have to give them more education. Your new DVD should help greatly in that. Nothing like visuals to help things along.

13. I personally am NOT leaning toward a change in the standard. I think that just smacks of changing the standard to fit what is currently being shown. Our founders did not like the blue eyed sable merles and made sure that they were not validated by asking for dark brown eyes matched in color. Also changing the standard to fit this one thing makes it even easier to go back and make

more changes in the future to accommodate the next fad in the show ring. I sincerely hope that we won't change our standard. I would much rather us work to educate the judges on the fact that we do not have a disqualification for color and that all shades of sable are acceptable including the sable merle. We need to stress that color should only be penalized to the extent that it interferes with correct collie expression.

14. Again I am not in favor of a standard change.

15. Well I am not a judge but having 30 years experience and having also owned a few other breeds I feel like our standard is one of the best out there. I don't feel that if we did change the standard it would likely not effect the future of our beloved breed. I really don't think it would cause people to breed any more sable merles than they already do. Breeders will still only do it if they feel it is the right breeding for the bitch. The blue eyed sable merles are NOT preferable (and I am not talking flecks in the eyes here!).

I just feel that changing the standard would do nothing more than help those that are SHOWING sable merles and in my mind that is not an acceptable reason to change a standard. Changes should only be made in the most extenuating of circumstances. In the years that I have been in CCA there was only one standard change that I recall and that related to the wording on the movement of the dog to more correctly reflect the single tracking action we want in the breed. As I recall this happened around the time I got into collies so I don't know all the reasoning behind the standard change.

16. I have known many who have bred sable merles and have NEVER known someone to do the blue to sable breeding in hopes of getting a sable merle! Always they have hoped that the best puppy would be a normal sable color so they would not have to worry about the blue eye issue. However as can happen in any litter the color you want is not always going to be the best puppy so many a wonderful sable merle has had the opportunity to go out and get its championship. Including some outstanding dogs that had more than just a blue fleck in its eye. My own wonderful once in a lifetime dog (Ch. Gambit's Dream Time) came out of a blue to sable breeding. I was just blessed that she was a regular sable but I also had her sable merle brother and showed him successfully despite a blue fleck.

17. Again I really don't think changing the standard would really effect this unless we were crazy enough to change the part of our standard asking for eyes to be dark brown and matched in color. I really could not support changing that at all!!!! I do not want us to promote blue

eyed sable merles. They really can never have the desired collie expression. If we were to change this part of our standard then more of the all-breed judges who already have a problem understanding expression will do an even worse job of judging expression.

18. I know what this handler is talking about. I know when I saw my first cryptic blue I was not sure which class the dog should be in. And the harlequin type blues are an even harder color to qualify. Merleing is a dilution gene and does not always work the way it is meant to. Personally have never seen a maltese or bi-blue in collies but if they do exist then the judges should question them. I believe it is up to the owner or handler to decide if the cryptics and harlequin type blues to either enter the blue class or just go with bred-by or American bred if they don't want to explain the color (they probably will have to anyway). Of course my feelings on these colors are the same as the sable merle. I do not feel we should change the standard to make showing a particular color of dog easier. Good dogs will win regardless of color.

Color should never be a priority in judging our breed in my opinion although it always does happen. Judges always do have their favorite choices. We should just emphasize in our judges education classes the various types and shades of colors that are available in our breed that fall under the umbrella of sable and white, blue merle, tri-color and white. A good collie is a good collie regardless of its color. It should be penalized for were it deviates from the standard and how its eye color and shape effects its expression. Also we should stress that a dog should not be dismissed based on color. If the judge does not like the color then they should just not use the dog in their placements or they should withhold ribbons based on lack of merit.

Deborah Falk, Aurealis

1. I have been a member of the CCA for over 25 years. I whelped my first litter in 1977. I have bred many litters that contained multiple sable merle puppies. I have promoted sable merles in the show ring for as long as I can remember and have completed their Championship titles with minimal difficulty. I have placed many sable merles in pet homes and they have made wonderful companions for their families.

2. I am not a licensed Judge, but in preparation for such have Judged multiple Sweepstakes, Puppy Matches and Tournaments. I have also attended many Judge's Seminars.

3. Yes, I have attended many CCA Nationals, since 1977, and have missed only a few over the years.

4. I consider the current Collie Standard to be an idyllic profile of what we expect our breed to be. It is not a standard of perfection, because perfection is unique to each person, nor is it just acceptability. It is a profile of ideal traits to be held in high regard and as a goal for breeders and Judges of our breed.

5. Over the years my perception of the Collie Standard has been one of always learning and evolving. It is like integrating the parts to make a whole, creating that image of ideal, in my mind. That takes alot of studying of the breed.

6. I personally feel that sable merles are fine in the open sable class. I believe this because they are predominantly sable with varying degrees of merling. They most closely resemble a sable. The language for sable merles regarding eye color should be similar to that of the blue merle. "In blue merles, dark brown eyes are preferable, but either or both eyes may be merle or china in color without specific penalty. The sable merle should be penalized to the degree that the expression is affected, not excused or disqualified.

7. To me, quality is more important than color. It is irrelevant how much merling or shading is present.

8. For the purposes of show and identification, a sable merle is another color. It is also a genotype. Breeders do need to be aware of the risks of dilluting the merle gene.

9. They defined what they felt was important at the time, but they did not describe all colors.

10. I do not feel that the ideal collie then or now would be sable with blue eyes. However, it should be penalized accordingly, but not excused, because it does exist.

11. No.

12. Yes, there is a lack of knowledge in the identification of sable merles.

13. It would greatly benefit the breed to openly clear up any misconceptions about the sable merle by adding the appropriate language to the standard. The fact that sable merles exist in breeding programs and in the show ring is reason enough to clear up the controversy regarding sable merles. This can do nothing but benefit the

breed and hence openly address any concerns that Judge's may have regarding the Judging of sable merles.

14. The standard should recognize 5 colors: Sable and White, Tri Color, Blue Merle, Sable Merle, and White.

Sable Merles appear Sable but may exhibit varying degrees of merling pattern. In Sable Merles, dark brown eyes are preferable, but either or both eyes may be merle or china in color without specific penalty. If the eyes are not dark or matched in color, the sable merle should be penalized to the degree that the expression is affected. Of course, language should remain that expression is one of the most important points in considering the relative value of Collies.

15. This change in clarification of color will help Breeders and Judges alike to better understand our Standard.

16. No. It is a result of color combinations. I am sure many would rather have a rich sable color in their puppy. But, many times the sable merle may be the pick of the litter according to our standard.

17. No. The same language regarding expression in blue merles should be added to apply to the sable merle. After all, it is a dilution of the merle gene.

18. Obviously, Judges need further education in identifying sable merles. Amended language in the standard will help to alleviate their concerns about doing the right thing. If these colors are acceptable, then Judges can focus on what is important, and that is not color, but virtues in accordance with the Standard. The other colors come up so very rarely, that I do not think it is of concern. Again, quality rather than color should be of foremost importance in Judging the Collie Breed.

Marcy Fine, Overland

1. Member since 1966. First litter in 1970. Experience with sable merles for the last 20 yrs

2. Not a Licensed judge

3. Every year since 1970

4 Standard of ideal but the people who wrote the standard are not infallible. I have felt there are inconsistencies and omissions that were not addressed in the past.

5. No I have always wondered about the way the eye portion of the standard was worded poorly and the fact that sable merles were not addressed in the mid 70's

6. Sable merles should be shown in the Sable class

7. The only time color of any kind would be a consideration is if it was just plain ugly. I don't care if it's sable, blue ,tri or any other color.

8. It is a genotype that has varying degrees of being displayed. The merle pattern of tri's is usually much more visible. There are cryptic blues which exhibit very little merling but they are very rare. I think there is a modifier to the merle gene which displays blues as grey with black spots or tris with grey spots. I know tri factored sable merles will usually have more pattern than pure fore sable merles but I have never used a very patterned sable merle in my breeding program.

9. I don't know why the color portion was changes from color is immaterial to the present wording. I think the last time sable merles were an issue they were dropped from inclusion because of a compromise between the members on that committee. There were certain members who refused to discuss or debate the issue and would not vote for anything until the issue of sable merles was removed from the table. More or less 1 or 2 members holding up the whole membership because of their irrational prejudices.

10. I don't think the founders of the breed were dealing with very many blue merles let alone sable merles. It would be interesting to see what color dogs those founding fathers had.

11. I have never kept a sable merle dog until last year because of the prejudice associated with sable merles.

12. I think most show/breeders are very careful when registering their puppies to make sure they get the right color on the papers.

13. I think a change in the standard is necessary because judges are no longer judging the merits of the dog but looking to see what we exhibitors are trying to get away with when showing a sable of any color if the traditional color pattern is in question. I have been questioned about tri factored sables being sable merles and have had pure for sables questioned about the genetic makeup. When the judge is worried about what color the dog is you are not going to get an impartial evaluation. Chances are you are not going to win either.

14. Under colors define Sable as any shade of brown from light tan to dark mahogany and may have a merling pattern. Under eye color: as there have never been non merles with eyes that were not matched in color. delete that sentence. Add : In Merles dark eyes are preferred but either or both eyes may be varying shades of blue to be judged by the degree it effects expression. (The question of adding sable merles & blue merles instead of merles is open)

15. Yes to a,c&d I personally can see no downside. There will be the ugly patterned dog shown but I stand by my

statement that ugly color is ugly color whether it is a muddy blue or a red tri or washed out sable.

16. I don't think anybody ever breeds for sable merles to keep them hoping they will be the best. I think sable merles are kept because they just happen to be the best in that litter.

17. I don't think it will have a lasting effect on the influx of blue eyed sable merles. You will find an increase in the beginning but the "degree to which eye color effects expression" will weed out the ugly ones. I haven't seen an increase of china eyed blue merles because it is currently allowed. They are much fewer that in shelties because the general collie breeder finds them lacking expression. The same will happen to sable merles with china & bright blue eyes.

18. This is the reason to include the merle pattern in the description of sables. It removes the issue of color pattern as an issue when judging a dog.

Bob Futh, Starberry*

1. 1961, 1959, Yes, two of them sleep in our bedroom. One is likely to be in bed when I wake up.

2. Yes, over forty years

3. Yes, most years since 1960

4. Perfection It is easy to understand and is in order of importance.

5. Yes, I place more emphasis on the whole rather than individual parts.

6. I only have two minutes, not sixty-three days.

7. None unless it interfered with the overall picture.

8. Genotype, not an opinion, a fact.

9. Other than overall picture, none.

10. No

11. No

12. There is a difference between identifying and knowing what to do with them.

13. The standard is complete and easy to understand now. It does not exempt or require any color except eye color. I can only imagine what a mess we would have trying to get understanding along with proper use of the English language. The latter is very rare these days.

14. N/A

15. a. NO b. adversely c. NO d. NO

16. No and No

17. Yes, a different breed

18. YES NO. We must always show judges the very best that we can get. I must say here that when I was learning other breed types, being mentored by the Stebins (Dobes), Nancy Carroll Draper (Danes), the Cherns (Newfs), and many more, none of these mentors ever talked about anything but perfection. Don't muddy the water, concentrate on virtues.

Sally Futh, Starberry*

1. Since 1953, 1949, Yes

A. First litter in 60s, second in 80s, currently have third generation sm waiting to be shown..

The quality and healthy survivors in each litter have mostly been sms. WHY? These breedings have all been successful in terms of quality but NOT what we wanted in color.

2. Yes... National twice, in Canada and throughout US.

3. Yes, most years since 1955 - WD, RB, WB, Futurity, class wins. Never with a sm, yet!

4. Absolutely as a standard of perfection which must be engraved in your heart and mind.

5. Yes, I believe that anyone, as s/he grows and develops in knowledge, changes. As you become more familiar with the standard and see more dogs, you recognize the great gap between the dogs you see and perfection, and put more emphasis on the positive virtues, particularly those that are hardest to get.

6. I always have felt that I would show one in Bred by if eligible, or Ambred, but I have come to realize that they do belong in open sable, which is their phenotype.

7. Absolutely none, except in the eye of it was obvious and affected expression.

8. No, sable merles are sables and are genetically different ONLY.

9. How much importance do you think the authors of the standard placed on color? Obviously none since they only added colors blue, then white, finally blue-headed white when the madding (or easily confused) crowd forced the issue.

10. Absolutely not.

11. NO

12. Yes, probably of knowledge only or at least primarily.

13. I am not because I can see no benefit. There are other issues which probably could use further explanation just as much, and I believe that education on all items of confusion to ignorant judges is the way to work through this problem.

14. N/A

15. It doesn't bother me as much as it does Dorothy. I can live with changes. And do, frequently in judging other breeds. a. No. b. No. It is pandering to the lowest common denominator. c. No, this has nothing to do with the character or quality of the breed today or in the future.

16. Of course not. Well I, from the great age I have attained, feel that my opinion should matter. But that is probably not relevant

17. Yes, because it will encourage even more breeding(s) to produce them.

18. Have yet to see a bi-blue Collie and don't expect to without Sheltie blood. I think the gene is long gone from the pool.

Harlequin blues I don't see as a problem. There are all kinds of blue markings which DO affect one's overall impression and can distort the picture. Harlequin sable merles, on the other hand, are very distracting.

Re Jeff's question: The obvious answer is to ignore the body color except as it adversely impacts the overall picture, to follow the standard in regard to obvious blue eye(s) which affect expression, and don't look for trouble to dig for blue flecks.

Absolutely.

A continuing dialogue.

Tell them, REPEATEDLY.

DEFINITELY NOT.

Amy Gau, Rosepoint

1. I have been a member of CCA for 17 years. My first litter was 12 years ago. Sable merles - out of several breedings, I have had two litters in which there was one sable merle each. These were not my picks from either litter. One due to blue eyes, the other for other reasons not the coat color.

2. I have applied but have not yet been approved. I have judged collies in multiple Sweepstakes.

3. I have attended and exhibited at 13 CCA National Specialties. I have attended both breeder and judges seminars at the Nationals.

4. The standard is definitely a description of the ideal collie - one none of us has yet to see but each of us strives to breed. The standard is not intended to reflect what we see in the ring or whelping box.

5. I do not believe my perception of the collie standard as the ideal of perfection has changed. I do believe my understanding and interpretation of the standard has changed and grown. I also have found that the written standard of our breed (and any breed for that matter) is just a starting point for understanding the ideal and it can be interpreted differently and yet correctly by many individuals.

As I have had my hands on more dogs, I have come to appreciate that dogs of different "styles" can each reflect the standard. I have also come to believe that a dog can have merit in some areas and have faults that make it hard or impossible to show due to faults according to the standard. It is not the obligation of the standard to describe everything possible so that it can be shown or to make it easier for that dog to compete in the show ring.

6. I believe this is an appropriate class for them as their coat appearance fits the description of a sable as defined in the standard.

As an exhibitor, if I were to enter a sable-merle, I would probably consider whether putting the dog in a different class would be easier or be where the dog would have a better chance under a particular judge - just like I do with every dog I enter of any color, size, maturity, etc. I would also have the same consideration with a "cryptic" blue merle. No sense in making the judge have to make a decision about the color when putting the dog in another class would work as well.

7. I would put no importance on coat color except in how it may or may not impact expression. [Though in a sable merle I have yet to see one whose coat merling impacts expression in any adverse way.]

Now, eye color would be a different story.

8. The sable merle is a genotype which may or may not be evidenced in the color of the adult collie. Genetically, the dog is a sable merle regardless of the appearance much in the same way that a "cryptic" blue merle is still genetically blue merle or a genetically pure for sable is still that whether we can determine that from looking at them or not.

9. It was enough to list in the standard but it is not a significant portion and receives no significant emphasis. I think the one place where color was more important was in the color of the eyes. I would suspect that is because it does impact expression which has a great deal of emphasis in the standard.

Note: we do not disallow any color in our standard. We list the colors that are recognized. Since a sable merle may or may not be recognized by a judge, I do not see how you can list it as a separate color any more than we would list a pure for sable as a separate color.

10. No. They also preferred dark eyes on a sable. Both would be faults but nothing more or less.

11. I don't think so. I think the standard's description of sable covers the sable merle coat color. If the standard allowed for blue eyes, I'm still not sure I would keep one with blue eyes. I would have to balance that fault with other strengths and weaknesses in the dog.

The degree of fault and virtue would be a factor - as it always is.

13. I have been conflicted on this since the beginning of the most recent arguments both for and against. While I do not generally favor changing the standard, I do see that there may be a need to add clarification without substantially changing the standard. We have made this an issue for ourselves and it may be that because of that we have to resolve it.

For me, the standard allows for a sable merle coat color but not the blue eyes. In its current form, it does not appear to penalize a blue eye on sable merle any more than a light eye on any color. It's a fault and one of expression but that is it.

If there is a way in which we can clarify for those interpreting the standard that merling is ok, then I am ok with that and see benefits to judges.

If we go into the issue of the blue eye, it becomes less clear to me. I'm not always fond of the blue eye on the blue merle and really can't see that a bright blue eye on a sable merle is in any way the picture of the ideal collie expression. If it has a fleck or doesn't detract it isn't bad but that degree of color can't really be defined. I really don't see telling judges or those new to our breed and reading our standard that a sable with a blue eye is ok.

[see notes further on about an alternative to changing the written standard.]

14. If we have put ourselves in the position that we have to make a change to close this issue, I believe any change has to be absolutely minimal and not open the door for

other issues in interpretation. I would just add "including some merling" to the description of the sable color.

Caveat/Question: Does adding the word merling now open ourselves up for the question - what degree of merling? what should merling in a sable look like.

I would suggest an alternative that I haven't heard mentioned. Maybe we should look at what we currently include in our illustrated standard versus what is in the written standard. Maybe the place to update and clarify is the illustrated standard?

15. I do not believe a change is needed for any reason other than to close the issue that we have opened ourselves.

I do not believe that changing the standard will improve our breed. I have no idea if there will be long term impacts. It is always possible in any change to have unintended impact.

If there is a way to deal with this issue in any other way, I would support that. Maybe putting it in the illustrated standard as an illustration of what the various shadings of sable can look like? I have seen other illustrated standards that use it for showing markings and what is acceptable. It works well in those cases and might work well in ours.

To the judges who are asking for a clear message from the CCA on our breed standard and the color now that we have opened up the issue: A clear, thorough and personal communication of our intent to all judges of the breed and sending an updated illustrated standard could go a long way. The illustrated standard is a much more official document than just a memo or reminder. It provides real, official documentation of the issue without actually changing the standard. That clarification in such a permanent document would go a long way.

I think if most of us read the standard and the illustrated standard, we'd find that much of what we take for granted as being part of the description of the collie is actually in the illustrated standard and not the actual standard - for ex, the alignment of hock and pelvis.

16. No and No. I have heard of some using sable-merles to improve coat color but have not talked to anyone who has intentionally done this.

17. I think it depends on whether we accept the blue eye on a sable merle or not. If we do not accept it, we should not see more of it in the ring on sable merles. However, I do think that if we add sable merle as a specifically listed color that we will see more sable merles exhibited.

There are people today who only reluctantly do breedings that will produce a sable-merle. I think this has more to

do with the possibility of producing a blue-eyed sable merle that would be very difficult to show. If this is not a concern, more of these breedings will be done and we will see more sable-merles exhibited.

18. I agree with this handler. I do not think color should be a priority in judging and I think if we open the issue of color we need to be ready for other questions on color. I also do not believe we should be looking on changes to include everything possible.

I would add a concern on where do we stop? What about the cryptic blue merle? They are probably in worse shape when it comes to picking a class than the sable merle.

What about size? Should we change that because we are producing more dogs below standard height that are really beautiful?

What about all the clarifications that are in our illustrated standard? Should those be added to the official written standard? The sheltie standard certainly has a lot more of the structural information in their written standard. We only provide details in the illustrated standard.

A lot of what we understand about our breed is not in the written standard. Anyone adjudicating on our breed has an obligation to know and understand our breed beyond the standard. It is our obligation as a club to provide as much official documentation as possible in helping them learn how to interpret our standard in a way we would prefer.

If, after providing that information, they get it wrong (and not just have a different interpretation), then we educate them.

Maret Halinen, Napier

1. Since 1973 and I whelped my first litter when I was 7 years old with my mom.
2. I've been licensed to judge Collies & Shelties since 1996
3. I have attended just about every CCA but 2 since 1974 and have had my dogs exhibited successfully (BOS to BOB, WD, and RB as well as won the Brood Bitch class and had numerous class placement.
4. To me it's my bible, my guide so I know I am on the right track.
5. It has changed some as I am living in the America now and times has changed, but I still hold on to the guiding light written in fine penmanship by the breeder's past. Don't see reason to change that.

6. I am fine with them in the Open Sable class.

7. I am fine with Sable Merles as long as the eye color doesn't take away from the expression. I personally prefer dark eyes on Sable Merles, but the overall quality of the dog is really what I would be looking for the most not so much emphasis on the color.

8. It is not a color.

9. I think at the time enough, but time has changed and no turning back.

10. No I don't think so.

11. I don't think we should change the standard, but do think we should give some written guidelines to the public at large on color inheritance, but not make it the main and most important thing, which it is not. Much emphasis on attending the national seminars and include a chapter on color. Also sable merles are ok for breeding purpose, but please use judgment when showing as you would with any other color as how it measures up in the class.

12. Lack of knowledge mostly and we should most definitely educate and give guidelines for the All Breed Judges utilizing the AKC news letter and the Judges Educational Seminars.

13. I am not in favor of changing the standard I don't see reason to.

14. If you do that then everybody will be focusing on trying to recognize which specimen is sable merle, pure for sable, harlequin, etc. as they are sometimes hard to recognize rather than focusing on the importance of the overall quality of the animal. I think perhaps more emphasis on color inheritance education is needed.

15. a. Please don't change it. b. Will confuse new breeders and I think we will lose track. c. NO d. Most definitely needs to be addressed right now as I feel we need to give direction to all breed judges how to go about this as well as new breeders.

16. This is a leading question???

17. I prefer dark eyes and that should be emphasized. .

18. Here we go please read my answer in 14.

Debbie Holland, Fantasy

1. I've been a member of CCA since 1976. I bred a few litters in the 80's. My first sable to blue breeding was in 1991, Ch. Fantasy's Cover Girl ROM was a product of that breeding.

2. No

3. I attended my first national in 1976. I have won BB, BOS, WD, WB, Reserve dog and bitch, Best Puppy, Best Bred By etc. as a breeder/handler.

4. Perfection

5. No

6. I have no problem with them in the open sable class

7. None

8 N/A

9. Little, more is on head etc.

10. No

11. N/A

12. N/A

13. When the issue of changing the standard to define the sable merle came back up I was at first ready to change the standard.

I felt the judges were forcing our hand about sable merles. After much thought I came to the conclusion that the standard does not need to be changed the judges need to be educated..

14. N/A

15. N/A

16. I have never made a breeding hoping for a certain color.

17. N/A

18. N/A

Marion Johnson, Raincrow

1. I joined the CCA in the mid 70's about the same time I whelped my first litter. I have seen sable merles increase in numbers and popularity since that time. Betty Crawford was a huge advocate of s/m during this time period and I am sure y'all remember her efforts to have the s/m recognized. I myself, have had sable merles, finish in conformation and titled in performance work. I had a beautiful s/m smooth bitch in my breeding program. I had lost her along with my own line of collies two years ago in a kennel fire.

2. I am not a licensed to judge, however I have judge numerous sweeps and a futurity going back to the late 1970's to the present .

3. I have attended as many nationals possible and have had some successes: WD Smooth, Best Smooth Puppy,(both in the early 1980's), usually have placements, etc. Plus

I have worked as Rally Chair for the 1st AKC recognized CCA Trial in Okla., and was Raffle Chair for a CCA show this past few years.

4. I think the standard is a blueprint to help guide breeders along the many varied paths that lead to the "IDEAL" idea of the collie.

5. My minds picture of the "ideal" collie has not changed over the years. I have seen "fads" come and go (i.e., stove pipe muzzles, small size, big size, tiny eye, acceptable of poor movement as long as the head had the "look". etc). But my mind's eye picture of the collie has stayed true to the standard.

6. I think sable merles should be shown in the open sable class if the owner so desires.

7. Color/patterns should never be a judges primary concern unless the marking adversely affect expression. And this could happen with ANY color pattern.

8. Sable Merle is a color, resulting from a dilution of the sable factor as blue merle is a dilution of the Tri factor.

9. Many years ago, it was feared that breeding blues to sables would result in so many double dilutes that the breed would be adversely affected and that uneducated pet people would take a sable merle and breed to a blue and be horrified at having a double dilute.and if that pup was deaf/blind, it would damage the collie breed as a whole.

However, the is a myth that has lost its impact, with the advent of breeders producing quality sable merles that have contributed to a better collie and with the education by said breeders to the pet person with whom they place a s/m puppy.

10. I would hope they were wise enough to picture the collie not by its color but by the qualities that make a collie a wonderful companion capable of working or performing or just being a companion and guardian.

11. I have always felt that showing a sable merle with or without blue eyes a "behind the hand" kind of thing, since they were not a "legal" color yet being done on a regular basis in a "sneaky" manner.

12. I think too much is placed on whether it is a sable merle or not. Shade colors vary so much just like the variations in the sable. However since in the past the CCA has refused to address the issue, I think a lot of judges are puzzled and possibly consider that since we (as a club) won't address the issue it must be a "no no" and avoid dealing with the s/m by not putting it up or excusing it.

13. I think a change in the standard is long overdue. I think the s/m breeders has proven to the collie world that

quality sable merle's can and will contribute to the breed and they can and do offer much to help breeders strive toward their "Ideal". The inclusion of the sable merle color takes it away from the "behind the door" breeding and showing, and legitimize it for the whole fancy.

14. I am in favor of a standard change. It should be kept simple (KISS principle):

Under color: cg to read: "The sable and white is predominately sable, with or without merling, with shades varying from

Under Eyes: Except in merles, they are required to be matched in color....

In merles, dark brown eyes are preferable, but either may be.....

15. I am not sure that I agree with this premise, however the changes I suggested will serve nothing but to make the standard more understandable and ageless. The breed is already accepting sable merles and their value to breeding programs, As far as protecting the "essence" of the breed, if we do nothing, we are leaving ourselves open to confusion and misinterpretation both by judges and by the fancy.

16. There will always be someone breeding for A color... whether sable merle, blue, white, tri, sable. I think by ignoring the sable merle, we are damaging our credibility to the dog world.

17. They are already commonplace.

18. I think this question is not valid to the argument since we are ONLY discussing inclusion and recognition of the Sable Merle.

I think is shortsighted to not legitimize the sable merle since so many are involved in using them in their breeding programs, while some of these same people are not wanting to address the issue as legitimate.

Thank you for including my opinions in your surveys.

Caroline Jones, Limerick

1. I have been a CCA member since 1989. That would be 20 years this year. I whelped my first litter in 1990. I bred my first sable merle in 1998. Her name was Ch. Limericks Opalescent. I finished her from the Bred By class. She was NOT heavily merled nor did she have blue eyes. She had very dark brown eyes.

2. I am NOT a licensed judge but I have judged sweepstakes and matches for several collie clubs for the last 15 years.

3. I have attended quite a few CCA Nationals and have also exhibited at many of them. My first national was in 1992 in Tampa Florida. I have also been to the national in 1994, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.

4. I hold the collie standard in high regard. I think of the standard as being perfection. The collie standard is very explicit in detailing collie virtue and type.

5. I feel the way I perceive the collie standard has surely changed over the years. I understand it a whole lot better now, twenty years later. I have been shown by my mentor and "students of the breed" what certain virtues the standard describes should look like and feel like.

6. I personally feel that sable merles should NOT be shown in the Open Sable class. They are NOT sables. There are more classes that they can be shown in.

7. I am not a licensed judge, but when I was judging sweeps, color did not sway my opinion at all.

8. In my opinion, sable merle is a genotype. Not a recognized color. That's why I feel they should not be shown in the Open Sable class.

9. I don't think the authors put too much importance on color. They stated what colors collies could be, and then went on. Sable Merles have been around for a very long time, and why they weren't added to the standard a long time ago, says a lot to me. And, I feel the reason that the authors states in the standard that only Blue Merles are allowed blue eyes, is because blue eyes in sables really detract from expression.

10. Yes....I think I answered that in the above question.

11. No.....I would still breed a blue to a sable if I thought those dogs complemented each other and had what I wanted for each individual. I would still do the breeding, but I am a person that feels not everything you breed MUST be shown. A sable merle with a blue eye, or two blue eyes, that has what I did the breeding for, can still stay in my back yard and hopefully give me, in the next breeding, a dog or bitch that is a recognized color, that can go on and be shown.

12. This question can be answered differently if one is showing a collie or if one is judging a collie. I think there is a definite lack of knowledge in judging the sable merle. Some judges don't know what to do with this color. Especially if it is heavily merled. If a sable merle enters a ring, the first thing a judge should do is judge it just like any other color. Except when it comes to the color of

the eyes.. The standard is very explicit in eye color.....a sable merle with a blue eye, or two blue eyes, cannot, or should not, be shown.

Now, I also feel that a lack of integrity from a breeder who would show a sable merle with blue eyes is even worse. Every breeder should only take in the ring their BEST breeding stock. A sable merle with blue eyes can be a breeders BEST, but to show this collie, is in complete defiance against the standard. And this to me lacks a breeder's integrity.

13. I would like to see the standard stay the way it is. It is a good standard. A very explicit standard. One that explains very well what the collie should look like. If we, as breeders, start changing this standard to meet our own needs, instead of breeding collies "TO" the standard, before you know it, the collie won't look like the collie anymore.

14. I answered how I feel about this above.

15. To change the standard as it is now, just to add a color that is not a real color, so one can win at the dogs shows, would be detrimental to the breed.

16. I hope and pray that no breeder ever breeds a litter hoping for one single color. I hope a true reputable breeder breeds two dogs together, hoping to get the best collie, regardless of color, that they can breed. But, a true breeder will also know that the best collie could be a color that is not recognized, but they are willing to take that chance knowing that the best pup could be retained for breeding only.

17. I feel that if sable merles with blue eyes were allowed to be shown and become commonplace in the future, the beautiful expression we have come to know in the collie today, would become a memory.

18. This question can be answered very easily. When judging collies, the standard again, is very explicit. There are NO disqualifications for color. Judge the collie as the standard describes. The standard does not put a lot of emphasis on color so let's not put more into it then necessary.

*Pat Jung, Palary**

1. 26 yrs. 1st litter 1977. No first hand experience with sable merles as a breeder, but have certainly observed many in the show ring over the years.

2. Yes, have been judging collies since about 1994.

3. Yes, have attended and exhibited many times at the CCA.

4. I hold it as an ideal; dogs should be judged according to how closely they resemble the standard. However, any written document will be subject to interpretation and personal prioritization; therefore judges ideally should have as much supplementary education as possible.

5. No, I can't say my perception of its purpose has changed.

6. Judges cannot always tell that a sable-appearing dog entered in the Open Sable class is a merle. They can only judge what is apparent to them. The problem is that the obvious sable merle may have its color viewed as a fault by judges who do not understand it, while those who appear sable will have full acceptance.

7. I am a breeder-judge, I would place no importance on merle patterning or shadings on an otherwise quality entry. More education of judges will help to clarify this issue, but judges may still choose to reject a dog that is obviously sable merle because its color is not mentioned in the standard, especially if it has blue flecks in its eyes. That is their decision and wise exhibitors would not show sable merle dogs to those judges. Thinking outside my breed, if I were judging another breed and a dog carrying a color not mentioned in its standard entered the ring, but there was no DQ specified, I would probably fault the dog's color as I judged the entire dog, weighing that fault against its virtues. Then I would seek out breed experts for validation or clarification. I think some non-breeder judges would have that attitude toward an obviously sable merle collie. They would certainly fault blue eyes in sable merles more than they would in blue merles, and they should, because our standard states that eyes are dark.

To create a separate class for sable merles means more judging time and more awards to purchase. To lump them with blues asks judges to guess whether or not they qualify for the class. The Bred-By-Exhibitor and American Bred classes remain valid options for obvious sable merles.

8. It is most certainly a genotype; the sable merle, even though overtly sable, will produce some merled offspring. Its phenotypic color, perceptible at birth, may or may not be so obvious as it matures.

9. I believe that color was important to them only after all other considerations. Richness of color and markings were the "icing on the cake".

10. The standard states that eyes are dark and matched in color except in the blue merle, where one or both may be china or merle – though dark are preferred nonetheless. This wording leaves no allowance for blue eyes in a sable merle, but there is no DQ for that either. I can only guess

that they knew they were allowing for sable merles with dark eyes to be included implicitly. I am not old enough to know what they were thinking.

11. No.

12. The breeders can identify sable merles in the whelping box. I see no reason for any breeder to do anything other than evaluate the puppy on its merits and use it accordingly in a breeding program, with full knowledge of color inheritance, just as they would a blue merle. In the show ring, some judges will not perceive some sable merles as merles, and I don't see that as a problem as long as they don't discriminate against another sable merle just because it shows patterning. Again, clarification and education, not changing the standard, are the best routes to follow.

13. I am in favor of keeping our standard as it is. It could be argued that the standard should be changed to allow sable merles to have blue eyes. Blue merles are allowed to have mismatched eyes, with the caveat that expression should still be of paramount importance, and dark eyes are preferred. But that would open the door to acceptance of blue or blue-flecked eyes in a sable that is not merled. Don't ask me where that could come from – mongrelization? I don't know. As an example, the Sheltie standard says that more than 50% white should effectively eliminate a dog from competition, but it is not a DQ. The spitz was used to create the Sheltie and Sheltie breeders don't want that white creeping back into the pedigrees, because that would be evidence of mongrelization. Whenever we change rules or standards, we need to anticipate whatever wacky fallout might occur in some future time.

14. The sable merle is implicitly recognized in the standard in that a dark-eyed sable merle without obvious patterning would meet the standard, and one with merled eyes would be penalized according to the extent of the impact on expression. If the standard were changed, I suppose it could redefine sable as including dogs with shading, but I think it might be even more confusing and might cause some confusion in understanding genotype.

15. a. I'm not sure. b. How will it affect the future of the breed? I foresee no positive effect. c. Is this in the best long term interest of this breed? I don't think so. d. NO. Unlike breeds like Dalmatians, Samoyeds, Irish Setters and the like, color is not the essence of our breed.

16. No. No.

17. My first reaction is to answer "NO" but after thinking about I am not so sure. I think blue eyes appear more objectionable on a sable than on a blue, and one would think that would be a limiting factor in planning breed-

ings. But I suppose people could become inured to the look if the standard is changed. Because the merle factor is in fact a dilution factor associated with some phenotypic health issues, it is safe to assume that breeders will take care to recognize the merle and not confuse it with pure colors. I am not as clear on this as I would like to be.

18. No, I don't think we need to address colors that are relatively uncommon. Cryptic blues do show up with some frequency, but the standard places no minimum on the extent of merling so there should be no problem in interpretation. Is the harlequin blue any more distracting than the dog with one brown front leg? Should not an astute judge be able to look beyond markings? I've seen judges question reddish tris. In these instances, the wise judge will ASK. And, really, it is seldom that a comparison between two collies should reduce to a decision based on color.

Susan Kaelin, Calibre

1. I have been a member of CCofA since 1981, whelping my first litter in 1979. I've owned and shown sable merles and finished one. I have not bred a litter that would have produced sable merles, however I have bred blue merle to blue merle.

2. I am not licensed to judge at this time, but have judged collie sweepstakes. Just recently at the Columbus Collie Club Specialty my finalists did consist of a beautiful sable merle bitch with a blue fleck in her right eye. She has a beautifully shaped eye and place correctly.

3. Yes many of them, and I have placed in the classes with sable merles, placed third in Open class when it was in KY when Chip Atkins was judging (can't remember year at this moment). Won the brood bitch class in 2003, consistently placed second in every class in 2003. 2004 won the Am Bred class, and second in a large 6-9 month class. 2008 stud dog placement and Am Bred placement. Handled Lilah Williamson's dogs at many specialties.

4. The standard is what I try to breed to, so it is my standard of perfection or the ideal collie. I am constantly revisiting it, watching the video, analyzing in my opinion whether the dogs I have bred or am currently exhibiting meet our standard. Constantly evaluating where improvement is needed, etc... It is definitely not acceptability in my mind, it is our guideline, or what we should use to measure our success. Acceptability will breed mediocrity.

5. I think my perception has been enlightened as the longer I'm in the breed the more I understand the standard and its intent. When I first started showing dogs, I thought the judges needed to know the standard so they

would know how to judge, ignorance was definitely not bliss. As I evolved, I realized I need to breed to meet the standard. Thankfully I caught on quick with the help of some great mentors, and I didn't breed a litter for approximately five years after my 1979 litter. I studied the standard, the various lines, and watched dogs at shows and took a lot of notes, before I proceeded. I really wish there was a way to prevent novices from breeding until they understood the standard. I love having healthy debate around others interpretation of the standard, this healthy debate has strengthened my knowledge and in my opinion deepened my understanding.

6. I have no problem with a sable merle in the sable class.
7. If the merling affected the dog's expression and there was another dog that was of equal quality, I would choose the latter dog and place the sable merle depending on how deep the quality was in the class. My decision would be made from the other qualifiers of our Standard.
8. It is a genotype. The color would be a trait of your phenotype, which is the physical manifestation of genotype instructions.
9. I think the authors of the standard placed a lot of importance on the color, evidenced by the way they describe the colors in our standard, and the variations of these colors.
10. No, I don't think they were picturing sable dogs with blue eyes when they created the standard, as the severity can affect the expression of the dog, which is important to our breed. It is difficult to get correct expression with a blue eye, but I also feel the shape and placement impacts this as well.
11. No, a change in the language would not have altered any of my decisions as I looked at expression and structure first.
12. I believe there is a deficit of knowledge in the identification of sable merles. Some sable merles are being bred without mentors for new members to our breed which causes a potential long term issue. I strongly feel if a reputable breeder knew the dog was a sable merle it would be identified as such. Sable merles are hard to identify at times.
13. I feel the standard needs to be left the way it is. My concern is we are changing the standard to help exhibitors win, when throughout the years the quality sable merles have won regardless of the color. I am concerned that we will be allowing mediocrity, and what is really needed is an education for judges and breeders. Once we change the standard for this color, what color will be next?
14. No answer

15. All of the above are my concerns.

16. No, I don't believe that they are deliberately hoping that the best puppy is a sable merle, just as those who do a blue to blue breeding are not hoping that their best puppy is a double dilute. Since in my mind, it is something we are not breeding for when we breed, I don't think the standard should be changed.

17. No answer.

18. The harlequin blues, cryptic blues, maltese, bi-blues, etc... would be very tough in educating the judges. Lord, some of the breeders can't figure it out. The only thing that I can think of with all the colors listed above and the sable merle, is to let the judges know these colors exist, that they are variations of the merle, and not an excusable fault of the dog. We need to teach them to fall back on structure and expression, treat the blue eye as a fault in the sable merle, but to put up the dog that is closest to meeting the standard.

I think what has caused this entire issue is exhibitors getting excused. We need to communicate to the judges that they are not to be excused, if the dog is not their preference don't place it. Then the exhibitors can figure out who to show the dogs under and who not to, without this issue. It will be similar to how exhibitors know what dogs to show to what judges to, i.e., judges that like doggy bitches, etc...

*Helga Kane, Kanebriar**

1. Officially since 1964 In 1970. Yes. In the years I was breeding, I produced a total of 6 Sable Merles out of 3 separate litters.
2. Yes. Have been judging collies since 1983.
3. Yes. Attended first CCA National in 1965 – have attended most years since then. Exhibited at a number of CCA's in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. No longer exhibit myself, but still attend.
4. I think our Standard very adequately describes the "ideal" collie.
5. No
6. I feel that the Open Sable Class is for dogs that are predominantly sable in color,(as stated in our Standard's description of the color) therefore it would be the proper class in which to exhibit Sable Merles.
7. None
8. It is definitely a genotype just as a tri-factored sable or pure-for-sable would be.

9. Not that much -- the Standard even states that "there is no preference among" the colors.

10. Probably not since so much emphasis is placed on expression. Blue or china eyes can be detrimental to proper expression in blues and even more so in sable merles.

11. No.

12. Do you mean by breeders or by judges??? In either case I would say "I certainly hope not."

13. I am ambivalent about a change in the Standard. Sable merles are a fact of life. They are being produced, and contributing to breeding programs, and many are exhibited in the show ring and do their share of winning. I seriously doubt that either including them in the Standard – or leaving the Standard like it is will change the way people breed or exhibit.

14. Though I am neither in favor, nor opposed to change, I do feel that the wording of our Standard that requires eyes to be matched in color except for blues, could be said to discriminate against sable merles. If any change were to be considered at all, it might be to clarify that section – the simple addition of the words "or sable" in the section on eyes might take away that fear of discrimination. i.e. "except for blue 'or sable' merles, they are required to be matched in color". That's about the only change I would favor and that would mention the sable merle without adding another color.

15. I think our Standard is fine the way it is now, however, there are a number of people in our breed who feel very strongly about including the sable merle in the Standard. They too have the right to be heard – and their viewpoint at least considered.

16. No. No. Sable Merles will continue to be produced whether the standard is changed or not, and sometimes the best puppy will be a Sable Merle.

17. I see no reason to add sable merles as a recognized color – they are already covered under the description of Sable. And as long as breeders and judges put the emphasis on expression that our Standard demands, I doubt blue or merle eyed sables will ever become commonplace.

18. I think our Standard is already very clear on judging the "quality" of the dog with no preference to color.

Gayle Kaye, Chelsea

1. I joined the CCA in 1969 and bred my first litter in 1970. I have done a couple of sable to blue breedings. I was the co-breeder and co-owner of a sable merle champion

that finished in the '80s (with dark eyes and no obvious merle coloring).

2. I am a relatively new judge. I applied in 2004 and was approved for regular status in 2006.

3. I have attended about 25 Nationals, but have exhibited at only a handful due to the difficulties of transporting dogs from the West Coast.

4. The Standard presents, in words, what the ideal collie should look like and it should serve as the guideline that each and every breeder should look to when they set on a course of breeding Collies. Basically it is a "Standard of Perfection" that all should aspire to whether judging or breeding!

5. My perceptions have definitely changed. Upon first reading, the Standard was "Greek" with many terms and phrases that made little sense. With experience comes a greater understanding of the terminology and with time, mental impressions begin to take form. When a person is new, there's little understanding and really nothing to compare to.

6. Personally I feel this is where they should be exhibited when not shown in puppy, American bred or BBE. However.....the ideal would be to change the Open Blue to an OPEN MERLE class. It would be ridiculous to have a 5th open class, as typically the Open classes are not full.

7. It would depend on the overall quality of the dog when all things are considered and the degree of distraction. Also would depend on the amount and placement of the merling and how distracting it is to the overall dog. I do not subscribe to the theory that a good dog cannot be a bad color. I feel color and markings definitely can be a distraction. Someone recently showed a pinkish bitch with weird coloring and markings. It was very hard to look past her bizarre color. I would not excuse a heavily merled dog for being in the Open sable class, unless that dog lacked merit.

Frankly I didn't realize that it was the judge's job to decide if a dog is in the wrong class or not. As a new judge, I would like clarification on the proper procedure if I ever should come across a dog that I feel is in the wrong class. Is it the judge's responsibility??

8. I think it is both. No explanation needed.

9. I don't believe much emphasis was placed on color at all. Not only did the Collie have several different color variations at the time of the first Standard, it was stated in the very first Standard that color was immaterial. However, along the way, someone obviously felt those matters

should be addressed because later Standards did mention colors and markings.

10. The first American Standard was basically the British Standard. Not sure what the founders of the breed pictured as that would be extremely difficult to determine at this point. The first Standard was radically different from the Standard we have today.

11. No!

12. Could be both...depends on the individual..

13. I am leaning towards keeping the Standard as is. However, that said.....if bizarre actions in the ring keep occurring, something may have to be done. The recent action of excusing a SM for being in the wrong class only helps the "cause" of those hoping to change the Standard. Personally I like the Standard as it is, but I can see the opposite viewpoint when judges succumb to weird behavior.

14. What a convoluted question!

15. Not sure why changing our Standard would or should be of concern to others not involved in the breed.

Standard changes should not come as a result of fads or fancies and should never be made in order to promote the winning of certain factions.

16. I do know there are some individuals today that favor the sable merle color as they have stated openly it's their favorite color, but how would you know what past breeders did or believed??? I would like to think that someone like Elisabeth Browning did a sable to merle breeding not because she was trying to make a statement, but rather because she thought it was the best breeding to make (Ch. Tokalon Blue Eagle ex Tokalon Aileen). I am sure Ch. Tokalon Storm Cloud (who resulted from the breeding) had sable merle littermates - did she keep them or show them? Unless you were around during that time how would you know???

17. I know of some breeders who think blue eyes on sables are pretty - Personally I am NOT a fan of blue-eyed sables. However, there are already blue-eyed sable merles being shown and they are finishing. At the recent Roseville Specialties in Northern California, a sable merle puppy with one blue eye, finished in 5 or 6 shows.

If the Standard is changed to include sable merles, I feel the wording for eye color needs to be done carefully. This is my greatest area of concern when it comes to adding the SM color to our Standard. (Except for the blue merles, they are required to be matched in color. In blue merles, dark brown eyes are preferable.).

18. Are the oddball colors that common that we need to worry about them? I think the education angle is definitely of prime importance but like anything, you will always have the odd ball judge (like the one that started this latest furor) who will interpret things as he/she sees it. I don't think any amount of education is going to help those rare instances when judges enter the show ring hoping to make a statement....even if erroneous. What makes this latest incident even worse is the judge is a Collie person. If these incidents continue, we may have no choice but to change our Standard.

*Marcia Keller, Marnus**

1. I've been a CCA member since 1946, first litter whelped in 1945. I've made 2 sable to blue breedings when I couldn't find a tri male suitable for the blue bitch.

2. I've been licensed to judge Collies since 1965. Have judged all across the country and in Canada...judged the National twice.

3. I first attended the CCA National in 1947 and first exhibited in 1953. Since 1968, have been awarded BOS, WB, Best Stud Dog, Best Brood Bitch, Best Puppy and Best of Breed.

4. A Standard of Perfection. Who would want to breed to a Standard of Acceptability?

5. Yes, I think I now appreciate the Standard, the way it was written and what it says much more than I did when I started.

6. No objection.

7. If the dog was spotted like a Dalmatian, it would bother me. But so would a rusty, orange tinted tricolor. Type is the important thing. Color and markings are way down on the list of considerations.

8. Genotype. It has the same genetic makeup as a sable, just modified by the merling factor.

9. Little. Emphasis in the Standard is on head, expression and outline.

10. Definitely not.

11. No. Type is what's important for the ring and for breeding stock.

12. If you are a breeder you need to know if a sable is a sable merle to know what to expect in a litter. In the ring it should make no difference.

13. No change. Sable merles can win under the present standard if their type is good. Just educate the judges to

judge on type and not be concerned with whether the exhibit is sable or sable merle.

14. Not in favor of change.

15. Changing the Standard could result in many more sable to blue breedings, invariably resulting in more sables with blue eyes. This was certainly not the goal of the founders of this breed.

16. It's hard for me to believe that any breeder would make a breeding specifically to get sable merles.

17. Yes, and I believe that would be a setback for the breed.

18. Judges don't have to know if a dog is a sable or a sable merle. Sometimes you can tell by looking at them and sometimes not. We should instruct judges to judge on type. It's not their job to figure out the genetics of an exhibit.

Ron Keller, Marnus

1. I've been a CCA member since 1960, first collie litter whelped in 1955. We've made 2 sable to blue breedings when we couldn't find a tri male suitable for the blue bitch. Nice sable merle with blue eye. Did not keep it.

2. Not licensed. Have done numerous sweeps.

3. I first attended the CCA National in 1958 and first exhibited in 1965. Since then, have been involved with all of our dogs, some being awarded BOS, WB, Best Stud Dog, Best Brood Bitch, Best Puppy and Best of Breed.

4. A Standard of Perfection. Who would want to breed to a Standard of Acceptability? Definitely the blueprint we should all follow.

5. Yes, I think I now appreciate the Standard, the way it was written and what it says much more than I did when I started.

6. No objection.

7. If the dog was spotted like a Dalmatian, it would bother me. But so would a rusty, orange tinted tricolor. Type is the important thing. Color and markings are way down on the list of considerations.

8. Genotype. It has the same genetic makeup as a sable, just modified by the merling factor.

9. Little. Emphasis in the Standard is on head, expression and outline.

10. Definitely not.

11. No. Type is what's important for the ring and for breeding stock.

12. If you are a breeder you need to know if a sable is a sable merle to know what to expect in a litter. In the ring it should make no difference.

13. No change. Sable merles can win under the present standard if their type is good. Just educate the judges to judge on type and not be concerned with whether the exhibit is sable or sable merle.

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Grace Kosub, Vanity

1. I joined CCA in 1967, and my first litter probably came during the next year. I have never bred just for color, so naturally I have had sable merles in several litters.

2. I have been licensed to judge Collies for 18 years.

3. I have attended countless CCA specialties over the years, as an exhibitor as well as a CCA mentor.

4. I absolutely hold the Collie standard as a standard of perfection for the breed. I do not feel that any part of the standard should be considered 'acceptable', or as a 'suggestion'. Our standard is one of the oldest and most beautifully written of any standard that I have read. It tells us exactly how our breed should look and move. It is not confusing or lacking information necessary for the breeder or judge. The last change to our standard was in 1977 when the description of single tracking was added. In my opinion the change that we are now discussing would be frivolous.

5. I do not believe that my perception of the correct Collie has changed over the years. However, I do believe, considering many of the dogs that are currently winning, that the perception of many breeders and judges has changed. The current trend seems to be a more 'fancy' Collie, incorrectly built. (Probably more information than necessary for this question...sorry)

6. Which class the dog is entered in is of no importance to me.

7. None.

8. A genotype. Simply the product of combining the sable gene with the blue gene.

9. The 1910 English standard states that 'color and markings are immaterial'. Yet this standard also says that eye color should be 'brown except in the case of blue merles'. In contrast to the English standard, the CCA standard from this same time, has no mention of the blue merle coat nor any mention of the blue eye. So in answer to your question, I don't believe that the concept of blue eyes on a sable was ever a consideration, in 1910 or now.

10. Absolutely not. See answer to question 9.

11. No.

12. Yes, outside our own breeders and judges I think there is little if any knowledge or understanding of the difference between a sable and a sable merle.

13. I would not consider making a change to our standard for any reason. As stated above, I believe it is one of the very best and clear cut 'in the book'.

14. I am in favor of no changes to the standard.

15.a It will only confuse the issue. b. We will end up with a conglomeration of 'odd' colors and will be asked many many more times to change the standard to accommodate these colors. c NO! d. I think it must be put to rest once and for all.

16. No. I believe that color is the last thing to consider in a breeding.

17. I believe that the acceptance of the blue eye on the sable merle is the primary issue involved in this discussion. While I personally have no problem with a sable merle in the ring, I can not truly appreciate the expression on a sable dog with blue eyes, and since I feel that expression, eye shape and placement are crucial to our standard, I would most likely not place a blue eyed sable merle.

It is difficult enough to educate judges on our breed as it is. For the most part multi breed judges just don't understand the importance of the Collie head, eye and expression, they do not understand the difference in how a Collie single tracks as opposed to some other breeds and they surely don't understand all of our current colors. Why muddy the waters by adding more confusing information. As an aside, at this years Westminster Kennel Club, the Collie judge completely ignored a beautiful white Collie. Color confusion?

*Carmen Leonard, Lisara**

1. Have been a member of the Collie Club of America for approximately 40 years.

Whelped our first litter in 1973

If memory serves me correctly, have only bred one litter with sable merles---beautiful sable merle puppy with two bright blue eyes.

2. Am currently licensed to judge Collies and Shetland Sheepdogs. Have judged specialties and all breed shows and have judged our National Specialty.

3. Have attended and exhibited at our National Specialty. Collies we have owned and/or bred have won Winners and above on several occasions.

4. I regard our Standard as the description of the ideal collie --- a blueprint of our goal as breeders. No dog is perfect but we wish to breed towards this blueprint rather than to change the blueprint to accept that which we might have bred .

5. I continue to perceive our Standard as my guide in my quest to breed the ideal collie.

6. I have no problem with a sable merle being exhibited in the Open Sable and White class. The name of the class does not imply genetic composition only appearance. However, the sable merle should have dark eyes as required by our standard for that coloration.

7. The amount of importance I would place on merle patterning or shading on a quality entry would depend on the impact that pattern or shading would have on the appearance of the dog. Sometimes, the pattern or shading "muddies" the sable coloration in a way that is not attractive at all because the coat does not look rich or clean. Same would apply to judging blue merles. Sometimes, the markings on a blue merle leave something to be desired. These markings can sometime have an impact on expression, outline, etc. The shadings on a blue merle can also have an impact on its appearance.

8. It is a genotype----it is a genetic composition which may or may not be visually expressed.

9. I do not believe that the authors of our standard were trying to give us a genetics lesson---the authors were merely describing the appearance of the various colors they felt exemplified an ideal collie.

10. No. Bright blue eyes on a sable colored dog does not fit the description in our standard on expression.

11. No. I should be cognizant of the genetic makeup of this sable merle as it relates to color in addition to its other qualities or lack thereof. Therefore, the decision to breed this sable merle, blue eyes or dark eyes, would not be made on the basis of its being a sable merle. If I kept a sable merle with blue eyes, I would not exhibit it, no matter how beautiful I might think it is in other respects, because it would not fit the standard's description of proper expression.

12. I think that there is some confusion among some non collie breeder judges as to what a sable merle looks like. In my opinion, these judges should concentrate on the appearance of the collie and its conformation to our standard, including expression and richness of color, and not try to figure out the genetic makeup of the dog.

13. I think the standard has served us well for many years and can continue to do so as is. There are blue eyed sable merles being exhibited and quite a few that have completed their titles. There has been so much discussion on this subject that, at some specialties, one almost felt that the sable merle was being rewarded because it was a sable merle rather than in spite of it.

14. I think the description in our standard of a sable and white collie gives the sable merle enough recognition as long as the sable merle has dark eyes. I feel that the standard is a visual standard and should not be dealing with the genetics of how one achieves this visual perfection. It is up to us breeders to figure that out.

15. a. no b. to allow the inclusion of blue eyes for a sable would pave the way for the exhibition of many more sable merles than are currently exhibited and destroy the quest for the beautiful expression that is so important to our breed. c. No d. Only to reiterate that our standard should remain as is

16. I don't think any of us do a sable to blue breeding hoping that the best puppy is a sable merle anymore than any of us do a blue to blue breeding hoping that the best puppy is a double dilute. I believe that my answer to this question reinforces the need to keep the standard as is.

17. Yes, I feel we will have even more blue eyed sable merles being exhibited and accepted and that would be a detriment to the beautiful expression that we collie breeders prize.

18. Color should not be a priority in judging. There is no need to explain the other odd colors either. A harlequin has vivid colors but usually looks like a brightly colored blue merle, a cryptic blue should be shown in the class for its predominant color (again, the classes are for visual color not genetic composition), a maltese will look faded, and I don't think I have ever seen a bi-blue collie.

My goodness, if we were to describe every possible shade and color pattern, our standard could turn into a book. The judge is not judging the genetic composition of the exhibit, only its appearance.

Barbara Linder, Donnybrooke

1. I have been a member for 43 years. I whelped my first litter in 1965. It was a blue merle to blue merle breeding. Absolutely!

2. Yes, I have been licensed to judge collies for 10 years and judged sweeps for 30.

3. I have attended 40 CCA's and have exhibited and won at many.

4. The standard describes perfection and is the bible of our breed.

5. NO

6. Sable merles are covered in the standard and are considered sables.

7. I would penalize the sable merle only to the extent that the markings detracted from expression.

8. It's both. It's a genotype because it can produce sables, sable merles and blues. It's also a shade of sable.

9. They gave us four colors and instructed us to have no preference between them.

10. They told us that the desired eye was dark, except in blue merles.

11. No, correct expression is the name of the game. I would not change one decision.

12. I don't believe that lack of integrity has anything to do with it. It's a lack of knowledge. Why do they have to identify sable merles at all?

13. I don't believe that the standard needs to be changed. Instead, breed to it.

14. I am not in favor of a standard change.

15. No Answer

16. I would hope not. Its not producing any particular color, but quality that's important.

17. Absolutely. It will encourage breeders to want to push blue eyed sables. Not just merle or flecked, but totally blue.

18.No, this is the collie standard, not the sheltie standard [or any other breed]. If the judge doesn't know the difference, we shouldn't be giving them entries or assignments

or respect. They are to judge our breed, by our standard not their interpretation of it.

Tom, I was in Florida, sorry it was so late. I am at Carole's this week end [judged Midwest]. By the way, my Best of Variety [rough] just happened to be a sable merle "Ch. Headline Soldier of Light" [son of your Best of Variety smooth at CCA].

Ed and Fran McNamee, Tarawood

1. Ed & I have been members of the CCA since 1960. We had our first litter in 1957. Yes, we owned a sable merle bitch who we bred to our mahogany champion and had 1 blue and 6 mahogany pups.

2. Ed has been judging Collies for 43 years, since 1966 and Fran has been judging since 1995.

3. Yes Yes, we have attended the CCA Nationals and exhibited.

4. We definitely hold the Collie Standard as the standard of perfection or the ideal Collie, and it is always in our thoughts, words, and deeds throughout our breeding program. We constantly refer to the Illustrated Collie and have given it to many judges and newcomers. We believe it is almost impossible to follow the written standard without matching it with the Illustrated Standard.

5. Emphatically NO. We do not believe in the fads that have gone by every 10 years.

6. I am not sure, I never showed mine in the sable class because I knew what color he was, and named him such that everyone would know what he was from the name. Open sable would be a class I suppose for the S/Ms but I would prefer seeing them in either a "Merle" class or their own "Sable Merle" class.

7. We have no feeling regarding the Sable Merle being in the Open Sable Class. We are judging the whole dog and not the color. One of the finest bitches Ed has judged was Ch. Edenrock Pretty Woman a sable merle. We would place no importance on the patterning or shading unless it detracts from the overall picture and expression. This would apply to all colors.

8. Sable merle is a genotype. The blue merle is also a genotype but a color. Let the geneticists fight over whether it is a genotype or a color. If a sable merle looks like a sable it is a sable, if the blue looks like a blue than it is a Blue and if a Tri looks like a tri, it is a tri. All these colors have shadings. Should all these shadings have classes? (Ridiculous)

9. None. The authors of the standard placed much importance on expression. Look how many times expression and balance are mentioned in the standard and because of this we believe all judges should be given Lorraine Stills Illustrated Collie. The whole dog is what is important. Without a picture in front of you it is impossible to picture the ideal Collie. Also, everyone should remember that the CCA, after much hard work, squabbles and years of studying, came up with the Illustrated Collie so that people would be less inclined to deviate from there own interpretation of the standard..

10. Absolutely not. If the blue eye is offensive to the expression it does not go up. In the Australian Shepherd breed they may have one or both eyes blue. Those breeders think it is pretty. In the Collie, one or both eyes blue takes away from expression which is the essence of our breed. Fads, such as, too small an eye or too round an eye are just as incorrect as a blue or speckled eye on a sable merle.

11. As knowledgeable breeders (by not breeding blue to blue or sable merle to sable merle) I would keep or exhibit a sable merle with two dark eyes. It is important that sable merles not be sold to the general public without being spayed or neutered.

12. Absolutely yes

13. We would not change the standard for all of the above. As we have stated before, the standard is about the whole Collie. Regards to color, it is explained in the standard that the Sable color could be from light gold to dark mahogany.

14. No change.

15. a. No. b. Negatively. People would not understand the sable merle and then there could be the problem that a judge could ,therefore, think it a defect. c. Absolutely not. d. Yes, it should be addressed now but it should be made clear that it is not a separate color but a sable with some merling pattern. No matter how you address this there will always be people who refuse to understand.

16. Reputable Collie breeders, either in the past or today, do not make a breeding in hopes that the best puppy would be a sable merle. The English forefathers of our breed had sable merles and were very selective as to how they were bred but they never showed them. According to this answer, and the ones above, we are definitely against changing the standard.

17. I can envision sable merles with blue or merled eyed collies being shown. There are sable merles being shown today who have some blue speckling in the eyes yet the

standard asks for dark eyes in all colors except blue. The blue eye detracts from expression and even in blues a blue eye detracts. Our biggest fear is the novice who is unaware of the effects and color variation from sable merle. When in FL I saw a polka-dotted dark sable merle. It was not a pretty Collie.

18. No. The standard states what colors are acceptable. If the dog is a sable with merling it belongs in the sable class. Any deviation where it did not look like a sable would be distracting and take away from the all over picture, and as judges, would penalize according if it distracts from the whole picture. Don't worry about it. If it looks like a sable it is a sable. Of course not. It is the whole picture that should be stressed - balance, expression and movement.

*Pati Merrill, Merrill's**

1. If so, please elaborate 37 years. 1972 – 1st litter. No breeding experience with the SM.

2. Yes, – collies and juniors – 28 years.

3. Attended 28 nationals, exhibited at 17, judged 2.

4. I believe the Standard is our building plan. “the collie in descriptive and/or measurable terms”.

5. Of course it has changed for me – it takes years of touching, having and seeing virtues to know them, want them and appreciate them – on your own dogs and on the dogs of others.

6. Unless a sable merle is some other color than sable – this is the correct class.

7. I am a judge – a sable is a sable – isn't it? Some in this class will be light, some will be dark, some will be golden, all with markings to match or perhaps in contrast. ANY Patterns? This opens too many doors when any pattern is okay- it is not. If any could mean brindle or speckled, then Odd patterns not associated with the collie are foreign to the breed – we don't want to start with Lassie and end with Spuds McKenzie – do we? I don't see ‘shading’ as meaning a SM collie can be any color,- it should not mean you can bring anything – for example: red roan like an aussie/ Irish Setter red is not a collie color. Let's not pretend it is a collie color and somehow try to forgive it under sable merle wording. Otherwise I will judge all collies the same.

8. Some sable merles show the color(ing), some do not. This is another problem when describing the sable merle as a separate color – it isn't always there. Sable is the visual color, sable merle is the genotype which may or not be

visible. This could be in the same way a tri is a tri – even if it is a white factored tri – similar problem – some heavily marked tris (with white) are not white factored – some tris with very little white are white factored. Which one visually is the white factored tri? How do you define it in words? Are you going to forgive larger appearing or whiter than usual white haws?

9. They listed the colors and made specific reference - there was no preference – no color is favored. I do not want nor do I think all the breeders before me wanted collies with any color that might suggest another breed. That would include any pattern or shading that is foreign to the collie.

10. Let's make this simple. If they pictured it –it would have been there –they didn't/its not there. I take it to mean they did not want it included in the Standard. There are some big HINTS about where blue eyes could exist. SABLE MERLES are not some new found color so let's not act as if the founders and all those authors along the way just forgot.

11. Without specific language if I had a good one – I would keep it whether I could show it or not. With specific language to allow the blue eye(s) or fleck. I still would weigh out the whole collie and not keep it just because I could show it.

12. In fairness there is no way to determine some sable merles until they are bred – and with the random luck of the genes you may never know. Some sable merles look like pure for sable, some look like tri factored sables, some sables look like sable merles and they are not. So – there is nobody I repeat nobody who has the ability to identify all sable merles visually. That aside – yes, some folks have a deficit of knowledge. Ask a few people what they think you can get from a blue merle to sable merle breeding or a SM to SM breeding. You'll get a surprise what they don't know.

13. How many paragraphs would it take to explain the SM may look like any other sable or they may have merling? Hard to define something not always there.

14. Just as the Standard does not describe white-factored sable, tri or blue and so many other potential “colors” - it does not describe the sable merle. The standard describes the sable. The language is there to allow the SM.

15. a. ‘Understandable’ is not at issue – winning is the issue – The Standard is ageless and should never be changed to reflect the trends of the day. SMs fall under the sable description – they don't need independence.

b. Giving an identity to one of the color variances without restrictions to the limits could bring in colors/patterns not associated with the collie.

c. Same as above - if you can, you will and it will be pushed beyond the very limits of any description – it already is – why give it a license to explode?

d. –The essence is fine. The way the Standard is written there is zilch to stop anyone from keeping a SM. A sable merle with Flecks- a SM with a blue eye- a SM with 2 blue eyes, at a show – might not win. If you show a SM, the color may confuse some judges – meaning that SM might have a hard time winning or might not win at all – I am not for changing the Standard to win. Why should we change our Standard to allow more to win or to prop up judges lacking Collie knowledge?

16. Some hope their best puppy would NOT be a SM as they worry about eye color or extreme body patterns. Others hope it would be a SM so they might get sables, tris, blues, etc in one litter when bred. SM may be a short cut for some – easy way to get lots of colors. – wild as it is – some love the thrill of whatever. Neither should be a reason to change the Standard as they are both personal choices.

17. IF the standard is changed for showing purposes- if blue eye/ eyes are allowed in SMs – then they will be seen more often in the ring – We see sky blue eye(s)/flecks today in Sables(merles) in the ring and in proud ads for major wins – pretty strange as the Standard specifically states – REQUIRED TO MATCH (except in the blue merle) and dark.– The Standard is for those dedicated to the breed, not for the whim of any one person on any one day with any one dog. Conversely for those who dabble, for those who insist they can show everything they keep or for some who judge – Why give any more latitude as we already have breeders and breeder judges who either can't read or thought it was okay to use their artistic leeway to disregard a part of the standard for the sake of a win. And those who have a fit if they don't win!

18. We are talking about the Collie Standard – not about what judges know or don't know.

We have totally disregarded the very nature of the standard – it is not for THEM – it is OURS. It should be guarded by us with extreme care to keep it for the COLLIE. Never should it be changed as a means to make a part acceptable in the show ring. Never should it be changed to absorb any part because that part has become more prevalent or there are those who want it cause they have it! If the standard has to be written to explain to those who do not care to study it and work to understand it - then it will

take books, maybe volumes - not paragraphs and it still will be misunderstood.

The Standard is first and foremost a verbal picture of the ideal. It is:

A call to the breeder to amass the parts and bring them together with the express purpose of making a grand example of what the Standard has set before them as the model.

To address the confusion among judges? – why in the heck are we starting with colors – we have some breeder judges who do not touch heads and never look at the collie head on, many who like cobby dogs, picture only, award for the best groomed, etc - so rectifying confusion in judges has lots more items ahead of the SM issue.

Are we going to re-write the Standard to explain the other 50+ items judges/some breeders haven't been able to absorb from reading the Standard?

Kathy Moll, Deep River

1. Thirty years. 1978. Yes. I have had approximately 10 sable merles in litters over the years. Four have finished championships.

2. I have never applied to judge. I have judged a number of sweepstakes in both collies & shelties.

3. First attended a national in 1979. Have attended and exhibited at many since then. Highest award at a national BOS to BOB.

4. The former, but with latitude for personal interpretation of perfection. However, the standard allows for acceptability also, for example, preference for things such as dark eyes, with blue eyes “acceptable” in blue merles. In addition, some faults are more heavily penalized than others illustrating the standard writers’ understanding of some possible deviations from “perfection” in real life collies.

5. Definitely! The more collies you observe standing & moving and are able to go over at various ages and from various lines, the more you learn. The more you read, attend seminars and listen to experienced collie breeders, the more you learn. The more you raise and watch puppies, the more you learn. The more you read the standard and commit it to memory, the more you learn.

6. Sable merles are sables, and if shown in an open class, should properly be shown in Open Sable. A merle gene in a brown dog does not make it a different color; it's still brown. I, however, have never shown a sable-merle in an Open class.

7. If I were a judge, none.

8. Sable is a brown color gene; merle is not a color gene but an insertion gene that changes color on a black coat by lightening it to gray. On a brown coat, the color may be various shades of brown, but it is still brown.

9. In the earliest 19th century standards for the collie, coat color was apparently not very important. Confusion about the difference between white (double) merles and homozygous white color genetics meant that color headed whites were not in the earliest standards. Even the present standard of 1950 allowing sable & tri headed whites excluded blue headed whites until the last revision in the 1980s. Excluding the white collie, and until recent times, white collies with blue merle heads and markings means to me that lack of genetic information influenced the emphasis or lack of emphasis on color.

10. It's difficult to know whether they thought about this idea at all except to say that they really disliked "yellow" eye color! If I had been one of the people "picturing" the collie I would have been imagining collies with beautiful eye shape, size and placement with blue or brown color as a less important consideration. Yellow eyes would NOT be part of my imaginings. Apparently, from the beginning, blue eyes were acceptable in merles. The excerpt from the 19th century collie standard written in Scotland before there was an American version said what's quoted below. Notice that the writers referred to collies of "mirled colour" not blue "mirle," just "mirle." Doesn't even say that brown eyes are preferred!

"Eyes, of fair size, but not prominent, are placed rather close together, and set obliquely in the head, which gives that cunning foxy expression so characteristic of the breed. Colour, any shade of brown, the darker the better, yellow eyes being a great fault. Dogs of a mirled colour should have a mirled or china eye, and sometimes both eyes are of this colour."

11. Retain for breeding/exhibiting, well, yes & no. I don't like to keep more than 10 personal collies, and really prefer 8. If the individual was superior to its non-sable merle littermates in nearly all ways or had the trait or traits that I did the breeding to solidify, while others in the litter did not, then I would keep that collie. Because I try to keep individuals that I can finish within a reasonable time and then breed later, a sable merle that is otherwise a dog who could contribute might not be kept. The reason would be whether I felt that the collie would run into more than the usual discrimination in the ring because of merling or blue in eyes. Funds are limited for most people, so wasting entry and travel money is a consideration. For example, Mike Billings, whose reputation as a respected

judge is well known, said of my sable-merle rough dog that she really wanted to give him the 4 pt. major, but that she only gave him reserve because she wasn't sure about one eye being blue and the other brown. (Our standard does say that except for "blue" merles, the eyes are "required" to be matched in color.) This happened last year. After 9 points and 5 major reserves, I gave up on finishing him. On the other hand, he is the sire of my sable-merle smooth champion who is #1 breed & all-breed (most systems) for 2008 as well as several other beautiful champions. It's a shame that he will never be a champion himself!

12. No more so than in any aspect of our breed. You're either serious and do your homework continually in all areas, or you don't! Since there is a DNA test readily available now to identify the merle gene in all breeds, the issue of a sable-merle who "looks" like a sable or a cryptic blue that "looks" like a tri can be identified, and certainly should be if the genetic identity is in question and the intention is to breed the dog.

13. I am in favor of a change in the standard. I believe that the revision could be accomplished by omitting the word "blue" before the word "merle" in the eye color section. A brief addition to the sable coat color section would take 5 words. The changes would allow judges to reward deserving sable-merle collies as the closest to the standard without violating the standards insistence on matching eye color or a merling pattern or lack of same.

I have on one occasion had a judge ask if my smooth bitch was a sable merle before awarding her a major. She was a puppy and a homozygous sable with no merle gene. I told him she was not; he seemed relieved and went to get the winner's ribbon. Such incidents are impediments to rewarding the collie that, in a particular judge's opinion, is closest to the standard. Keeping a beautiful collie that you can BOTH breed and show is important and beneficial to our breed. The reason is essentially the same, as I presume it was, for the addition of white collies with blue heads & markings in the last revision!

14. Revisions for clearly including sable-merles:

Eyes... Except in merles they are required to be matched in color... In merles dark brown eyes are preferable... The word "blue" has been omitted twice in this section.

Color... The "Sable and White" is predominantly sable (with or without merling) varying from a fawn sable color... Five words have been added and a change in placement of parenthetical.

15. Asking ourselves these same questions about the standard change including blue marked white collies really answers all of these. Presumably the change was

made to correct an unjust prejudice – always a good reason IMO.

16. Thoughtful breeders do breedings in hopes of attaining excellence in appearance, temperament and health. It's very difficult to say what breeders, present or past, "hope(d)" for in regard to color. The fact that sable-merles are subject to prejudice would likely keep most people from "hoping" for a sable merle, just as they likely didn't "hope" for blue headed whites before the standard made mention of them. Why ask for trouble and make your exhibiting life difficult?

17. It will likely make them more common since blue eye color is a matter of chance in merles and not design. However, since the standard asks that you judge according to how ALL aspects of eye affect expression, blue eyes are one aspect to consider. Frankly, eye size, shape & set which CAN be controlled through careful breeding are more important to me than random blue color. Yet I have seen judges, even breeder judges, reward eyes on the sides of heads, tiny round eyes, etc. rather than put up a sable merle collie with dark blue in its eyes that IMO had a beautiful, correct eye. The example that jumps immediately to my mind was a collie that was not my breeding, did not have my breeding behind it and was not owned by me, who was placed last in a specialty class twice in one weekend. This was apparently based on the eye color since both judges made a fair "production" of pulling open the collie's eyes. This was a beautiful collie with many virtues that we appear to be losing in collies. Fortunately, this collie eventually finished under Doris Werdermann with a BOB at an 80+ entry specialty.

18. By omitting the word blue twice and adding 5 words. While it may not undo confusion completely, it will certainly help those judges who return to the table to check the standard before giving awards!

Do we want color to be a priority in the judging of Collies? It's for the very reason that we do NOT want color to be a priority that sable merles – normal collies that are brown rather than black - should not be discriminated against. Two recently publicized incidents simply join the MANY previous incidents of discrimination against normal sable-merle collies that occur in our breed with regularity, not to mention the not so distant-past writings of Annie Rogers Clark.

Because the harlequin gene is not common, while a merle gene in sables is much more so, the former need not be addressed as the latter should be. Harlequins are blue merles with an additional pattern gene that only appears as enhanced white with larger color spots. Harlequin does not appear as a phenotype without the merle gene.

I owned one that Ginny Holtz gave RB in smooths at the CCA national in 1999 and is the dam of 11 smooth and rough champions. I bred one (a daughter of the first) that Joe Reno gave smooth WB to at the 2003 national. They are blue merles both in genotype & phenotype.

Because a true cryptic would be shown based on how it looked (i.e. if it has any merling, it's a merle, if not it's a tri color) for judging purposes, there's no need to address that. The 2008 genetic identification of the merle pattern in dogs indicates that expression of merle is controlled by "genetic tail" length and is not controllable through selection.

I think "maltese" & "bi-colors" are sufficiently rare to need no address.

Collies should be judged according to phenotype. If we allow for genotype then infertile collies, those with non-visible genetic health defects, etc. would be penalized – that's not a possibility. Because sable-merles are at least as commonplace as color headed whites, they need addressing!

Joe Purkhiser, Caribe*

1. CCA since 1965. First litter – 1967. No sable merles.
2. I have been judging Collies since 1977
3. We have attended many Nationals and exhibited at several...judged one.
4. It is the mark that all breeders should strive to attain and judges should use it as the bar to judge from.
5. Not a bit since we added the blue headed white.
6. Absolutely should not happen. The Standard recognizes 4 colors & should be judged that way until the CCA meets the challenge to sanctify or eliminate the Sable Merle.
7. Extreme
8. For a judge, it is a color. For a breeder is a genotype that must be dealt with.
9. Having known those who revised it last, I think they were very diligent in their appraisal.
10. Absolutely not...what an abomination.
11. No.
12. A lack of integrity in those who sell or show them as Sables. A lack of knowledge in most breeders...not all, but most.
13. Were it possible, Sable Merle should be a DQ. But, that is not going to happen, so it must be dealt with.

14. My honest position would be to add a disqualification: Sable Merle
15. When you open a Standard, any Standard, you always run the risk of adding the present day fads. These things must be undertaken only by serious, objective people.
16. I cannot believe that that is true. No.
17. It absolutely will and if that happens the breed should be renamed because it will no longer be a Collie.
18. I'm not sure if your "well known and successful handler" properly interpreted whatever comments were made or not. I spend about as much time around Collie Judges from outside the breed as anyone and have not been questioned much except on the sable merle. I truly believe that there is no education program that will work unless and until the CCA addresses this problem with integrity and a deep feeling for where this breed came from and how it got here. If and when the CCA takes such a position, I suggest that the education begin with today's breeders.

Martha Ramer, Society

1. I have been a member of the CCA for 30+ years. I have bred litters that had sable merles and have owned and/or finished sable merles with no difficulty.
2. I am currently provisionally licensed to judge rough and smooth Collies and Ltd Junior Showmanship.
3. I have attended many National Specialties both as a spectator and an exhibitor. Since 1991, I have not missed a National Specialty. I have bred or owned dogs that have been WD, BOS, BOSBOB, and numerous AOM.
4. The Collie standard is a standard of perfection. The standard is something that I strive to attain in my breeding program. Others that have gone before me, have put many more years of thought into the making of the standard. Theirs is not to be questioned.
5. Yes, the way I perceive the standard has changed. I have more respect for the standard that I did in the beginning. My interpretation of the standard has grown and become more clear. While no dog is perfect to the standard, it should not be taken lightly.
6. Sable merles in the sable class have been happening. I finished a sable merle dog from the Open Sable class. There is no need for change.
7. The affect of the merling on a Collie would be no different to me in open sable or any other class. If the merling affected the expression of the dog, then it would be judged accordingly. If the merling pattern were distracting overall, it would affect me the same as a blue merle pattern. The expression is a very important part of the standard. The body markings should affect the dog to the extent it affects the overall impression of the dog.
8. Sable merle is two dominant colors. Sable and Blue. It cannot be a single color because it is two colors. In my opinion the sable merle is a pari-color in effect. The Collie has 4 color genes. Sable and blue are dominant. Tri and white are recessive.
9. I'm not sure how much importance the authors of the standard placed on color. I would think not as much as the hard to get traits like the head and the body type. As markings also do not figure in a decision about a particular dog, neither should the color.
10. I do not think that the authors were picturing blue eyes in any dogs. I believe they did even want blue eyes in the beginning in the blue merles.
11. A standard change to allow sable merles would not have altered my decisions to keep or exhibit a particular dog or involve it in a breeding program. If I felt that the best breeding for a particular animal were to produce a sable merle, or that the best off spring from a particular breeding were sable merle, it would not stop me from doing the breeding or keeping the pup.
12. I'm not sure about integrity, but there is a definite lack of knowledge. There also is a lack of respect for the standard and those that came before us. Although most breeders go through a stage where they think they know everything, when they are around long enough, they usually realize that they never will know everything. The people requesting the standard change are stuck in the know it all stage.
13. There is NO benefits to breed to changing the standard. The standard is a standard of perfection and excellence and should be respected that way. Nothing in our standard prevents us from showing and finishing all colors including sable merles.
14. I am NOT in favor of a standard change.
15. a. No, it will not make the standard more understandable and ageless.
- b. The affect on the future of the breed will allow more liberties in the ring and indiscriminant breedings to take place.
- c. No, this is not in the best interest both short term and long term for the breed.
- d. Absolutely nothing is threatened in our breed that

adding the sable merle to the standard will help. The threats to our breed are the same to all breeds. Animal legislation, animal rights, and health issues, none of which have a thing to do with color.

16. Of course breeders of today or the past did not do a breeding hoping for a sable merle pick of the litter. In the past, they probably did not even do the breeding at all if sable merles would result. Today, we all strive to pick the mate for our dogs/bitches that are the best match to achieve our ideal idea of the standard of perfection. We try to breed sables to tris or to other sables and blues to tris or at least tri factored sables (all with or without white factoring). Sometimes the best dog for a blue is a sable or visa versa. And sometimes its is a sable merle. But we all hope that our pick will be a recognized color so that we may breed it down the line with greater ease.

17. Yes, I do feel it will be commonplace to see blue eyes in the sable class or sable dogs period. It will be a shame because it detracts from the expression we all look for. Unfortunately the majority of the dog shows are all breed shows. All breed judges do not put the same emphasis on expression as they should or as breeder judges. We can educate them as much as we want, but they are judging many breeds and do not take the time or have the experienced eye to recognize the correct true Collie expression. We already see that with brown eyes. This will reward incorrect expression and create a common look in our breed.

18. I feel that we should not address other colors just the same as we should not address the sable merles. I agree that the sable merle question will no doubt raise some confusion among the all breed judges. As it is, we have a standard that is much longer and more detailed than most other standards.

I believe the statement that Tom Coen released to the judges, is a perfect explanation of how to judge the sable merle. If the dogs markings or eyes bother the judge and prohibit him/her from evaluating it properly, then the judge should not award the dog.

There are many people that insist on a full white color and white front legs on a Collie. Some also insist on a large white tip on the tail. For the people that judge our breed that want those full white collars, changing the standard to say that they can accept dogs without white collars, will not change their opinion: if they want a white collar they want a white collar.

We cannot dictate the judges personal preferences, we can only teach them our standard of perfection. It is our choice who enter our dogs under. No one forces us to

make entries. If we mandate sable merles in our standard, we cannot change the opinions of the judges that do not like sable merles. We cannot get inside their heads. There will always be another dog in the ring to select. We keep records of judges and what their likes and dislikes are. This subject is merely something to add to list.

I feel that the majority that are pushing for the sable merle to be added to the standard are people that have not done their homework. I also wonder if they were mentored in their early years. Breeding dogs is a rewarding and yet sometimes thankless passion that we have. There are bumps in the road and hurdles along the way. How many times has the experience breeder done a breeding that didn't turn out. You go back to square one and start again. There are disappointments along this road. But it's the right road. Shortcuts are not always the right way to reach your goal. This subject is a shortcut that should be avoided.

*Joe Reno, Hi-Crest**

1. I have been a member for almost 36 years. I have bred and finished 4 sable merles, 2 with a small fleck of blue in one eye, barely detectable, the other 2 dark eyed.
2. I have been judging collies since 1994, have judged bitches at the CCA National in 2003.
3. Yes, I have attended and exhibited at numerous CCA Nationals.
4. I think of the collie standard as the ideal, the foundation for helping me create the picture of the perfect collie I strive for in my breeding program and as I judge the breed
5. No.
6. I feel they appear as a sable and should and could be shown in the open sable class.
7. Not much importance at all.
8. As a breeder ,the sable merle is more a genotype. As a judge, it is more phenotype
9. I don't think there is an over emphasis on color in our standard
10. I think perhaps they were. Most times a sable with blue eyes is very distracting and cannot possibly fit the ideal standard when evaluating expression.
11. Rarely would I keep a sable merle with blue eyes. In a rare circumstance I might for breeding if it were so virtuous and perhaps the only get from a certain bitch. I would not show it.

12. I don't think they need to be identified in the showing and they can't always be. I have had light tri factored sables as 6- 12 mo puppies being identified as sable merles, and they clearly were not. (myself knowing from the litter box)

13. I am happy to see the standard stay as it is.

14. N/A

15. N/A

16. I don't think so...when I do a breeding, and get sable merles, I am always holding my breath hoping that if one of my favorites is a sable merle, that it has dark eyes!

17. I don't like a blue eye on a sable. As a judge I have put up sable dogs with a blue fleck or a partial blue eye, it really depends on how it strikes you. I had a beautiful sable smooth with 2 blue eyes and could not do anything with it.

18. We need to leave the standard as is, sable merles finish and even some with blue eyes if shown in the right circumstances.

Linda Robbins, Gambit

1. I have been a member of the CCA for about 27 years. I had my first litter in 1979, while I was still in high school.

2. I have always been comfortable with breeding blues and sables together, and have owned many sable merles that have resulted from these breedings. I have shown and finished many SM's (7-8 at least) and used even more SM's in my breeding program throughout the years. I have never made color that important in my dogs vs. the quality of dog I could breed.

3. I am currently fully licensed to judge collies. I have in the three or so years that I have been judging collies encountered many Sable Merles and when merited I have awarded them the winners or higher.

4. I have tried to attend as many National specialties over the years as I could. Sometimes I just go to watch and mingle, while other times I have shown my dogs. I have some success on that level winning different placements, from class wins to Best of Breed.

5. I think of the standard as an Ideal of what the collie should look like. A perfect dog could not really be bred. Not only because it is an unobtainable goal but also because the standard, as detailed as it, still leaves room for individual interpretation. I think of it more like painting a picture. If the standard had meant to describe one kind

of perfection then it would be more like a paint by numbers picture. With the exact wording instead of "medium size" (for the eye) and or a "trifle long in proportion to the height" (for the length of back). Instead I think it is meant to let a breeder use his own experiences and taste to paint their picture of the collie, while using the standard as a guideline. Saying this I still think that it is important to stay close to the ideal of the standard, in other words paint a collie that looks like a collie not like an abstract or cartoon version. "With no part of the collie ever seems to be out of proportion to any other part."

Once I got over the novice stage I learned to read the standard and applied it to a living breathing animal. I have always stayed real close to my ideal of how I think the standard describes the collie. I have a clear vision of what I want in a collie and what areas that I want to emphasize in my breeding program.

I think that the collie as a breed has changed. I think that as breeders of different generations come of age and take their turns in interpreting the standard and breeding the next generation, the breed moves in a slightly new direction. Some of this is the breed maturing, the leveling out of quality. You have more individual dogs that are of higher quality but have fewer dogs that stand above the average, as one of the greats. I have also watched the breed go through what I call fads. These are generations where the breeders tend to focus on one area, sometime to the extreme and sometime this can be to the detriment of the breed. Sometimes these fads self correct and the breed comes back to a more moderate place.

6. I think the standard states the sables as "predominantly sable (a fawn sable color of varying shades from light gold to dark mahogany)". I think this accurately describes all dogs that appear sable including Sable Merles. The standard never mentions anything about what genes the dog might carry; it concentrates on the visual appearance of the dog. I strongly feel that the Sable Merle is predominantly sable and should be treated as one and be welcome in the open sable class. I also doubt that AKC would give us another color class, especially for a dog that is not a noticeable different color like a tri or blue is.

7. When I judge the dog, the best one wins. I don't consider coloring as that important. The standard does not tell us that color faults are heavily penalized. I could just as easily have a reddish tri or a straw colored sable or a darkly marked blue. I would still have to consider the dog's over all quality against the other dogs present. I have so far never been distracted by an "ugly marked dog" whether it was blue, tri, sable or sable merle.

8. I believe that the merle gene whether on a blue or sable

dog works like bleach. What I mean by this is that the merle gene is a dilute gene. It attaches to another color gene. In the blue it attaches to a tri gene and in the sable it attaches to the sable gene. It causes the color to "bleach" out or become more diluted in the animal. Something like if you got bleach on your clothes and some of the color bleached out where the bleach came in contact with the material. But the color stays intact in the areas that the bleach did not touch. Thus the patterned affect.

It is a gene that can be easily predicted and safely used in a breeding program. When a dog only inherits one merle gene it is a completely normal dog.

9. The standard tells us quite clearly what areas they want the breeders and judges to put the most emphasis on. And color is not list or mentioned as very high on this list Other then stating the different recognized colors it does not say very much more on this subject.

10. I'm not sure what the authors of the standard understood about the Sable Merle. From the pictures of dogs from that error we see very few blues. So I doubt there were very many Sable Merles. And how many of them had blue eyes? I think if they had the intent to completely eliminate that color they would have mentioned them as highly undesirable in our standard. I do believe that they had very little understanding of how the merle gene worked and some breeders thought of them as defective. I'm sure the accidental producing of double dilute was a frightening experience for the early breeders. I also believe that many of the early breeders would have eliminated the Blue Merles if they could. I think that color was added to appease the breeders that did breed and fancy that color. And because the blue eyes were a natural occurrence in blues they allowed the blue eyes on blues. I think if our founders knew what we knew about the way color is inherited they would have added the Sable Merle. Since there is no argument that you can make that allowed the blues but not the Sable Merle.

At one time if I had a Sable Merle with one or more blue eyes it would influence my decision to keep that dog. But I never had a problem if both eyes were dark as I believe those dogs are already included in the standard.

Then in one litter I had the pick, a very nice male with a blue eye. I decided to place him as a pet. But due to a thankful circumstance, this puppy was returned just one day after he left. I just could not part with him again. As a small breeder I had to keep my dog numbers within a certain amount, I had to think hard about using up one precious spot for this puppy. What would I do with a male that I might not ever be able to show? Keeping males as just stud dogs is hard nowadays. With the small breeders

more predominant, keeping any stud dogs is hard enough to do with out the benefit of getting to show them as well. What to do when the best puppy in their litter is a SM with a blue eye? How do you justify keeping them. So the pick of your litter ends up in a pet home, just because of an eye color. (an eye color that the breeder has no control over). Certainly it could be a great loss to the breeder and maybe the collie world too.

So this dog grew up here. When I felt the time was right I showed him. He finished quickly with 4 majors mostly from breeder judges. Several judges made a motion in the ring that they had seen the blue eye, but put him up despite it. He was a very good dog. But it was his ability to produce where he proved his self worth. In three years he earned a ROM with many of his kids winning top honors at the National at specialties and groups all around the country and in Canada. This dog not only has made his mark in my kennel but was an influential stud dog for many other breeders. It would have been a great loss to all of us if I had just found another pet home for him. Because of an eye color! Most importantly he proved that Sable Merles can be a valued part of a breeding program.

This dog was Ch. Gambit's Trick of Light ROM.

12. I think that there use to be more issues with breeders not knowing what they had. This would create a problem if they later chose to breed an unknown SM to a Blue or another SM. As more breeders use and accept the SM the unknown factor goes down. As breeders sell puppies on spay and neuter contracts less of the uneducated general public are involved in breeding. This decreases the chance of accidentally producing double Merles.

This is the only area where I think SM have a disadvantage over Blue Merles, that to the untrained eye they can be missed. This can also work in their favor as it they are not a significantly different color. That begs the question then, why do we have such prejudice against them?

I think we can never have enough quality dogs available to us, no matter what the color! Making the SM more legitimate would open a whole new world to breeders, at least to those who don't already embrace this somewhat controversial color. How many good dogs are in pet homes simply because of an eye color? What a loss. Especially an eye color that a breeder can't control. Getting blue eyes on your Merles does not make you less of a breeder. Unlike a yellow or light eye, breeders can't breed to improve this. And should not have their dogs faulted for it. I do understand that a blue eye can be distracting on the collie expression but let each dog and his eye color pass the expression test on his merit. Think about how our breed

could have lost some valued and beautiful dogs if we had not included the Blue Merle in our allowed colors. What argument is there for not allowing the SM that could not be said about the Blues?

I think that the SM is already included in the standard under the color sable. I would like that to be more generally accepted amongst breeders and judges. It just needs to be announced as so. I don't propose that we change our standard and add the color SM as a separate allowed color.

Even though AKC does have a check mark under color for the SM, I think this is for the purpose of breeding and that the color should be specified on the dog's registration papers. A judge does not judge a dog's breeding status, he/she is just judging the dog that is presented to them for the two minutes or so they have to judge that dog. They really have no business judging the dog on what genes he/she carries. Whether it is his/her color or the fact he/she might be a carrier for some genetic disorder. A judge should just evaluate the dog on his presented virtues.

In my perfect world we would get over our unrealistic, prehistoric and unfair prejudice against the SM. We would all embrace our unashamed color and even go so far as to add one or both blue eye being allowed on the SM. Give the SM the same status as the much loved Blues.

15) I have no problems in changing a standard when a standard that is almost a hundred years old is in need of some minor updating or has vague areas such as the collie standard has. I think that we need to add the SM, just clarify a long misunderstanding and missed opportunity in our standard. I do think that it would be better for our breed to allow these useful and valuable dogs to have a real status.

I think the whole part of the eye color in our standard is very vague. It states "Except for the Blue Merle they are required to be matched in color." This actually makes it more acceptable for the SM to have two blue eyes. That it's possibility a lesser fault because they at least match in color. It also never calls or names the color as china or blue. It just warned against not being dark enough or having a yellow ring. What kind of dark eye-dark brown or is dark blue okay. I do believe the time is upon us to get this resolved, this constant debating is causing more division among our breeders. Resolving this would allow a more uniformed and comprehensive ideal of what breeders should strive for.

16) I know several breeders that list the SM as one of their favorite colors. They love the softness and color that they have. They also like the fact that they can produce all the

colors in their litters. I remember one breeder that was breeding and showing when I first got into collies that use to call the SM gene the pretty gene. Mostly because it seemed the SM was more often than not your pick puppy. I personally love my SM. That said I always hope for two dark eyes whether it's a SM or a Blue I await for the eyes to open and see if I got lucky. Because I believe it's only luck if you get two dark eye on any Merle.

17. I think there already are a few being shown. If they are accepted I believe that more breeders will keep and show the blue eyed SM. But we will not be inundated with them. Just like the blues, a lot of breeders will still not keep and show a blue eyed dog. This is a personal decision. As a judge I personally don't see that many blue eyed dogs. Whether this is a selection that happens in the litter, or if there is a way by not using a many blue eyed dogs in your breeding program you can cut down your chances in getting blue eyes? I don't know. But I don't see the blue eyed dogs as being a problem in our breed. Right now I think we have more pressing issues that haunt our breed. But that is for another discussion.

18. Like the blue eyed dogs, I have not personally seen a Maltese or bi-blue. I have seen what I might call a harlequin and I have personally owned a cryptic blue. Like it was stated before in a previous question I believe the standard does not put a lot of emphasis on color. I think breeders and judges should be given a chance to judge these dogs if they come up. Cryptic blues are not a fault and are again a natural occurring color. As for the other colors they are so rare and certainly not in the same category of acceptance and abundance as the SM. Many problem colors kind of weed themselves out when they are not put up by judges. Like the straw colored sables I used to see, they were just harder to win on. So breeders bred away from that color. We also don't have as many mahogany sables anymore even though this was a much loved color by some breeders. We could be in danger of losing that color all together. Right now we need to address the SM. It is a question and discussion that continues to trouble our breed. And not worry about every what if's and what abouts!

*Shelley Roos, Wickmere**

1, 2. I have been a member of the CCA since 1968, the first year I was eligible. I had previously been active in the Junior Collie Fanciers of America. My first litter was whelped in 1966 although I was involved in breeding before that. In 1966 I had the first bitch registered in my name, bred her and whelped the litter resulting in my first champion (a Working Group-winning Collie). We

made several breedings that resulted in sable merles and finished one.

2. I have been licensed to judge Collies since 1999 and have judged at both Specialty and All-Breed Shows -- including the honor of judging Intersex at the 2007 National Specialty.

3. My first attendance and participation at a CCA National Specialty was in 1968. My father was Show Chair, my mother was Hospitality Chair, and I won the Open Tri-Color Dog class. I handled my mother's dog to Best of Breed at the 1972 National and his daughter to Best In Sweepstakes. When we were actively breeding, I attended the National Specialty every year. Now, I attend less frequently.

4. The Collie standard is of the ideal collie. If it were otherwise, the Breed would quickly resemble any dog, any place -- thereby losing the essence of the breed.

5. My perception of the Collie standard has changed over time -- much as I have. It is dependent upon my level of maturity and the phase I'm at as to my interpretation (i.e., as breeder, exhibitor, handler, mentor, judge, and most importantly, as a student -- that spans all phases).

6. If the dog has the qualities and attributes the judge is seeking, the exhibit's color should be the last consideration.

7. I would be so pleased to see a quality entry that I would not consider the markings -- to include whether or not it had a full collar! It is hard enough to breed, select, condition and exhibit a quality animal.

8. The sable merle is a genotype. It is not a color, merely the expression of the dominant merling pattern.

9. The authors of the Collie Standard expressed just enough importance on color to define the four primary colors; sable and white, tricolor, blue merle and white. When one reads the Collie Standard one gets the sense that they were describing an ideal that would simply (and eloquently) fit into these four boxes: Sable and white, tricolor, blue merle and white.

10. At the time the Collie Standard was written, the founders of the breed/authors may have been more cognizant of Mother Nature's affinity for lighter, larger eyes, and broader, coarser skulls; and they simply wanted to complete the entire picture to create the essence of the breed AND give those breeders the optimal goal. Since only their words can speak for them, one would have to assume that a blue-eyed sable was not within their scope as completing an ideal Collie.

11. No.

12. Let me address this in two ways, breeding and judging:

Breeding: Initially it may be no more than a deficit of knowledge because the individual is not familiar with the dog's pedigree and how to understand and properly use basic genetics. However, if that same individual continues breeding and selling sable merles without becoming knowledgeable and sharing that same information with all their puppy buyers (whether for show or pet), I find that a blatant indication of a lack of integrity.

Judging: Often, individuals electing to judge the Collie come from different breeds and bring with them an inherent color aversion based on their years of involvement in their own breed. One can only hope these individuals have taken the opportunities to learn from study groups, seminars, mentors and viewing audio visual aides. I have attended many such learning opportunities only to be dismayed by seeing individuals attend only to receive their certificate of participation and quickly leave--never having sat still long enough to absorb any knowledge. There will always be people like that in the world.

13. The Standard should remain unchanged as it has served us well now (with minor modifications) for quite some time. I was "trained" to read the Standard prior to each judging assignment and continue to marvel that the authors were so descriptive in their chosen words. I would be more concerned that IF the Collie Club of America chose to change the standard, that the American Kennel Club would then step in and request further format and wording changes.

14. N/A

15. When I receive the quarterly judges' newsletter, I always read the standard changes announced in the newsletter and wonder what specifically happened to cause the parent club to embrace a change. This questionnaire said "One must ask why." So do I. a) I do not believe it would make the standard more understandable and ageless. b) It is difficult for anyone to predict what may happen. The best way for me to respond to the question concerning the affect on the future of the breed is to quote a man for whom I worked for many years: Never say never, and always avoid always.

c) This is difficult for me to answer because I am not a proponent of changing the standard. But as guardians of the breed we must include in our analysis the "cost" to the breed of saying the standard we were teaching to all interested parties (i.e., breeders, judges, fanciers) was not exactly correct. Now it's perfect. Until we change

our minds, go with this one -- for now. d) No, I do not believe so.

16. In the blue to sable breedings we made, it was always hoped that the best puppy would not be a sable merle. As in life, things didn't always go as we wished. However, that being said, I still feel that the Standard should not be changed.

17. I believe it could result in blue-eyed sable merles. We had a blue-eyed sable merle bitch shipped in for breeding to our tricolor dog. She was put in a run out in the kennel building and everyone ran out to see her! What an initial shock. However, that breeding resulted in a lovely blue bitch that finished. That breeder was knowledgeable and was under the tutelage of breeders well versed in genetics. She never showed that sable merle bitch but she got out of her exactly what she had hoped to attain.

A sable merle smooth was shown to me at one time. I kept trying to look at the expression and the handler kept "mishandling" the dog so I could not get a good look. Later, outside the ring when I saw the dog looking around, it had a blue eye. That action really irritated me. Now I demand that a dog look at me straight in the eye and if it is trained to do otherwise, I'll take the muzzle and look.

I'm accustomed to looking at Blue Merles and don't have any preference for either a blue or a dark eye. I would have great concern about the potential for merle eyed sable collies becoming common-place.

18. Regarding the education of potential Collie judges, I think that the new DVD is excellent. I showed it to my all-breed club for an educational program. However, when judge's go through the process to become eligible to apply for new breeds, they will view the AKC breed tape, attend seminars and most likely the National Specialty, read a few books (or at least know the names of some). Then the majority go home and stack all the hand-outs on the book shelf and any tapes or DVDs they got go in the same place or in a drawer. In other words, they simply check that box!

When I have studied new breeds, I have been very lucky to find good mentors--and I LISTEN. A huge challenge is to find the people that actually know and that can make good breed mentors. The student has to assume responsibility to learn from many sources, assimilate that knowledge and formulate their interpretation of each breed standard. Every breed struggles with this issue because every breed wants to produce judges that end up judging their breed well.

We do not want color to become a priority in the judging of Collies. It is evidently a difficult breed to grasp by certain judges. Spending more time on edification of colors means less time spent on the elements of the Collie.

Here are the four colors the Collie Standard accepts... period.

Lily Russell, Tango

1. I have been a member since 1989, my first litter was whelped in 1994. I have only done 1 sable to blue merle breeding, because in my very small kennel each potential puppy is critical and I was worried about having a sable merle with blue eyes. In the litter of 9 (4 finished) the puppy that would have been my pick due to structure and attitude was a sable merle bitch with two china blue eyes. She was placed as a pet. At this time, there are several sable merle dogs, that I would consider using on my tri bitches, but if given a blue of equal quality, I would choose the blue to avoid a reoccurrence of placing my pick pup in a pet home due to eye color.

2. At this time I have provisional status for judging collies but hope to be approved by fall/winter 2009.

3. Yes, I have shown at several National Specialty clubs, 1stOpen Tri, in 1993 with my foundation bitch, Ch. Debonair Tango at Midnight, 1stBrood Bitch, 1995, same dog with two of her get. CCA Wichita, Kansas, Ch. Tango's Wings of Chance, made two cuts, Louisville, KY the following year, 1 cut in the specials ring. Award of Merit on Ch. Tango's Lynmar's Jackpot (owner/breeder/handler) 2005, 1stplace Smooth Brace Class, Charlotte, NC 2007, (Ch. Tango's She's Got the Look, Ch. Tango's Simply Irresistible). I have been at several other nationals and not placed (11 or 12 by a quick count).

4. When I think about the standard, I think that if a dog meets each detail of the standard it will be ideal or perfect. However, I also realize that "the perfect dog, is extremely rare, so when comparing a specimen to the standard, I look at the virtues the animal has, the more the virtues, the closer to the standard and that animal is the one who is closest to the ideal

5. I think I try to look more for virtues now, when I started in this it was easy to find a fault in a dog. 20 years ago, I think I just looked at the outline of the dog. Now, it is how those pieces all come together to make a balanced animal, that can move effortlessly.

6. I personally, have no problem with Sable Merles in the Open Sable Class.

7. I think this is the crux of the controversy. If the shading is light and does not detract from the appearance and expression, I would have no problem with the dog. It also depends on what else is in the ring. If all dogs are of equal quality, and one of the entries is a heavily patterned, tri factored sable merle, with merling on the ears, and on the face, I would probably choose another dog

8. Genotype, there are some sable merles that you do not know they are sable merles by just looking at them.

9. I think that when they wrote the standard, they were thinking about the outcome of crosses maybe to produce a dog that would fit into the "ideal". I do not think a sable dog with heavy merle patterns and blue eyes was something that they wanted.

10. NO, and I personally do not care for a sable dog with blue eyes. If we penalize light brown eyes in a sable dog, how can we accept a 2 blue eyes, or worse one blue and one brown? This is difficult for me even in the blue merle(two blue eyes, or a brown and a blue) I think it detracts from expression.

11. Can not answer that as I am a new judge, and have not had a large entry of sable merles yet.

12. I would answer NO, some you can not tell after they mature and some just "shout it" with heavy body spashes, merling on ears, and blue eyes.

13. Part of me would like to keep the standard as it is. There have been several sable merles that embody all that is the collie, with correct expression and without distracting heavy merling, with these dogs in mind I would vote NO for a change. However, another part of me would like to see the controversy about this color end. In both of the incidents that we have had (10/08 and 2/09), if I would have been judging I would have simply not used the dog or excused for lack of merit, and not brought color into the equation.

14. N/A

15. a. Not in my opinion. b. I am not sure, could we see lighter brown eyes eventually? c. I do not see how adding the color,sable merle to the standard will help or hurt the breed. d. NO

16. NO, NO

17. Yes. As stated previously, I do not think they are what a collie should look like? A light eye, even though the correct shape will change the expression of the dog.

18. As in place, emphasize that color is not a disqualification and that it should not be used when judging a dog. Head detail, expression and body structure are what make

the collie what it is. Do we want color to be a priority in the judging of Collies? NO, color should be the last thing that is looked at!

*Barbara Schwartz, Impromptii**

1. Yes – I have owned and bred many sable merles

2. I have been licensed to judge collies since 1970. I have judged the CC of A National twice and have judged specialties all over the country.

3. I have been attending CC of A Nationals since 1964 and have shown in them since 1967.

4.I think the Standard describes the Ideal Collie. I do not believe that there has been a collie that has reached the perfection of the Standard, but the great ones have been close.

5. No. I grew up in Collies looking at many great ones. I keep looking for those Collies in the ring today. I still look for the same head qualities and expression I saw in the 60's and 70's and correct collie structure is the same.

6. I think the sable merle fits the description of a sable and thus should have no trouble being shown in that class.

7. None, if it did not change the expression of the animal.

8. I believe that the sable merle is a genotype. I have had sables that could pass for sable merles and were really tri-factored sables.

9. I think that they described the ideal colors of the collie. That is what the standard means: the IDEAL.

10. Remember when the standard was written dogs often got distemper-eye that was blue. I think that a blue eye can distract from the expression of a collie be they sable or blue. The ideal in any color would have dark medium sized almond eyes set obliquely.

11. No

12. For breeder not, this is not a problem since the AKC included it on the registration form. For judges it should not matter. If it walks and quacks like a duck, judge it as a duck. If it has a blue eye and it does not detract from the expression, judge it as a failing. If it has a blue eye that detracts from the expression, it is a major fault. All characteristics that detract from expression is a major fault.

13. I think that the standard as written is sufficient to cover all of the colors presented in the ring. I could not, as a judge, be able to tell if a dog was entered correctly in a

sable-merle class since many of the sables (especially when they are young) could be mistaken for a sable-merle; for example, CH Impromptu Banner Still Waves had judges pulling back his eyelids looking for blue flecks. He was in fact a red mahogany when he was an adult. Conversely I have had a sable merle puppy that was a dark mahogany at birth with no merling anywhere. She was only identified as a sable-merle at eye checks. She had a twin sister that was found to be a sable.

14. I am not in favor of the change.

15. a. No b. There have been numerous sable merle champions. I cannot imagine that a change would cause there to be more. c. No d. No. Loss of expression, loss of type, loss of size are much more important issues.

16. I think that they wanted the best puppy to show the characteristics that make up a good or great collie of any color. There is not a great collie in a bad color.

17. I agree with the standard as written. I prefer a dark brown eye in all colors. Blue eyes can and often do detract from the correct sweet expression which is imperative in a good collie.

18. No. A good collie cannot be a bad color.

Carole Stanley, Afterhours

1. I started breeding collies in the late sixty's and joined the CCA shortly after that. I decided that blue merle collies were beautiful and bred quite a few of them. Sable merle collies were a result of those earlier stud dogs being bred to sables.

2. Yes, I am currently licensed to judge collies and shelties. I did several sweeps and decided to apply for collies in 1990. I was approved by AKC in 1991. I have done many specialties and all breed shows since then.

3. I have attended many CCA National shows in the 40 years since being involved in the breed. I have shown dogs thru out that time in all the classes. Collies of all colors and ages. Ch. Afterhours Firestorm was awarded Winners dog from the open sable class by Ted Kjellstrom in 1994. Fire was a sable merle. All of Fire's wins came from the "open sable" class.

4. I do think of the standard for the collie as perfection. I believe that the "framers" of our standard knew what the perfect collie should look like and have described it beautifully for all time. The use of adverbs and adjectives have left room for the breeder to breed to the standard and still have the artistic ability to interpret it.

5. Each time I re-read the standard [before each and every judging assignment] I learn and understand more about what makes the perfect collie. The essence of our breed becomes clearer in my mind.

6. I think that sable merles are a shade of sable being the dominant color. They look like sables and should be judged as such in the open sable class. There is a great variety of difference in color in all sables i.e. pure for sables, shaded sables, dark mahogany sables, red and orange colors and sable merles. But, they are all sable and white to the eye.

7. None at all.

8. It's both – as is tri-factored sable and pure for sable. But the color sable merle is hard to identify unless there are tell tale markings. The same is true for the other genotypes of sables. At different stages in a collies life, the color of coat changes. There is a definite darkening of depth of color as the dog ages. As puppies, its difficult to tell at first glance whether the coat color will darken to what degree. Many tri factored sables appear pure for sable or even sable merle.

9. The framers of the standard told the reader that there is no preference between the four colors. I know that sable merles existed then and they did not mention it. Nor did they point out that we should consider them any thing but sables. As well thought out and as detailed as they were, they chose not to direct us to differentiate between the sables.

10. No, I think that they described the " perfect collie" to have dark eyes , except in the case of blue merles, which can have one blue or china eye or both.

11. No, I feel that all my decisions, both judging and breeding collies has been in compliance with the standard. Blue eyes in sable merles are considered a fault as instructed clearly within our standard. Not an excusal or disqualification. We only have what AKC imposes on any breed as disqualifications, none of our own.

12. A lack of knowledge more than integrity is my feeling. When breeding and judging out pace the research, reading and experience required to understand our breed , we are headed for trouble. I have heard many people complain about sable merles, mistakenly thinking that there is something wrong with them. There is nothing wrong with them. The wrongness surrounding them is people not knowing and accepting them for what they are, just a variation of sable.

13. I am happy and grateful that the standard governing our breed is so good. Having read many other breed stan-

dards, I like ours the best. I am not in favor of changing it at all. What I am in favor of, is to educate breeders, fanciers and judges to greater knowledge of it. So, that they understand what is said and what is not said in it.

14. I think the sable merles are implicitly recognized in the part of paragraph on color. Specifically, sable and white describing the variations of color. From Light tan to dark mahogany and every color in between. If it should be decided that there is a need to include "sable merles" to put to rest the controversy, then the phrase Sable merle might be included in that description. No class change would be required or any further action.

15. In light of this most recent controversy over "sable merle" where one judge made a point of singling out a sable merle and faulting it, where no fault existed as supported by the standard. My thought is, that the judge in question was at fault. If she does not understand our standard as written and insists on judging according to the one that she has decided on in her own mind, then he or she should not judge our breed. When judges do many breeds, there can be a transference from one breed standard to another.

16. I can not answer that question for any one else as I don't know. But, I can for myself. I breed for the quality's of the collie, regardless of color, that combined make a great collie. When I find a puppy of superb quality, I don't care what color it is. I actually do breed for sable merles if the breeding is done for the right reasons and am pleased when the best is a sable merle, as I would be if it were a sable, blue, tri or white.

17. Since we would then have to change the description of eyes to match, I would be outraged. The color sable merle is already accepted. The eye change would change the whole description of the collie. Since "expression" is the essence of the collie we would be ruining our breed.

18. No changes are necessary at all. It would only confuse the judges more and take the attention away from the process of identifying the best collie according to the standard regardless of color. Judges education needs to make sure that all judges be impartial in their evaluation of the collie regardless of color.

David Supplee, Tartanside

1. I have been in Collies 25+ years, A member of CCA about 20 years. I whelped my first litter in about 1983. I always tried to breed away from getting sable merles, however when I did, they generally went to pet homes because they had either one or both eyes were blue which ruined the expression.

2. I have judged many sweepstakes and many puppy matches.

3. I have attended many CCA's and exhibited in many as well.

4. I hold the Collie standard as the Ideal. The breeders that wrote the standard worked so hard to bring the Collie to the present day, they had such insight that we can only imagine.

5. No, I have always thought of it as the ultimate, and always will.

6.

7. I am not a Judge, however, it would depend on how much it affected the over all look and expression.

8. It is a Genotype! When bred they can produce all colors.

9. A Great deal of importance. It is said with out coming out and saying it.

10. Absolutely NO!!!

11. NO!

12. No.

13. Keep the standard as is, The good sable merles with 2 dark matching eyes and a beautiful expression still win.

14. Keep the standard as it is.

15. a. No b) It will create a very common, ordinary breed. c. No d. I guess, discuss, keep as is and move on.

16. I am sure breeders of the past hoped for no sable merles, I am not so sure of the breeders of today.

17. As I said in # 15, it will cause the collie to become common and ordinary and quite UGLY!

18. I believe the bottom line is ... A sable should have 2 dark matching eyes and a beautiful expression and a merle can have blue eyes, but both must be judged hardest on their expression!

*Glen Twiford, Wind-Call**

1. I frankly don't recall exactly when I joined the CCA. I think it was in the late 1930's. My first litter was in the early 1930's. I started in Collies completely isolated from mentors or instruction.

I imagine I have had as many sable-merles as anyone reading this. When you can't get answers you are stimulated to think. As I made experiments in color breeding I began to get fewer sable-merles from similar matings. I never knew for sure if it was breeding corrections, or luck. I

knew I didn't want sable-merles and put much effort into controlling them.

2. Yes. In 2001 AKC gave me an award for being the longest still active judge in their organization.

3. I have had numerous top winners at the CCA including Best of Breed. I have judged the national three times: 1958, 1964 and 1984.

4. Of course, it is a standard of perfection. A standard of acceptability could have endless variations and would not be a standard.

5. My perception of the standard has not changed. It has become easier to verbalize to others over the years what I have been breeding for.

6. How about a raccoon? To be a little more sensible, I have seen sable-merles from the old tri/mahogany breedings to blue merle that were more of a muddy blue. Exhibitors today probably have not seen them since we have fewer really dark mahogany sables.

So why not show them in the Open Blue Class? Sometimes blue is called an incomplete dominant, but that is of no concern in our discussion.

7. There is no degree of fault. You have a sable-merle, or you don't. That it's a quality entry does not enter into the problem.

8. Sable-merle is a combination of colors, not a color.

9. Plenty! They never included sable-merles and having had the first blue merles our common sense tells us they could not be unaware of them and found them unacceptable.

10. There is no such thing as a sable with blue eyes. Such a dog does not exist.

11. No, not at all.

12. Yes, each, but particularly the former.

13. Of course we should keep it as it is. Would you consider changing a perfectly sound standard to an incorrect one?

14. This would take some imagination. I am not in favor of changing the standard. This is non-sense.

15. Did not care to answer these questions at this time.

16. No. I find this ridiculous. It gives stability to sable-merle.

17. There is no such thing as blue-eyed sables. Yes, blue eyed sable-merles would become commonplace.

18. a. It's an altogether different subject...From experience I have found odd colors occur so rarely.

b. You have to educate the collie people before the judges. Emphasize sable-merles are not in the standard, they are not a color and keep them out of the ring.

c. Only if it needs to be controlled.

Janine Walker-Keith, Incandescent

1. I have been a member of the CCA for 25+ years. I whelped my first litter in 1968. Yes, I have had experience with sable-merle Collies. I have done sable to merle breedings during the last 40 years which resulted in sable-merle Collies in both rough and smooth varieties. I have also had litters as a direct result of breeding sable-merles.

Ch. Incandescent Limited Edition was a result of a sable to merle breeding. My current CCA BOB winner, Ch. Kadon Bethany's Gospel, is also a result of a sable to merle breeding, although I am not his breeder.

2. I am not licensed to judge Collies, but have judged many sweepstakes during the last 40 years.

3. I have attended countless CCA nationals since the early 1970's winning awards including AOMs, Reserve Winners, BOS to BOV, #1 Hawkin's System Collie and Best of Breed

4. In regard to the Collie standard I hold it as a Standard of Perfection. The notion of acceptability would run a muck, as it would be based merely on emotions, wants and likes. A canine standard of perfection is based on facts, form and function.

5. My "understanding" of the standard has evolved from knowledge I have gained from over 40 years of experience observing, hands on, breeding and discussion with mentors and peers.

6. Feelings should not enter into this subject...

The Open Sable Class is exclusively for sable collies, just as the Open Tri Class is exclusively for tri-colors, based on phenotype. Sable-merles are not sables and rarely present phenotypically as sables.

When a sable-merle is entered in the Open Sable Class most likely it is due to lack of integrity, or lack of knowledge on the part of the exhibitor.

7. You do not have to be a judge to understand that a Collie entered in the Open Sable Class which is phenotypically "telling" for sable-merle does not meet the requirements of that class and, according to AKC Rules

Applying to Dog Shows Ch.14, Section 6, paragraphs 3 and 6, should be declared by the judge and marked in the judge's book ineligible to compete in that class, considered wrongly entered, and may not be transferred into any other class.(paraphrasing)

The Collie standard states; "Sable and White is predominately sable (a fawn sable color of varying SHADES from light gold to dark mahogany)."

The standard does not include merling, mottled or marbled PATTERNS on sables.

The quality of such an entry is immaterial.

8. A sable-merle is not a single colored Collie. It is a Collie of two dominant colors, sable and blue merle. It is a non-color. It is a genotype, but a genetically merle animal has a very great chance of phenotypically expressing the merle gene anywhere on its body.

9. To retain ideal Collie type and correct expression I am sure great emphasis was given to color when writing the standard.

10. Absolutely not. Sable collies with blue eyes do not exist. Today's standard clearly states the two eyes are REQUIRED to match in color (except in blue merle) and shall be DARK.

11. No.

12. Both. I previously mentioned lack of integrity does play a role in sable-merles being entered incorrectly in the Open Sable Class. But, emotion and lack of real knowledge also contribute. Lack of knowledge regarding Collie genetics and the Collie standard may be a common denominator rather than lack of integrity. We cannot legislate integrity, only educate. At least I would like to think so.

13. I am not leaning toward either. Leaning would indicate emotional preference. Standard changes must be based on form and function, keeping in mind what is perfect and correct.

The standard as it is written is correct. Sable-merles cannot be included in a Standard of Perfection based on their genetic make-up. Their typical and uncontrollable merle coat patterns, and uncontrollable eye color, against a sable background, makes a far cry from perfection.

14. N/A

15. a. It could make it very confusing. b. It may open the door to other non-colors becoming recognized, changing collie type all together. c. No. d. At any time

the standard is in jeopardy, collies are in jeopardy. Both must be protected.

16. I am quite sure breeders of the past, as well as today, (if answering honestly) would not purposely breed for something which is not included within the standard. Breeding for the ideal Collie is the usual goal.

17. Tom, Is this a trick question or mis-worded? LOL

The terminology in this question should be corrected in order to educate.

There is no such dog as a "blue or merle eyed sable Collie." It does not exist.

No doubt, if the standard is changed to include sable-merles, blue or merle eyed sable-merles would become commonplace since eye color in sable-merle, like eye color in blue merle, is uncontrollable. Eye color in the standard would have to be changed, making blue or merle eyed sable-merles acceptable.

On some level the commonplace of blue-eyed sable-merles, as a result of these changes, would certainly alter our breed's beautiful expression, providing a very foreign look.

18. First, educate breeders, owners and exhibitors. Education may help resolve the exhibiting of "non-colors", which may help resolve judges' dilemmas.

The sable-merle meeting held at the CCA is certainly a step in the right direction.

The bottom line is we have many more important things to worry about within our breed than extremely rare "odd" colors.

Maybe it's time our national breed club provide AKC judges with accurate detailed visual aids and simple genetic information regarding sable-merle. It may give judges a clearer understanding.

With all due respect for the AKC, stating the Open Sable Class is the appropriate Open Class for sable-merles only promotes lack of integrity on the part of exhibitors, and confuses judges.

With proper education color will not become a priority in the judging of Collies.

Thank you for allowing my participation in this interesting survey.

*Adria Weiner, Edenrock**

1. I have been a member of the CCA for over 30 years. I whelped my first litter in the late fifties/sixties. Yes, I have

had experience with sable merles...I have bred, exhibited, and judged sable merles in the conformation ring.

2. I obtained my license to judge collies in 1993. I have judged numerous specialties, all-breed shows, and the Collie Club of America in 2005.

3. Yes, I have attended many of our Nationals and our Edenrock collies have been represented at numerous Nationals.

4. I have always viewed the standard as my guideline in my quest to breed that "perfect collie". Again, it has always been my guideline for breeding and judging.

5. Yes, I early on realized that those who authored the standard erroneously thought the sable merle was a defective or undesirable color. I clearly remember as a youngster many of the breeders felt that sable merles should be culled at birth because they were undesirable or defective.

6. Sable merles should be judged the same as sables in the Open Class.

7. I always look for the best quality dog in my class, regardless of color. I can't remember a time when color was ever a factor in my judging collies. I have had a well known judge tell me my sable merle lost because of the blue in her eye, not because she was a sable merle. That same judge is slated to judge an upcoming National.

8. Not sure what you mean by this question. The sable merle is an inherited color which naturally occurs when you breed certain colors together, i.e., sable to blue, sable merle to sable, sable merle to tri, etc.

9. I believe the authors of the standard placed the same amount of importance regarding color as say gait, legs, etc. Our breed is considered a head breed and that is described in great detail.

10. I feel the main reason the sable merle color was not addressed by those breeders who authored the standard was erroneous understanding of sable merle coat color, health and eye color, etc. All of those prejudices have been disproved.

11. No...Years ago, I made the decision that the sable merle was not addressed in our standard because previous generations of breeders lacked the genetic knowledge available to the breeders of today. There was a lot of prejudice against sable merles many years ago (and it seems some still hold on to those prejudices). I have judiciously used the sable merle in my breeding program for many years. Another point I would like to make is that our breed's popularity continues to decline and we have less animals available in our breeding pool. I know

that some breeders have placed their best quality puppy in a pet home because it is a sable merle (especially if there is blue in the eyes). What a loss!

12. No to both of your questions. I feel the real problem is past administrations have refused to hear the membership on this issue. It is my opinion that old prejudices die hard, and when club officers openly state they feel the standard is fine, how are we, the members, to think our opinion matters to these individuals.

13. The biggest benefit to the breed would be that it finally put this matter to rest. Never again would our club be consumed or torn apart by this issue

14. My position for including the sable merle in our standard is self-evident "It's broke and we need to fix it"... The standard does not acknowledge there is a color "sable merle", and that is why we still have controversy in our breed. Here would be my suggestion for changing the standard - in the description of the sable color "a fawn sable dog of varying shades of light gold to dark mahogany, including sable merles which may have a merling pattern" Regarding the eye color I would suggest "In blue merles and sable merles dark brown eyes are preferable, but either or both eyes may be merle or china in color without specific penalty.". These suggested changes are succinct and to the point.

15. a. Yes, I feel adding the sable merle to our standard will definitely put an end to this controversy forever.

b. The future of our breed will just be enhanced by adding the sable merle to our standard. They are out there, and until we put an end to this injustice, they will continue to create controversy.

c. What better example do we have than the latest incidents which occurred this year. Adding sable merle in the standard would stop the endless controversy about this color.

d. Yes, this has become such a huge distraction in our breed. Our club officers can no longer ignore the voices of the membership. Where does the statement "protect the essence of the breed" come from? Is there anyone out there who can deny the contributions sable merles have made to our breed...I think not! In my opinion, since the advent of the internet, it is no longer possible for our club officers to make decisions based solely on their own personal opinion. I feel this is a good thing. The appointed standard review committee consists of six people. I don't understand why more current breeders were not asked to be on this committee. It is these breeders who are in the trenches and they should have appointed to this

committee. I, for one, do not want a small committee making this all important determination on whether or not to change our standard to include the sable merle as a valid color. To protect our breed and our club we must allow the entire membership to vote on this issue.

16. Breeders of yesteryear did not value the sable merle. Today, most breeders accept this color along with the four recognized colors in our standard... Color is the last thing of importance in selecting puppies as far as I am concerned.. Give me a beautiful collie period. Sable merles have figured prominently in my breeding program. The impact in changing our standard would allow all of us to move forward and end this controversy. Plus, it might stop a breeder placing the best puppy in a pet home simply because that pup happens to be a sable merle with blue in the eyes.

17. I don't foresee that including the sable merle in our standard will lead to wide spread sable merles with blue eyes in the ring. The reality is sable merles are being bred and shown in all regions of the country right now and we have seen no ill effects to our breed.. I feel that any sable merle, with blue in the eyes, should be judged on expression, or lack thereof. There will always be some judges who will refuse to put up a sable merle with blue eyes. My own personal opinion is that I would much rather have a beautiful eye, with blue in it, than a brown, ugly eye. Again, each dog should be judged on its' individual merit...

18. I don't think that handler's question is valid and frankly, I am surprised it was included in this survey. The most contentious problem is, and will always be sable merles. Again, a sable merle is a NATURALLY occurring color when you breed certain combinations of colors together. The other colors are an anomaly and infrequently occur. I personally can't recall any judges asking me about those other "oddities".

Within one year we have seen two sable merle collies dismissed from the ring. One dog was excused by a non-breed judge and in the latest incident, the dog was excused by an approved breed mentor from the Open Sable Class, and to make matters worse, after excusing that sable merle male, the same judge, in bitches, gave another sable merle first place in the Open Sable Class. Talk about adding more fuel to the fire! Your letter to judges about how to "judge the sable merle" has made more judges aware there is a controversy in our breed concerning a coat color which past administrations have refused to include in the standard. How does that old saying go... "There is none so blind as those who will not see".

In closing, I am not angry at those judges who excused sable merles. I think the blame for this situation lies with administrations, in the past, who refused to listen to the membership and their requests to include the sable merle in our standard. You want this controversy to go away... let the entire membership vote on this.

Thank you for inviting me to partake in this survey.

*Alice Wharton, Country Lane**

1. 60 Years. 1950
2. Was licensed to judge Collies in 1967. I am now emeritus status.
3. I have attended and exhibited at the CCA national. I have judged at the national 2 times. I exhibited Ch. Country Lane M'Liss, Ch. Country Lane Renegade, Ch. Country Lane GinGeor Sequel, Ch. Wharton's Country Gal.
4. The Collie Standard has preserved the integrity of the Collie for many many years. We all strive to reach the ideal. It does point out the unacceptable.
5. No
6. I believe the sable merle Collies should be judged in the Open sable and white class. Not to have a separate class for sable merles. If a separate class for sable merles is adopted, there could be many more questions to address. How much merling permitted on body? for one.
7. Expression is of utmost importance and to be considered above all else in a quality entry. I have never experience judging a sable merle with large patches of merling on the body. After all, the Collie is "distinctive" do we want to deter from the general character of the Collie?
8. I don't consider the sable merle to be a color.
9. The authors of the standard stated there is no preference among the four colors mentioned in the standard - sable and white, tri-color, blue merle and white. Color should not take precedence over quality - referring to the four recognized colors.
10. No
11. No - never having bred sable to blue merle. Does not apply
12. Yes
13. I do not favor a change in the standard, except to make it more understandable, by correct wording to judge of our breed. Pertaining to sable merle - a change to add a class for sable merle would be detrimental to the

breed. The standard as it is has done well for the breed for many many years.

14. I am not in favor of a standard change. There are no parts of the standard that describe a sable-merle as an individual that meets the ideal of the standard, perhaps under eye section. More specific language addressing how much blue in the eye is acceptable and how it might affect expression

15. a. Hopefully

b. if not worded clearly just how much a merled eye on a sable merle Collie is “acceptable” it could cause more confusion

c. Yes

d. Yes

16. I really don't believe that Collie breeders in the past, or today would breed in hopes that the best puppy in the litter would be a sable merle. Please don't change the standard - just explain more fully under “eye color” in the standard just what is acceptable.

17. Yes

18. Shaded sable usually have variations of tan colors from light sable to mahogany in their coats. It is different to always detect if a sable is a sable merle. Sometimes you might detect a few hairs of blue-gray on the collie's ears or specks of blue in their eyes.

We do not need to address the “odd” colors as no were in the standard does it mention these colors. A judge, if following the standard as to color, they shouldn't be questioning that problem.

Color should not be a priority in the judges of the Collie. Sable merle is not a color. The AKC states “that a sable merle is not a color with a pattern that can readily be identified.” Does not recommend an additional class.

*Larry Willeford, Windcrest**

1. I have been a member of CCA since 1970. First litter was in 1969. I have had three litters with sable merles my last being in 2007. I bred a pure-for-sable bitch to a blue merle dog and had 10 puppies, 5 sables and 5 sable merles. Of the sable merles 3 had either one or both eyes with blue or flecks. One of the males had a small blue fleck in both eyes but not noticeable in most lighting conditions. He is light colored and does have a pattern on the show side. He finished easily in three weekend and none of the judges ask about his color.

2. I have been judging Collies since 1989, 20 years now. I have judged mostly Specialties including the Dog classes at the National in 1998 and the CC of Canada National in 1994 also judged the Kem Sweeps in 96 the week of the National.

3. I have been to most Nationals since 1972 but have missed a few. I have exhibited several times but usually not. Won reserve bitch at the 1979 National, several class wins through the years and an AOM in 2000.

4. I hold the Collie standard as a standard of perfection. We probably have the best written standard of all breeds and I hold it in highest regard and respect.

5. The more I learn about Collies the more clear the standard becomes and what our founders had in mind for the ideal of perfection.

6. Sable merles should be shown in the Open sable class or any of the other applicable non color classes.

Off subject here but I would like to see the Open color divisions revised. Like Shelties, Open Sable and Open AOC. Most shows now only have an entry or two or none in these Open classes and seems to me a waist of time in judging the different classes. Just a thought.

7. None at all. Would only fault an entry to the extent the expression was effected by blue or blue flecks eyes.

8. I think the sable merle's phenotype is sable with a merle gene factor.

9. I don't think the authors of the standard thought much about color and states that in our standard.

10. No.

11. No.

12. Apparently some all-breed judges have problems identifying a sable merle but that should not be their focus anyway. The standard clearly states that there is no preference in color and judges should not be concerned about it.

13. I do not feel we need a standard change to include sable merles. Sable merles have been around since the beginning and there does not seem to be a problem out there today finishing sable merles. Many have contributed greatly to some breeding programs.

14. N/A

15. No to all.

16. No. When I have done this kind of breeding I am always hoping for as few sable merles as possible, mostly

because of the possibility of blue or blue flecks in their eyes.

17. Yes I do. If we have a standard change we would most certainly see more blue eyes shown on sable merles. I would not like to see that happen and feel dark eyes on sable merles should always be preferred. I don't mind a fleck or two as long as it does not effect its expression.

18. I think education is the key to the sable merle issue and these other "odd colors." Explaining these issues to new Collie judges through breed mentorship and judges seminars is important. I'm not sure there is that much confusion among most judges but there are still a few that just don't get it and probably never will. Color should never be a priority in judging the Collie.

Carl Williford, Twin City

1. 27 years. Yes, owned, exhibited, finished to Ch. And judged them.

2. Yes, licensed for 8 years

3. Yes, attend annual and probably have missed 5 in 27 years.

4. IDEAL

5. Yes, over the first few years, I was not exposed to as many collies that were close to the ideal as I have been of late. The standard became more clear to me once I saw and put my hands on those dogs that were closer to the ideal. In other words, the standard came to life the more dogs I saw.

6. No issues with SM's in open sable class

7. The best one would win regardless of color or markings.

8. I think this is irrelevant.

9. I think there is enough in the standard on color.

10. Yes, I think they thought a sable with blue eyes was not acceptable.

11. No

12. No

13. I believe there enough information written in the standard to breed, exhibit, and judge collies towards the ideal.

14. N/A for me

15. N/A

16. No

17. Yes

18. Absolutely not!

Arnold Woolf*

1. Almost 65 years

2. Yes, judging collies since 1961

3. Yes, years back

4. Ideal

5. No

6. Without blue eyes-permissible

7. depends on eye appeal

8. Genotype - too many breedings of merles to sables

9. A great deal

10. Absolutely not

11. Perhaps

12. Yes

13. Clarify eye colors with coat colors

14. Blue eyes in sable merle permissible

15. Yes, more sable merles; questionable; I presently fault blue in sables

16- no & No

17- probably and I do not like it

18- basicly my real concern is in eye color.

OTHER RELEVANT COMMENTS

I have just carefully read your proposed discussion of the sable merle question in the December, 2008 Bulletin. First I would like to thank you for your work, knowledge, and involvement on the part of the Standard committee of the CCA. Having served several times on that committee over the past 60 years, I know how seriously each committee member thru out this time has taken this charge. Our history is almost as long as the AKC's and many dedicated fanciers, breeders, and judges have struggled to uphold the integrity of our written standard. It defines the direction of our breed, is the guideline for our breeders and judges, is the property of the CC of A, but is protected by the rules and regulations of the AKC.

I feel I understand the plight of the sable merle issue. The fancy wants direction from teh club and there is no question that this issue has been with us for many years. Thru all that time, no standard committee acting under the direction of the CC of A has chosen to include sable merles in the standard color description. In my mind, now is not the time to ask the AKC to include this in our standard. In the past few years, several breeds have addressed color issues in their standards - dappled dachshunds, brindle pugs, merle Chihuahuas, thereby creating huge new issues for both new and seasoned judges. Dogs have been improperly disqualified; new fanciers receive incorrect information or chose to interpret the standard in a way that does not protect the essence of this breed. Once the membership of the CC of A does change the standard, it cannot be changed in any way for a full tive years.

I judge many breeds and know tht it causes great concern when a parent club alters an old, tried and true standard. One must ask why. Will this change make the standard more understandable and ageless? How will it affect the future of this breed? At this time, purebred dogs are being challenged on all fronts. We badly need continuity, long time guidelines, and as few missteps as possible.

I judge many breeds and I know it causes great concern when I must address a standard change. When a parent club, by full vote changes its master plan in any way, I must ask why. Is this in the best long term interest of this breed? Is this an issue that must be addressed at this point to protect the essence of the breed?

If I am concerned with all my years of judging experience, how will the new judge either starting out in Collies or coming from another breed interpret and pass judgment? Not all collie fanciers are comfortable with the sable merle component. They can be beautiful, they are here to stay, and are wonderful variation of the color fabric of our breed, but please leave the standard alone. It has served us well for a long time and this is far too tumutuous a time in any purebred dog's standard to make any changes that may cause misdirection. Ours is a grand and historic standard.

Best wishes,

Dorothy Schroeder Welsh

I am a recipient of this email although I am vehemently against changing the standard. Is there a way for my email not to be clogged by these messages anymore? I am an admirer of great collies regardless of color and I love Ch. Candray Constellation. Changing the standard will not remove the bias some judges bring with them when judging our collies. Some judges favor sables, some judges love tris. We all know that. The great Billy Aschenbrenner judged our Nationals the most number of times in history. That's the amount of respect he enjoys in the breed, and

yet who doesn't know that he favors blues? Some judges just don't like the idea of sable merles and amending the standard will not change their minds about it. They will continue penalizing sable merles under some pretext other than color. What have we achieved then? Nothing. In the meantime we will be tinkering with one of the best written standards in pure bred dogs. It's just not worth it in my opinion.

Dante E.G. Fañgon, Charidan

Just a quick note to let you know Jim Noe & my own feelings on this subject of the sable merle. Having served on the CCA color committee in the past, I still recall that we tried to revise the standard to include it as a separate color class (Sable Merle). The feedback that we received was that it did not need to have a separate class, because our definition of sable was any variation of sable from a very light sable to a deep dark mahogany.....However the blue eye was left up to how it affected the expression. I have never felt that sable merle was an illegal color & still do not feel that way. I do think however that revising it to an acceptable separate color would also make the blue eye completely acceptable. I think that we have had many beautiful sable merle collies in the past With many of them being top winners & producers & although I would not recommend actually breeding for that particular color, I also do not think that we should throw the baby out with the bath water. It would be a shame not to use some of these beautiful collies in our breeding programs & it would certainly be a setback to our gene pools to not use

them Please understand that I would always recommend that sable merle pets should be neutered & or spayed, just like any other pets that we sell today.

Please understand that I also feel that a breeder should have some understanding of what a dilute color actually is. (A blue merle collie is a diluted tri color & a sable merle is a diluted sable.) We do not under normal circumstances breed dilute to dilute unless you have a better than average knowledge of color genetics in collies. Just remember doubling up on anything such as a dilute color in our breed can bring about some disastrous problems.....Double dilutes can also be even more problematic.

Please print my response if you so desire.

Thanks for your note & I hope our response will be well taken.

Best Regards

Jim Frederiksen & Jim Noe, Two Jays



Ch. Sassy's Smokin' Dragon



Ch. Southland's Beyond The Glory



Ch. Hi-Crest Blame It On Rio

I have thought about it for a long time too and as you know, I have had a sable merle or two. I do think that there are enough classes for them to be shown in puppy, bred by and Am bred. Yes, Open too if they don't carry the merleing too heavily but that's up to the exhibitors discretion and they can't complain if they put one in the open class that sticks out like a sore thumb. A quality animal should be judged on virtues against our standard. Eye color seems to be one of the hurdles when it comes to sable merles. My personal feelings are the same as they are in blue merles. A bright blue eye or a glass eye is awful no matter if it's blue or sable merle.

I have times when I think it would be great to have it written in our standard so there is never another argument about the sable merle as a color, or that a judge can read it without question that it's acceptable. But... then I think about the addition of a class just for them. My concern is... Would it encourage some select few to breed just for the color? That is not what we should be doing. I would be worried it MAY get some people flirting more with DD and I do NOT approve of that at all. When you get health problems because of the color (or lack of pigmentation).. then it's NOT good for our breed and we are not doing anything to protect our breed. QUALITY is how each individual interprets it. One person will think that a



Ch. Wickmere Noblesse Oblige

particular dog is spectacular and deserves to be bred while another wouldn't have a thing to do with it. It happens in ALL colors. My feelings are that a sable merle should be as good as the other colors and the way you measure it is by taking it to the show ring for opinions.

I don't think we need to change the standard to accommodate the color or add a class just for them. I think that the judges need to be educated so they are not discriminating against them JUST because of the color.

It's always going to be the Judges call. You can add the class and add the color but there will be some judges who will NOT put them up just because. It's the same as the judge who looks at the blues or looks at the tris first because they just have a preference for the colors. As exhibitors you have to take notes, and just don't show to them again. If they are using color as their judging criteria then we don't need them judging collies at all.

Thanks for surveying the members. I know it's got to be hard to know what to do as even now, I think what the heck, write it in and put it to rest once and for all. Yet, if it means we will have to standardize other things to make it easier for AKC then I say let's not do it. Just educate the judges.

Michelle Struble, Valley Park



