

# ABCF MESSENGER

Official Newsletter of the American Boxer Charitable Foundation

October 2020



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Wendy Wallner DVM

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

On August 15th The American Boxer Charitable Foundation celebrated its 25-year Anniversary. Over the years ABCF has grown into a leader organization for Boxer Health Research.

The Foundation continues to have consistent record in canine health research with support of grants in excess of 1.9 million dollars. By funding high-quality humane scientific research ABCF continues to work with the AKC/Canine Health Foundation to prevent, treat, and cure canine disease, with emphasis on Boxer related diseases.

Thanks to our donors, not only are we leading the canine community in research, our endowment is also growing. A hefty endowment can offer secure resources of revenues for the continuity of future research and help foundations weather economic downturns and fluctuations in support.

We were fortunate that in 2018 a very generous gentleman Mr. Tom Lewis donated lithium stocks to the Foundation, that yielded a sizeable amount of funds for the endowment. Consequently, we now have a healthy endowment.

Unfortunately, we were not able to hold the Annual fundraiser this year due to Covid-19. Therefore, the Foundation will need to rely on the generosity of members and Directors. I encourage All to support the Foundation during these difficult times.

Currently ABCF has sign on to two primary studies initiated this year. Dr Kate Meurs MOU grant #02808(identification of second genetic risk Allele(s) associated with the development of arrhythmogenic right ventricular Cardiomyopathy in the Boxer), this grant is fully funded by ABCF and was initiated May 1<sup>st</sup>, this is a 2-year study.

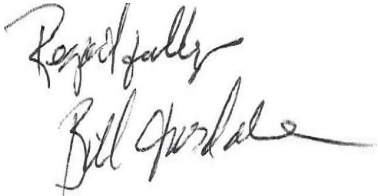
The second study is Dr. Jaime Modiano MOU #02806 (strategic prevention of canine hemangiosarcoma: lifetime follow -up, otherwise known as the Shine On Project). This study is funded in collaboration with the Golden Retriever

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Foundation, and the Portuguese Water Dog Foundation. The study was initiated on August 1, 2020, this study is over a span of 4 years.

Thank you All that have supported the ABCF over the past 25 years. Your contributions have yielded Great results for Boxer health.



Bill Truesdale



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### FROM THE TREASURER

#### The Treasurer's Corner

Wow, what a year and what an experience! I remember my Grandmother telling me to never ask, "What's next!" This year has certainly proved her adage correct.

Our Worldwide Pandemic has altered not only the way we go about our everyday living, but it has affected all the special events we look forward to each year including our National Specialty. And with our Specialty, our Foundation's major donation events. With fingers crossed, things will only improve from here on out.

Again, this year it has been a joy to interact with the wonderful people that make up this Foundation through membership and memorial donations. It never ceases to amaze me how far and wide the love of our Breed reaches.

Now to answer the question, "How are we financially doing this year as a Foundation?" We are not only meeting our financial obligations, but we are financially healthy. This year we have donated over \$150,000.00 to Canine Research. We have over \$50,000.00 in our daily operating checking and savings accounts. We have a Certificate of Deposit for \$60,000.00 and our Endowment investments now exceed \$1,050,000.00. Even during this crazy year, due to the work of our Investment Committee and with Charles Schwab's advice, our investments have gained in excess of 9%.

With that being said, we are also focused on expanding our annual revenue base. Without our annual fund raisers this year we have been limited to our membership and their thoughtful individual donations. While every dollar donation is greatly appreciated, for us to maintain and expand our positions for the future of our Foundation and its mission of supporting research into the medical and health needs of our Boxers we need to expand our donation type and frequency. Know that your Board is working on this issue. Any suggestions you might have will be greatly appreciated.

As we reach the end of the year and we look forward to the inevitable income taxes, in this year of "needs," please think of ABCF in your end-of-the-year donations. As you all know, ABCF is totally operated and supported by volunteers. No one is paid for their services. So, every dollar of your donation goes directly to our primary purpose of supporting research into the health and well-being of our beloved Boxer breed.

Thank you to all of you for enabling me to have this wonderful experience as your Treasurer. And remember, our Boxers love you.

Gary Ryan

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## AKC Canine Health Foundation Publishes Whitepaper on the State of Genetic Testing in Dogs

RALEIGH, NC (September 15, 2020) – The AKC Canine Health Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the health of all dogs and their owners, has published a review of the current state of genetic testing in dogs. This valuable resource is intended to help dog breeders, owners, and veterinarians make sound decisions with regard to interpreting and understanding the implications of genetic test results.

Creation of this resource was initiated by 2019 AKC Board Chairman, Bill Feeney, and funded by the AKC Canine Health Foundation (CHF) and the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA). It was completed by Dr. Liza Gershony, a [2019 CHF Clinician Scientist Fellow](#), and Dr. Anita Oberbauer, CHF-funded researcher and recipient of the [2019 Asa Mays, DVM, Excellence in Canine Health Research Award](#) - both from the University of California, Davis. The whitepaper was introduced by Dr. Oberbauer at the September 2020 American Kennel Club Delegates' meeting and is available on the CHF website at [akcchf.org/geneticswhitepaper2020](http://akcchf.org/geneticswhitepaper2020).

“While scientific advances in the area of canine DNA testing are exciting, they have also led to a desperate need for continued education,” says Eddie Dziuk, Chief Operating Officer of the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals and member of the AKC Delegates Canine Health Committee. “Dog breeders, owners, and even veterinary professionals often struggle with questions such as test purpose, accuracy, breed specificity/appropriateness, and interpretation of results. The genetics whitepaper is a long awaited and needed resource to address today’s most pressing questions and make better use of these powerful tools to breed healthier dogs.”

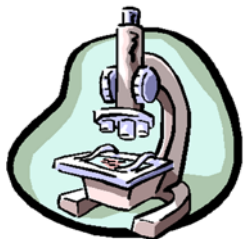
“The AKC Canine Health Foundation and its donors hope that dog breeders and caregivers use this resource to make informed and thoughtful decisions regarding their breeding plans and disease prevention and treatment strategies for individual dogs,” states Dr. Calvin Carpenter, CHF Executive Director. “Genetic testing is most impactful when properly used as one of many tools available to dog owners.”

The genetics whitepaper provides a foundation in canine genetics valuable to anyone involved in the care of and decision making for individual dogs or breeding stock. Practical applications and limitations of existing genetic tests are reviewed for the lay audience. This resource is offered as a tool to help improve the health of current and future generations of dogs.

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## Research Updates- Your ABCF Dollars at work!



**Grant 02519:** Prevalence of Bartonella spp. Infection in Dogs with Cardiac and Splenic Hemangiosarcomas Within and Between Geographic Locations

**Principal Investigator:** Edward Breitschwerdt, DVM

**Original Project Description:** Splenic masses comprise ~50% of all canine splenic disease. Despite advances in imaging and pathologic definition, the etiology and medical relevance of splenic lesions in dogs are often ambiguous. While some splenic tumors are benign, approximately two-thirds are highly malignant and carry a poor prognosis. Hemangiosarcoma (HSA) accounts for the majority of canine malignant splenic tumors and occurs in many large dog breeds, including mixed breeds. A less common site of HSA localization is the heart (cardiac HSA). Risk factors for both cardiac and splenic HSA remain unclear, confounding development of preventative strategies. The investigators recently reported a high prevalence of species of the bacterial genus Bartonella in dogs with HSA from North Carolina, suggesting a potential role in the initiation and/or progression of this cancer. Bartonella species exist worldwide and are transmitted by blood-sucking arthropods (e.g. ticks, fleas) and their presence in splenic tissue could potentially be explained by the fact that the spleen is primarily responsible for removal of blood-borne parasites from the systemic circulation. The investigators will perform a comprehensive examination of the potential association between Bartonella infection and HSA by comparing the prevalence of Bartonella DNA in tumor and blood samples from both splenic and cardiac HSA cases, and also within and between distant geographical locations in the US. Ultimately, demonstration of a robust association between Bartonella infection and the development of HSA may lead to new opportunities for improved diagnosis, treatment and prevention of this devastating cancer

**Update:** We are on track to accomplish all of our aims for this study. We were able to obtain the initial set of samples on April 26, 2018 so we had a short delay in starting this study. We have now completed all Year I study aims, with the exception of immunohistochemistry and FISH localization of Bartonella organisms within various cell types. An unanticipated complication arose that the mouse monoclonal antibody was no longer being made commercially. B. henselae specific FISH probes have been designed and validation of FISH probes are in-progress. IHC is also in-progress. All qPCR and ddPCR have been completed at this time and samples are waiting for FISH and IHC analysis. As reported above, we have published a manuscript to the Journal of Clinical Microbiology, representing additional research from our AKC-CHF study #02287, which allowed us to define the Western Blotting (WB) criteria for serodiagnosis of bartonellosis in dogs. That work required additional time and research effort to validate WB testing. We are very excited with the qPCR and ddPCR results obtained from the fresh frozen hemangiosarcoma tissues provided by the NIH-CCOGC. The results strongly support a role for Bartonella spp. in the etiopathogenesis of hemangiosarcoma in dogs. The regional study should provide additional insight as to the issue of potential causation. All three of the regions have identified,

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collected and shipped all necessary samples from their region. These samples have been tested by ddPCR, which has required months of validation. Validation of ddPCR is "In Press" in the Journal of Microbiological Methods. Because of the limitations on research activities at during the SARS-CoV2 pandemic, the testing and analysis of the study samples have been delayed. The NCSU College of Veterinary Medicine and the Intracellular Pathogens Research Laboratory have had suspended operations since March 2020. As of July 1, research operations are at limited capacity. Samples will continue to be processed, tested and analyzed as soon as possible given the constraints remaining in place to ensure staff safety. Even though we have had the down time we are still proposing to have this project complete by the end of the study on 1/31/2021.



**Grant 02528:** Developing a Next Generation Sequencing Diagnostic Platform for Tick-Borne Diseases

**Principal Investigator:** Pedro Diniz, DVM, PhD

**Original Project Description** Diagnostic tests based on the detection of DNA from harmful organisms in clinical samples have revolutionized veterinary medicine in the last decades.

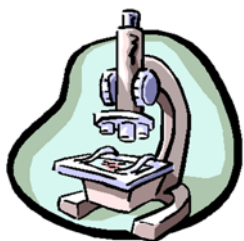
Currently, diagnostic panels for several vectorborne organisms are available through universities and private labs in the USA and abroad. However, the vast majority of results from sick dogs are negative, which frustrates veterinarians and dog owners trying to reach a definitive diagnosis. These panels are based on the detection of previously known DNA sequences of each pathogen, which limits their ability to detect novel organisms. In this study, the investigators will adapt high-throughput next-generation sequencing (NGS) to the detection of tickborne bacteria in dog blood in an effort to overcome the limitations of current diagnostics for tickborne diseases. If successful, increasing the capabilities of NGS to detect infected dogs and to accurately determine which bacteria are responsible for disease will support the development of a better diagnostic tool to simultaneously advance canine and human health. This work expands on Dr. Diniz's previous AKC CHF-funded study #02292.

**Update:** Diagnostic tests based on the detection of DNA from harmful organisms in clinical samples have revolutionized veterinary medicine in the last decades. Currently, diagnostic panels for several vectorborne diseases (VBDs) are available through universities and private labs in the USA and abroad. However, the vast majority of results from sick dogs are negative, which frustrates veterinarians dog owners trying to reach a definitive diagnosis. These panels are based on the detection of previously known DNA sequences of each microorganism, which limits their ability to detect novel organisms. Using an innovative approach, our study proposes the adaptation of high-throughput next-generation sequencing (NGS) to the detection of tick-borne bacteria in dog blood to overcome the limitations of the current diagnostics. Our previous results showed the potential of NGS in detecting known and potentially novel tick-borne bacteria. However, adaptations and optimizations of the technique are required for adequate efficiency and accuracy in detecting tick-borne bacteria. With support from the AKC Canine Health Foundation, we are investigating methods to concentrate

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the harmful bacteria in clinical samples, precisely detect them using NGS, and better characterize these bacteria using genetic sequences. Our most recent efforts have focused on finding new and better “DNA fingerprints” of these harmful bacteria, so we can precisely detect them from blood samples of naturally-infected dogs. Currently, we are performing a large-scale search among billions of DNA sequences of hundreds of tick-borne organisms known to cause disease in dogs and other mammals, to find the ideal and unique “DNA fingerprint”. Collectively, our efforts may yield a novel diagnostic platform for the broad detection of tick- and blood-borne organisms in dogs. The AKC-CHF support has been instrumental in the development of such diagnostic tools in veterinary medicine.



**Grant 02437-MOU:** Characterization of Renal Disease in American Boxer Dogs

**Principal Investigator:** Jessica Hokamp, DVM, PhD

**Original Project Description:** Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is often a progressive and fatal disease in dogs. Boxer dogs appear to have a predisposition for development of CKD, suggesting that kidney disease in this breed might be heritable. Studies in Europe report an increased frequency of Boxers with kidney and urinary tract maldevelopments leading to CKD, termed "juvenile nephropathy". The investigators' International Veterinary Renal Pathology Service (IVRPS) recently found that juvenile nephropathies are a main underlying cause of CKD in young Boxer dogs; however, there are no published studies that have determined the predominant cause(s) of CKD in Boxer dogs in the United States. The investigators hypothesize that pedigreed Boxers in the U.S. may be afflicted by several causes of CKD, including but not exclusive to juvenile nephropathies. To assess the most common causes of CKD in Boxers, the investigators will perform detailed examination of medical records and archived tissue samples to retrospectively reveal the predominant cause(s) and prevalence of kidney disease in Boxers and will also prospectively collect and analyze tissue and fluid samples from pedigreed families of Boxers afflicted by the predominant types of kidney diseases. This work will determine if certain types of kidney disease in Boxers follow a heritable pattern and might be related to genetic mutations, allowing for future studies on genetic analysis if an inheritance pattern of disease is determined.

**Update:** Boxer dogs appear to have a predisposition for development of chronic kidney disease, and there is concern that renal disease in Boxers might have a genetic basis. There are no published studies that have determined the predominant cause(s) of kidney disease in Boxers in the United States. Further, a genetic link between Boxers with kidney disease has not been identified. Our primary goal is to identify and characterize the predominant type(s) of kidney disease in American Boxer dogs to determine if there is a hereditary link between Boxers with specific types of kidney disease.

The major objective in this study is to diagnose the type(s) of changes that occur in kidneys of Boxer dogs with evidence of kidney disease. Collection of kidney tissue, serum and urine are all routine steps in the diagnosis of kidney disease. We have completed approximately half of this objective through reevaluation of kidney

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samples that were previously archived at two universities and through prospective evaluation of kidney tissues, urine, and blood from Boxers with suspected kidney disease. Although there are a variety of renal diseases that appear to affect Boxers, we have found that there are 2 forms of kidney disease that occur most commonly in this breed. After final characterization of kidney disease types, we can then evaluate the pedigrees to determine the best candidate genes (and/or dogs) for genetic testing. This will also help us determine which type of genetic analysis would be the most suitable.

We have re-evaluated archived samples from Boxers that were autopsied or biopsied prior to the commencement of the study at the Ohio State University and we are planning to re-evaluate archived samples from Texas A&M University as well.

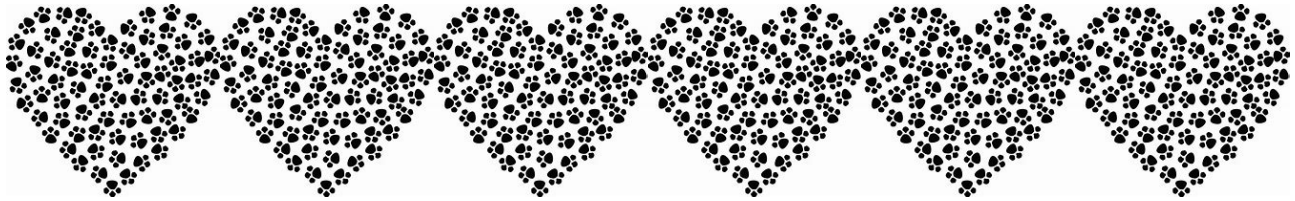
We are also continuing to collect kidney tissue, urine, serum and whole blood from Boxers with recently or newly diagnosed kidney disease. Learn how you can participate in this study at <https://vet.osu.edu/vmc/cto/clinical-trials/characterization-kidney-disease-boxers>. We encourage owners to allow kidney biopsies to be obtained from their Boxers with recently diagnosed kidney disease so that we can try to detect the early stages of disease, however, we also accept autopsied kidney samples. We anticipated that submission of minimally invasive samples (blood and urine) will represent many more dogs/pedigrees than the kidney biopsies, and indeed this has been the case. However, we encourage owners that have to elect euthanasia to consider providing kidney tissue to the study to provide a complete picture of the disease process. Urine and blood samples can also be submitted from Boxers that cannot be biopsied and from dogs related to those affected by kidney disease, whose owners would be willing to consent to sample collection. These samples will help us to create an extensive pedigree of affected and unaffected Boxers. As mentioned previously, biopsied kidney tissue, urine and serum are all considered routine diagnostic samples, which will help guide therapy for the dog. However, whole blood for DNA isolation is not considered to be a sample used for diagnosis of kidney disease. We obtained approval from the Clinical Research Committee at the Ohio State University, where the whole blood will be processed to also harvest DNA. With this approval, we created a flyer to distribute to Boxer breeders and owners, as well as all veterinarians that submit samples to the International Veterinary Renal Pathology Service. We have worked with the American Boxer Club and the American Boxer Charitable Foundation to distribute the flyer and have already received inquiries about sample submission.

If one or more of the most common types of kidney disease in Boxers demonstrates a pattern of inheritance, then we will select the best candidate dogs for genetic sequencing. This last step will be done in conjunction with analysis of the pedigree and the guidance of the geneticist for our study. This type of informed approach will ensure that we are examining DNA from Boxers that are affected by a similar disease process.



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### ABCF Membership Chair Update

Dear Boxer Friends,

School is starting and that will always be the beginning of a new year for me, even though my own children have not been in school for 25 years. And this year, my grandchildren have gone back to school – in their dining rooms!!!

Yes, it's the year of the pandemic and nothing is the same as it was. ABC was cancelled as were most of the shows during the spring and summer. Our dogs are waiting for that ONE point to finish and our puppies may age out of puppy classes without ever setting foot in the ring.

With the cancellation of ABC, ABCF was unable to hold its biggest money raising event of the year, our auction. The auction usually raises between \$25,000 and \$35,000 to fund research studies in boxer health. We know we cannot possibly replace that income but it would be a huge help if every boxer breeder and every exhibitor were to join ABCF for the year 2020!!!

If you haven't joined the ABCF for the calendar year 2020, this would be a wonderful time to do so!!!

As I'm sure you're aware, the Foundation was created to fund research into the problems that affect our beloved breed and that goal remains our sole mission. The money raised by the foundation has funded studies in boxer cardiomyopathy, sub-aortic stenosis, thyroid disease, degenerative myelopathy, and cancer, including lymphoma and hemangiosarcoma.

For as little as \$25.00, the cost of ONE show entry, you can become a member of ABCF. By clicking on the following link, <http://abcfoundation.org>, then hitting Online Membership Form on the left side, you can print the form and send your check or card number by email, snail mail, PayPal or by fax. But PLEASE take the time NOW to join the ABCF and help our boxers to lead longer and healthier lives. I'd also like to add that cost of membership has remained the same since the inception of ABCF. How many organizations can say THAT?

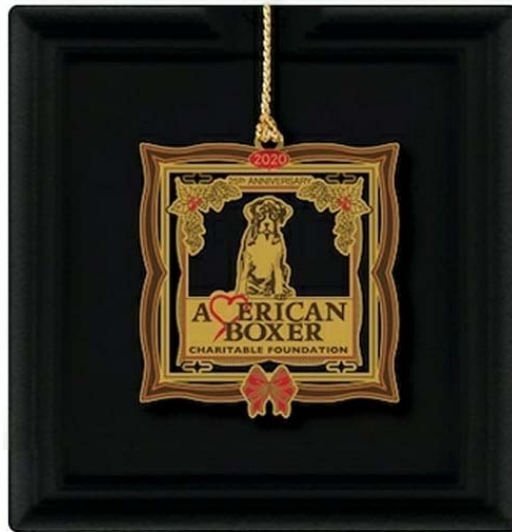
Please everyone, stay safe and healthy! Wear your mask and stay six feet from others!

Bobbi Compton

Membership Chairman

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All 2020 ABCF Members & Donors will receive a

~ LIMITED EDITION ~

ABCF 25th Anniversary Ornament

(2.323" width x 2.603" height)

Not a Member.....join TODAY!

<https://www.abcfoundation.org/membership.html>

With the holidays right around the corner...these will make lovely stocking stuffers and help benefit health research for our beloved breed!

Ornaments are available in our online store ( <https://www.abcfoundation.org/store.html> ).

Shipping to a destination outside of the United States MUST contact us via email ( [webmaster@abcfoundation.org](mailto:webmaster@abcfoundation.org) ) for postal rates before ordering.

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**Thank you to all the current 2020 ABCF Members!!**

Linda and Skip Abel  
Stephanie and David Abraham  
Patricia Adams  
Ann Anderson  
Vera Anderson  
Connie Back  
Candace Bartos  
Bates, Bill and Jan Montarsi  
Susan Bell  
Janet Blevins  
Tiffany Brigante  
Rhoda and Gordon Brouillette  
Joyce Baker Brown  
Mary Frances Burleson  
Joyce Campbell  
Suzie Campbell  
Carol McGuire  
Mary Lou Carroll  
Bob and Bobbi Compton  
Holly Cook  
Barbra Cotton-Beatty  
Crane Investment  
Jennifer Crane  
Sharon Darby, Sharon  
Fran and Warren Davidson  
Jewell Dunning  
Kim Dye  
James Eden  
James Eden  
Bob Erickson  
Jacqueline Fabrizzio  
Claire Fallon  
Lori Ferguson  
Sharon and Randy Fosseen  
James and Anita Franz  
Renee Fulcer

Lisa Fullam  
B. Thomas Fuson  
Donna Galante  
Shaun Garrity  
Christina Ghimenti  
Rebecca Gilchrist  
Glenn Glass  
Bob and Lyn Grimm  
Robert and Grace Hallock  
JoAnn Hart  
Nanette Hauprich  
Connie Haywood  
Dawn Heath  
Mary Hickey  
Teresa Hill  
Jeannie Hoffman  
Brynn Holic  
Marion and Laurence Hughes  
Theresa Janzen  
Stephania Jenks  
Jill Hootman  
Linda Johnson  
Maribess Johnson  
Sam and Teresa Kaminski  
Priscilla Kilman  
Phillip Koenig  
Jennifer Krutilla  
Nadine Kuhlemeier  
Melodee Lasky  
Carol and Tom Latta  
Julie Lawrence  
Jeannie Mattheiss  
Kathleen Meehling  
Vickie Millard  
Lee Morris  
Jessica Murphy

Mary And Steven Myers  
Bette Jo and Dwight Nunn  
Sandy and Steve Orr  
Peggy Otto  
Deb Owens  
Barbara Palmer  
Barbara Peiper  
Erin and Tom Rezmer  
Richard Ramsburg  
Delma Robinson  
Michelle Rocca  
Jennifer Rumping  
Scottie and Bethany Russell  
Sally and Gary Ryan  
Lynn Schaefer  
Debbie Schlesinger  
Phyllis and Robert Snyder  
Cheri M. Soileau  
Sharon K. Steckler  
Jan Stitt  
Susan and Larry Stogner  
Debbie Struff  
Brenda Stuckey  
Sharon L. Taylor  
Sue Ann Thompson  
Lauri Travis  
Tina and Bill Truesdale  
Julain Truskowski  
Jane Tully  
Teri Underhill  
Robin Vaughn  
Kathy Veglahn  
Darlene Vickers  
Barbara Wadge  
Maryann Watkins  
Susan Wooden

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Mark Young  
Linda Zazula

Allegheny Boxer Club  
Blue Grass Boxer Club  
Bluebonnet Boxer Club  
Boxer Club of Milwaukee

Boxer Club of Oklahoma  
Central Indiana Boxer Club  
Connecticut Boxer Club  
Eastern Boxer Club  
Heart of America BC  
Houston Boxer Club  
Middlesex Boxer Club  
Minnesota Boxer Club  
Missouri Valley BC

New Jersey Boxer Club  
Pacific Northwest Boxer Club  
Potomac Boxer Club  
Saucon Valley Boxer Club  
Southeast Florida Boxer Club  
Southwest Florida Boxer Club  
Tree Towns Boxer Club  
Upstate New York Boxer Club



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To become and ABCF member complete the form below or visit the website

<https://www.abcfoundation.org/membership.html>

1. Select your membership level:

\$25  \$50  \$75  \$100  Other

2. Select how you want to receive the ABCF Newsletter:

Online  Via US Mail (There is an additional fee of \$10 annually)

Pay by check or money order payable to the American Boxer Charitable Foundation or use MasterCard or Visa to join or renew your membership. You can also join, renew or pay online via our website.

Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Method of payment:  Check  Money Order  MasterCard  Visa

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expires: \_\_\_\_\_ CVC: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete form and mail to:

**American Boxer Charitable Foundation**  
P.O. Box 4194, Gettysburg, PA 17325-4194  
Email: [treasurer@abcfoundation.org](mailto:treasurer@abcfoundation.org)  
[www.abcfoundation.org](http://www.abcfoundation.org)

