



## The Saint Bernard Club of America

### Entering into its *third century* in America and member-club of the American Kennel Club

By John Cox



The Saint Bernard Club of America (SBCA) is a club rich in history, being one of the oldest breed clubs in the United States of America. We now are entering into our third century! It has been reported the Saint Bernard first came to America in the 1830s, having been sent to a Mr. Skinner by General Lafayette. In the 1870s as the sport of dogs started to grow in the United States, the popularity of the Saint Bernard grew along with this new pastime. To put this in a historical time frame, the 1870s was the decade following the American Civil War. We are talking stagecoach days! The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, and Orville and Wilbur's first flight was in 1903--a quarter of a century later!

The original Saint Bernard National Club was formed on **February 22, 1888** and has been reorganized from time-to-time (December 30, 1897 & March 1, 1932), but it has had a continuous history as a member-club with the American Kennel Club (AKC) since 1898. The Saint Bernard was one of the first breeds recognized in America by the AKC. Keep in mind, the AKC was founded only four years earlier in 1884.

We are also now entering into our third century of National Specialty shows. They have been on and off during the early years (1888-1934) but almost continuous from 1935 to date. In 1944, 1945, 1947 and 1962 there were no national specialties. The early specialties were only conformation shows and then in 1974 Obedience was added to the National. In 1988 the club hosted a Centennial Celebration and the 50<sup>th</sup> National Specialty Show (counted after 1935) in the mountains of Denver, CO. At this show new Working Dog Trials were introduced which entailed Draft, Weight Pulling and the first (and only) AKC Saint Bernard Tracking Test. New SBCA titles were also introduced for these new events. Who knows, maybe down the road, we will also have Agility Trials!

2003 has marked the 65<sup>th</sup> SBCA National Specialty since 1935. The show was held in Rio Rancho, NM. Saint Bernard fanciers descended from around the world to watch the many planned events of conformation, sweepstakes, obedience, draft work, weight pulls, national board meeting, national general membership meeting, seminars and the annual dinner. In fact, it was a "National Week" as there were also preceding Saint Bernard Specialties!

The Saint Bernard Club of America has been a long time pioneer club in many areas. Here is a "short" list of some of those accomplishments:

1. **One of the first** clubs to put together an AKC breed video.
2. **One of the first** clubs to produce an Illustrated Commentary to the Breed Standard.
3. **Maintains and supports** the original 1888 Breed Standard.
4. **One of the first** clubs to produce a National Club web page. <http://www.saintbernardclub.org/>
5. **Only club** to have a comprehensive breed database and Hall of Fame reaching back to 1877 plus, making it *all* available on the web free of charge. <http://clubs.akc.org/saints/Archives/Welcome.htm>
6. **Developed an extensive Library** on the breed over the past decades for the membership's use.
7. **Continues to award** the historical (circa 1900) national perpetual trophies at the national show-- truly linking each new specialty to our rich history of the past.
8. *Working on a breed CD*

***The Saint Bernard Club of America—one of the few breed clubs in the United States spanning three centuries and going strong into the future. Membership is stewardship of the breed we love!***