

# Papillon Club of America Health & Genetics



## CARLA HASS



I grew up with Bassett Hounds, but had a long hiatus from dog ownership during the time that I was in college and graduate school.

Having earned a bachelor's in science in biology, I realized that I wanted to learn more so I enrolled in graduate school at the University of Maryland, College Park, where I earned my master's and doctoral degrees. My studies focused on population genetics and molecular systematic, the study of relationships among organisms using information from DNA and proteins. My dissertation focused on a group of lizards found mainly in the West Indies, so I was fortunate (and still am) to be able to include travel to exotic places as part of my research.

In 1988 I came to Penn State, in the heart of Pennsylvania, as a post doctoral fellow; currently I am a faculty member in the biology department. My primary duties are teaching, but I still maintain a small research program and stay current on new developments in molecular evolution, including the determination of the molecular basis of inherited diseases, such as progressive retinal atrophy, which is found in Papillons.

When my husband and I decided to take the plunge back into dog ownership ( he grew up with Collies ), I did a lot of research to find a breed that would be the best fit for our lifestyle. I also hoped to be able to enjoy performance sports with a dog. The Papillon was the ideal combination of temperament, size, and appearance I still catch myself just watching my dogs because they are so beautiful.

Both Gusto and Amy were retired champions, and we felt so fortunate that the breeders entrusted them to us. I became involved with the PCA, not only to learn more about the breed and to meet people who share that interest, but to contribute what I can to support Papillons. Gusto and I have enjoyed taking many agility and obedience classes; he earned his CGC at the 1999 PCA National, as did Amy.

However, I have come to realize that competing in dog sports, both performance and conformation, is really more than a hobby, it is a lifestyle that my current career does not allow enough time for, but definitely something to look forward to in retirement. For now, I have chosen to contribute to the breed by serving the PCA, including service on the Genetic Committee, which seemed a natural fit given my training in genetics.

This committee is of critical importance to the future of the breed and is a very active committee. I look forward to continuing to work toward a better understanding of genetic disorders in this breed and the application of this knowledge to ensure the health of Papillons for generations to come. I have also served on the Constitution and Bylaws Revisions Committee, and the Rescue Review Committee. Locally, I am president and medical coordinator of Center County PAWS, an animal welfare organization involved primarily in rescue and placement of companion animals, as well as promotion of responsible ownership.