The Swiss Entlebucher club (SKES)* has a simple but comprehensive approach to their breeding program. Primarily their focus is to increase the gene pool, adhere to the Entlebucher standard through the Ankörung, and maintain a health history of their Entlebuchers in a shared database. By limiting their goals, the Swiss are able to achieve a healthy companion dog which is consistent in type and temperament.

*Everybody can join the SKES, even children with the OK of the parents.

EXPANDING GENE POOL
Since 1997, before the blood test was available, the Swiss elected, as a club, not to breed any dogs that were carriers of PRA, (which we understand tested the resolve of many). At the same time they realized that to have a healthier dog they would have to increase their breed gene pool. They went about this in two ways:

• They discontinued their Championship Program
• They increased the fee of stud dogs to entice more owners to keep their dogs at stud

First, we were told almost immediately that SKES had dropped their Championship Program to concentrate on the Ankörung. Paul Boss said that the dog show is looking for different qualities than the Ankörung. “At special occasions we organize dog shows. The last time was in 2001 when we celebrated 75 years. Sometimes we make dog shows together with the Federation of Swiss Breeds (a special interest group of the SKG). This always causes a lot of work and expenses.”

• SKES is not looking for one or two dogs that best fit the Entlebucher standard (which is how dogs are judged in a show).
• SKES is not looking to breed to the bitch or dog that has earned a championship title.
• SKES is looking to incorporate all dogs and bitches that pass the health requirements and the character/structure part of the Ankörung.
• SKES is looking, whenever possible, to breed a bitch to a stud dog only once.
• SKES has found through experience, by breeding primarily to 'title' holding dogs/bitches, the breed pool DECREASES, which INCREASES health problems.
• 15 years ago, there were only 6 males for breeding. Twenty years ago, the club would pay a stud dog breeder chf100 (100 Swiss francs). As an incentive to encourage breeders to keep their males at stud, they increased the breeding fee seven-fold.
• To their success, the club now has 36 breeding females and 15 stud dogs.

SKES IS LOOKING AT THE LARGER PICTURE - this could not be stressed enough. They are breeding for the FUTURE HEALTH of their dogs. Looking at the 'whole dog' through the Ankörung, dogs of exceptional quality are given the opportunity to become part of a larger breeding pool.

CHAMPIONSHIP PROGRAM
DOG SHOW/EXIBITIONS
• A dog show is an exposition. It is not the same thing as the Ankörung.
• One Swiss put it this way: "In Germany for example, the dogs have to visit two exhibitions before they test in their Ankörung. This is not the same with us. It is of everyone’s own free will to visit dog shows. The show titles can be registered in the pedigrees, but THEY ARE NOT RELEVENT. There are a lot of dog owners who cannot afford (or don’t like) visiting dog shows. Others visit dog shows all over Europe because they know that there are only one or two Entlebuchers….so they get good results!"
• "At special occasions we organize dog shows. The last time was in 2001 when our club celebrated 75 years. Sometimes we make dog shows together with the federation of Swiss breeds (a special interest group of SKG). This always causes a lot of work and expenses."
• Paul Boss made a point of telling us that even if a dog had done very well in shows and earned a record number of wins, that would by no means insure that that dog would pass the Ankörung.
SKES PRACTICAL WHOLE DOG APPROACH

Health issues aside, it is the goal of SKES to see their Entlebuchers as complete dogs. Again, they keep their approach simple so that they can monitor those aspects important to their program. We were told several times that the judges were considering the following priorities: Type, Bone, Character, and Movement in the evaluation of each dog that participated in the Ankörung.

Type, Bone, Character, and Movement
For this part of the report we have drawn from four North American books written by and for judges to shed some light on these four elements of the complete dog. From these, we can compare and contrast thought processes. These books are; “The Dog In Action”, by McDowell Lyon, “Solving the Mysteries of Breed Type,” by Richard Beauchamp, “An Eye for a Dog”, by Robert W. Cole, and “Dog Judging”, by Anna Katherine Nicholas.

Type
Anna Katherine Nicholas suggests TYPE and breed character as synonymous. “TYPE, refers to the combination of distinguishing features which add up to make each breed’s stamp of individuality. A dog to be “typey”, or of correct type, must be strong in those points, or features, considered by the Standard as characteristic of his breed.”

Robert Cole writes, “What Is Type? In judging dogs, Type is considered essential…. Ask 10 judges to define type and you are likely to receive 10 different answers—and they could all be correct.”

Beauchamp refers to Breed Type as being “a successful sum of the parts. The operative word here is “sum” rather than “parts.” If you can make that distinction in the dogs you observe, it will help you tremendously in understanding why some dogs are said to possess great type while others are not.”

What is astounding to Becky and me is the Swiss have created a 40 component document for use at the Ankörung that takes the guess-work out of determining what elements are considered for TYPE. This document/evaluation sheet is available to anyone who wants to understand which “parts” make up the ”sum” of the Entlebucher TYPE, i.e. height and length ratios, top-line, tail carriage, etc.
Granted, most of the dogs we saw whether young or old were from the breeding pool. However, of the 50 or more dogs that we saw on our trip, what really stood out was the uniformity of TYPE of the Swiss Entlebucher. These dogs are all very consistent in their looks.

**Type** - I think it is fair to say, if Swiss EMD had bone, character and movement but did not meet 'Type', this dog would be denied access to the breed pool.

**Bone**
We saw two styles of dogs in Switzerland - the 'old style', say from about 9 years and older, are larger in height, BONE size and coarseness than the 'new style' that SKES breeders are now intentionally breeding, which is a smaller, more 'sportif' dog. This smaller, 'sportif' dog also has good BONE.

McDowell Lyon states, "Observation also tends to show a linkage between bone size and the disposition of the dog, or perhaps we should say nervous energy and reflexive action. Watch closely the dispositions of the small boned, finely drawn specimens of any given breed and you will find that they more often have the "guts" or intestinal fortitude to keep right on going, right on fighting—they are the "do or die" fellows. On the other hand, you will find more shy specimens among them as a group. Heavy-boned individuals are quite likely endowed with a happy-go-lucky disposition, not given much to displaying an abundance of energy: they are steady, less apt to be shy whether of gun or strangers and are not as inclined to bite. These particular facts have been carefully watched by a veterinarian who has handled personally far more than 100,000 dogs."

**Bone** - I think it is fair to say, if a Swiss EMD had type, movement, and character, but didn't have substantial 'Bone', this dog would be denied access to the breed pool.

**CHARACTER**
Mr. Beauchamp states, "The question then is, what do all breed standards speak to? The answer, without a doubt, is origin and purpose. It's in that message that we find the characteristics that enable a breed to be what it was intended to be. There was an intention—a purpose—in every breed developed."
Although some may consider the job performed by a herding dog of greater significance than that of a dog of purely decorative breed, both have purpose—one to work in a particular manner, and the other to please in a certain way."

The Character of the Entlebucher is of such importance that within the Ankörung the Swiss choose to create two separate evaluations, one for character/temperament and the other for structure/conformation. As we mentioned before, the Swiss are looking for their dogs to have solid character that would make each dog, first and foremost, a good companion dog. This dog will be loyal, sociable and have a good relationship with its owner. At this time, the SKES has focused on companion dog qualities OVER performance qualities such as agility, herding, and carting.

‘Even-tempered’ and ‘calm’ are words to describe the Character of the dogs we met. What we didn’t see was aggressiveness toward other dogs. The Swiss feel this is more a question of education and socialization rather than breeding.

**Character**—I think it is fair to say, if a Swiss EMD had type, movement, and bone, but didn’t exhibit acceptable character, this dog would be denied access to the breed pool.

**MOVEMENT**

McDowell Lyon says - “The Gait of any dog is not a single factor like the color of his eyes or type of his coat but is a composite of his entire physical make-up. Except for color and marking, the other sections of the Breed Standard have some influence on gait and movement. The very purpose for which this dog was developed demanded efficient movement in the field and we should maintain this as the foundation of which we continue to breed.”

Richard Beauchamp writes, “Movement tells all,” a tried and true axiom of those who appreciate fine dogs. It is important to understand that the movement must “tell all” about its own breed.”
Movement - I think it is fair to say, if a Swiss EMD had type, bone, and character, but didn't exhibit acceptable movement, this dog would be denied access to the breed pool.

DOGS IN SWISS SOCIETY

Dogs are welcome most everywhere in Switzerland. We were most surprised when we took lunch with Maja, Miggi Schneider (breeder of Chinook’s not-so-distant relatives) and Hans & Rosy Kaufmann (breeder of Chinook’s grandmother and the puppy that was sold to actress Rene Russo) at the upscale restaurant Gasthaus Bahnhof, when Asta and Sira were both invited in with us. WOW!!! At the end of lunch the restaurant owner, Maggie Erni brought in her male ‘Astor vom Vorderrain’ to visit with Asta and Sira, much to our delight. This would never happen in the U.S.

In Switzerland, there are countless trails to hike on, up and over mountains, through farmland and in villages and cities. Dogs are allowed on-leash to walk and hike these pathways. Along the pathways are green metal boxes on stands, containing poop bags and a place to dispose of used bags. It is assumed that if dogs are on-leash, then there is room for all, wildlife included. In the U.S. dogs are barred from most national and state parks and from private land. The Swiss way of including dogs seems so simple.

On an outdoor trek, imagine our surprise when we were able to take Niro and Sira to the top of Mt. Niesen. We chose to take the funicular (a cable car)
midway up the mountain and then hike to Niesen’s summit with dogs in tow - a $35 trip for humans was free for the dogs!

On another outdoor adventure, we met a German couple 11,300 feet up on the glacier field at the top of Jungfraujoch. They were hiking with their two large Briards. Later we found out that while we paid $75.00 each for our train ascent to the summit, (which took over an hour and a change of trains), their dogs made the same trip for free! Would this ever be possible in the U.S.?

Because dogs are welcome in public all over the country, they have the opportunity for great socialization from day one. This may be a contributing factor in the Swiss Entlebuchers' stable temperament.

**SWISS DOGS AT WORK**
As we mentioned earlier in our report, the Swiss are not evaluating their Entlebuchers for specific performance traits. Rather they are evaluating their dogs for solid companion dog traits. Therefore, we were very excited to see some Swiss Entles at work.

**HERDING**
When asked why SKES doesn’t test for herding instinct, Paul Boss made two interesting comments. First, he said Entlebuchers as a breed HAVE the herding instinct, so it is unnecessary to test or breed for that characteristic. Secondly, he said that most Entlebuchers are used as companion dogs in Switzerland, a country with so many cows. Their concern is that if they breed with a consideration for herding instinct, that instinct may become too strong. EMDs with a strong herding gene could prove risky in a country where there is a cow in every pasture.

Knowing the Swiss don’t test for the herding instinct fueled our deep desire to observe a Swiss Entlebucher Mountain Dog working cows. With Maja’s help we were able to visit two such dogs. One was Freia vom Schärlig, owned by Maria & Franz Unternährer in Marbach. The other dog was Glenn vom Kornried, owned by Ruedi and Rita Renggli in Finsterwald. Both dogs lived on dairy farms at opposite ends of the enchanting valley of Entlebuch.
Freia, age (2 ½) had the task of moving adult milking cows in the middle of the day when the cows understandably were not interested in returning to the barn. She had a great spirit. Although she would have been happy to chase after the cows, Freia limited her herding to the moments Maria would direct her. Freia was always very attentive to Maria, always looking to her for instructions. Once she had done her work, Maria put Freia on the leash while talking with us. During that time one large cow came forward to that little Entlebucher’s face, either very curious or wanting to test her. At that moment Freia immediately took a strong stance to back the cow off, as if to say, “Hey, I am the boss here!” She was very theatrical and we all laughed.

In Finsterwald, Glenn’s task was a little different. It was the end of the day and he and his owner went out alone into a small field to bring some young calves into the barn. Ruedi has done a wonderful job training Glenn. When it was time to get the cows, Ruedi collected his staff, which signaled ‘time to work’. At that moment, he asked Glenn to join up. Once Glenn was in a sit-stay, Ruedi moved away from Glenn and asked him to come. That done, they were off. Glenn is still a young dog, maybe 18 months, but it was clear he knew what was expected. As Ruedi approached the yearlings, Glenn circled around to get the calves started. In the process of bringing the cows in, Glenn always circled back to Ruedi to check in. Just at the gate, one young calf got away and Ruedi read it instantly. Glenn, watching Ruedi’s body language, understood that this calf was meant to be his. With great speed and enthusiasm Glenn circled around and turned the calf through the gate, then closed in behind as the cows entered the barn. Job well done!
Most members of the SKES that we met came from a background of dairy farming whose families have been breeding cows for generations. It is not uncommon for Swiss farmers to exhibit their cattle at cow shows/sales, such as the one we witnessed in Aeschi’s bank parking lot! Their background in cattle transfers over to their understanding of quality animals. Although they may not be interested in breaking down every characteristic of a dog’s structure and temperament as we Americans do, we did find that the Swiss breeders we met had a distinct respect and connection with their dog as well as an aptitude for discerning quality.

Note of interest: Each cow has its own bell. The farmer knows the sound of each bell, and thus the cow. Due to many foggy days in Switzerland, often the farmer can’t see his cows and must rely on the bells to monitor their whereabouts. Calves have small bells. Sheep and goats wear even smaller bells. The bells clang with each bite of grass. They must all be DEAF!

DOG THERAPY
It was really interesting how Niro was always so vigilant when people came to the door and that he almost never got that friendly with Steve. However when it came to his dog therapy work there was a calmness about Niro, a state of non-resistance that was remarkable.

We were fortunate to accompany Maja and her dogs Sira and Niro for a two-hour Doggie Therapy session at a private facility for disabled adults. The session is a weekly visit with physically and mentally disabled adults who are restricted to wheelchairs. For privacy reasons, we were not allowed to take photos.

Interactions between these two dogs and 5 patients often occurred on tabletops or the patient’s wheelchair tray, which enabled the interaction between the adults and dogs to be a more physical one. The patients were assisted at every moment, as their movements had no rhyme nor reason. At all times both Sira and Niro showed extreme gentleness and patience. Their
temperament was solid. The not-knowing-what-was-coming-next aspect of the patients' behaviors contributed to the intensity of the session. At the end, we observers were exhausted!

**STRUCTURAL HEALTH PRIORITIES**

**TAILS**

**Intro**
The tail is a major issue to the Swiss. You could say the tail is 'all important'. Paul Boss spent no less than a half hour explaining the significance of the tail medically, structurally, and as a breeding element. Here are the concerns of the Swiss on the importance of the complete tail.

**Issues of Humane Practices**
- In 1997, the SKG/SCS instituted a no-docking policy. Docking is defined as cutting the vertebrae.
- For humane practices, the SKG/SCS has considered the practice of docking for appearance unnecessary and cruel.
- This practice is based on the Swiss Animal Protection Law.

**Medical Issues/Types of Tails**
- Paul told us that the only time a tail can be surgically docked is if there is a medical indication determined by a veterinarian. That indication would be, for example, if the tail were twisted like a pig’s tail in proximity to the anus, impeding elimination and leaving the rear area soiled.
- Tails that are crooked beyond the vertebrae can be surgically altered.
- Breeding short tail to short tail can be a lethal factor; it can be the cause of cryptorchisme, prognatisme, navel hernia, hare-lip or further genetic problems.

**Structure**
The Swiss believe that a healthy Entlebucher tail is an extension of a healthy vertebrae. A healthy Entlebucher tail is carried like a German Shepard's tail or saber tail. It is a tail that is fully developed in length without crooks or kinks or curls when in a relaxed position. The Swiss are making a concerted effort to breed Entlebuchers with the correct tail. Their records support that when they breed only correct tails, the instances of kinked, crooked, or partially formed tails are declining.
The tail sets the angle of the leg. When the tail is tightly curled, it diminishes angulation, which creates imbalance in the structure of the dog. Absence of angulation of the stifle can cause too much of a dip in the topline and results in a high, rear end.

Since a curled tail usually means less angle on the back legs or a straighter stifle, the larger issue is that there is some Appenzeller in the line. The Swiss do have a problem which we in North America don’t have. There are a lot of Appenzellers in the Swiss countryside and there is a record of a few getting into the Entlebucher lines years ago.

**Breed Issues – Appenzeller**
The Swiss have 2 very similar breeds with very different tails - the Entlebucher and the Appenzeller. These 2 breeds of dog co-exist in a small geographic location. Because of this, the Swiss must be vigilant in keeping these two breeds separate. So, it is not surprising that any intact male and female Entlebucher that has a ring-like tail tightly curling over and touching its back, will have its pedigree marked ‘Not For Breeding’.

**SKG/SCS Regulation of Tail**
We were told that through SKG/SCS regulations, that Max Heller always goes to see each litter with new breeders or litters with bob-tail puppies at day three -

- to assist the new breeders in any way, while checking the whelping site and the health of the puppies
- to see and record the tails (natural bob-tails must be recorded by the breed commission to protect breeder from accusations of docking)
ACL
The ruptured anterior cruciate ligament is a looming problem that will most likely get more attention, now that PRA is no longer an issue. Paul Boss said this would likely be their next priority, which will be determined at their next general meeting. At this point, reduction of body weight and hard activity is the only preventative medicine to deter ACL ruptures.

Ectopic Ureters
“Paul Boss is not experienced because this disease is rare with the EMD. Dogs with EU can be operated and should be castrated at the same time. Some years ago there was one bitch supposed to develop EU on her puppies. She was retired from breeding after the second litter. Last year we had two puppies (not the same parents) with EU. Both of them had short tails...”

Puppy Stuff
In a discussion on puppies, Paul says that when he has a litter, it belongs to him to raise and enjoy. Only when the puppies are ready to go home will he find the right family for each one. He doesn't like to send his puppies abroad because he likes to visit them! It is specified in his contract, that when he visits an owner and doesn't like what he sees, he can take the puppy back. He will reimburse the owner.

Generally, 3-4 weeks before puppies whelp, the bitch is given a distemper shot. This gives the puppy good antibodies from the mother’s milk. This holds over until the owner starts the shots, but by this time, immunity is at its lowest point. This is the time to work with puppies at home, as they cannot be around other dogs or puppies.

- 3 weeks-16 weeks is the most impressionable period
- 3-4 weeks puppies are noise sensitive
- Play with puppies everyday
- 6-8 weeks - walk them on leash
- 5-7 weeks - take to convalescent home - get used to old people if puppy is going to be used as a therapy dog or not
- “To worm the puppies - Paul Boss consulted with Prof. Dr. K. Pfister (Parasitology (?) University of Munich). Here is the latest theory:
  - The bitch should be wormed with MILBEMAX 2 weeks before the date of birth
  - Puppies: 2 weeks, 1 month, 3 months wormed with BANMINTH
Summary - Part 2
Most of what we have presented here was assimilated from extensive conversations with Max and Trudy Heller at their home; with Paul Boss & the judges at the Ankörung; with Christine Langenegger in Grindlewald; with the various breeders we visited; and again with Paul Boss and Maja Kleinjenni at her B&B (where we stayed).

The pattern that is emerging here is, it is impossible to learn everything about the EMD in 2 weeks, but the 2 weeks did give us the opportunity to build good friendships. These friendships have set the stage for ongoing communication, so that when questions arise, we will know whom to ask!