

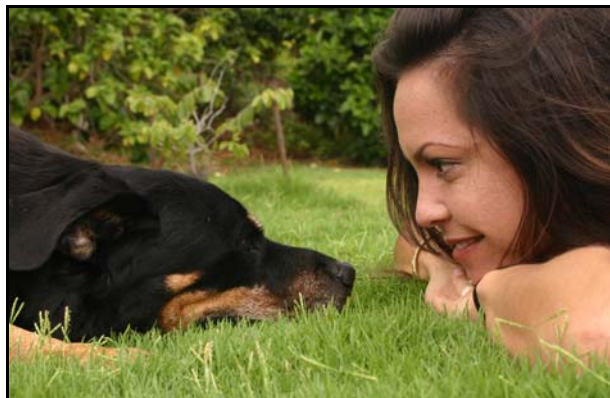
The Secret Society

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Lehua Pacheco & her 11-year old companion "Castro"

I suspect my husband is a member of a Secret Society. Some of your spouses, or family members, like my husband, could be members of a Secret Society, too. A society whose members are made up of people like him, all closely related to someone who has a passion for dogs. Outside of this society, are some of you who I describe as "the lucky ones". This would be those of you who have spouses who are just as involved with Rottweilers as you are. You get to plan your family vacations around dog events. You do not need to justify why dog supplements or medications cost more than the human kind. I would imagine that the rhythm of your house runs like a well-oiled machine, happily humming along with everyone on board with the same interest, the same intensity and the same goals.

Then you have folks like me. Married, or significantly linked, to a "non-doggie person" and there is a wide variety within our kind. There are those whose spouses are totally oblivious to our sport; but, yet live happily amongst us, supportive in allowing us to do as much and how much we want. I believe their mantra in life is "if they are happy, I am happy". It is as if they always get the green light in any endeavor. You can spot them right away. Their spouses are the ones with the permanent smiles etched on their faces. You have probably met a few of them on occasion. Like the one I met a couple years ago, who is a brother to a woman who has the #1-ranked Rough Collie in our area. At a show, I asked, "now who is that she is showing?" And he replied nonchalantly, "Hell if I know."

Just to clarify things, I know there are some of you out there who belong to this Secret Society, but do not believe you do. You are the ones reading this article, I imagine only because it has been conveniently placed in a certain area of the house where reading materials are left to help pass time for other matters at hand. Those who belong to the Secret Society are not dog haters. It is just that they do not understand the commitment and depth of our love for the breed. I suspect those in the secret society slowly come to love and appreciate aspects of our dogs; but, are never quite ready to openly admit it for fear of letting the flood gates open to a whole new level of insanity.

It is my belief that many non-doggie spouses have superhuman abilities. In fact, I can attest to this, as to my own astonishment, my husband is one of these people. He is

able to view a few hairs strewn on the bathroom floor, multiply it to the square root of the highest power and then instantaneously declare the area uninhabitable because of "a GA-zillion dog hairs". What I have noticed over time is that my husband has slowly indoctrinated himself into the breed without realizing it. You probably notice it, too, with members of your own family. Here is how I think it happens: It is subtle things at first, such as noticing dogs around them that have a conformation fault and blurting out something like, "Wow, is that a Rottweiler? Look at that top line!" Belonging to the Secret Society means that your spouse has developed an appreciation for your passion; but, purposely remains in denial and refuses to acknowledge it. This makes a person a perfect candidate for membership.

I have peeked through our curtains and witnessed my husband sitting alone in the yard with the dogs, talking as if they were old friends. Or other times, at non-dog social functions, I overhear him sharing stories we have had from dog-related events, confidently speaking and swelling with pride. Most recently, he has been getting his own calls from friends who have dog questions for him, or "can you ask your wife" type of questions.

There are still struggles when you live with a non-doggie spouse. Like the time, when in haste, I accidentally called one of our dogs by my child's name (this is a big no-no). You can just imagine the contorted expression on my husband's face, and the colorful commentary that followed out of his mouth. It is those moments, just when you think there is a breakthrough of acceptance, a glimpse of hope in conversion and alliance to your calling, that one slip of the tongue will remind your spouse that, YES, he was right. You ARE a crazy dog person. I have not given up hope. Just last week, we were at the airport returning a dog who lived with us for the past seven months. In 2008, her owner went away to care for her sick mom and she called us in desperation. She was looking for a place where she could safely board her dog. I recall with clarity the moment she phoned us, just before the holidays. Without a moment's hesitation, my husband volunteered our family to house her. When it was time for her to return to her owner, at the airport, my husband hoisted her crate into the cargo area and I said my goodbyes. Just then my husband said, "wait". He unfastened the front of her crate door, reached in and gave her a huge hug.

My husband is a member of a Secret Society. And by what I just witnessed at the airport, he just nominated himself President.

