

Maremma Sheepdog Club of America



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Board of Directors Candidate Biography

Please return this application to the above address.

Date: 10/9/2021

Position(s) running for: Board Member at Large (1st choice), Correspondence Secretary (2nd choice), Recording Secretary (3rd choice)

Name: Megan Borbon
First MI Last

Residence
Address: Naranjo Hills Farm, Tracy, CA

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Please share a brief biography: My husband and I started up our pasture raised egg business, Naranjo Hills Farm, in 2019. We quickly came to realize we couldn't expand our flock because every time we added a new chicken, a predator came and took one or two. It became a one step forward, two steps back pattern. Keeping our chickens in their coops defeated our mission to sell pasture raised eggs. I started researching online and came across livestock guardian dogs (LGDs). The Maremma Sheepdog breed particularly appealed to us as we wanted a LGD that was stranger wary, but would not

immediately attack due to the liabilities of modern society. We further heard Maremmas did well with poultry and stayed close to the stock compared to other LGD breeds. While many people say all LGD breeds struggle with poultry and need to be taught not to dig out or jump over fences, our experience was quite different. We purchased three Maremmas from three different MSCA breeders, and all took quite quickly to their job guarding poultry. Each of our Maremmas were rockstars from the beginning. None have ever left the property and are often seen sleeping right in the middle of their charges. While poultry is the main focus of our farm, we also have a small herd of goats, potbellied pigs, and barn cats that our Maremmas live with and guard. My husband and I both have full-time jobs off the farm. However, due to the help of our Maremmas, we are now looking at the ability to leave our jobs and become full-time farmers within the next few years. We recently purchased a 320 acre property in Northern California to expand our pasture raised egg business. None of this would have been possible without our Maremmas, as we would have lost the entirety of our flock that first year.

Experience you have that would be helpful in this Board position?

I am an organized individual who is focused on inclusivity and listening to all side of an issue before forming a decision. My full-time job is as a clinical psychologist, which has taught me how to be a good listener, understand the viewpoint of others, and communicate in an effective and supportive manner. I believe these qualities are needed on the Board of Directors to make sure every member's opinions and ideas are heard.

Why do you want to hold this position on the Maremma Sheepdog Club of America Board of Directors?

I believe the MSCA has the potential to develop into a well-run organization that achieves its mission statement (“dedicated to the protection, promotion and preservation of the working Maremma Sheepdog by providing breed and educational information to farmers, ranchers, breeders, and owners”). However, the MSCA is presently falling short with little to no education being provided to Club members. The MSCA website could be a rich source of training materials that help members raise happy and healthy Maremma Sheepdogs. Further, all members should be notified via email and the MSCA Facebook page when there are webinars coming up on such topics as training, preventative medicine, diet for large breed dogs, etc. We have many knowledgeable, experienced members that need to be tapped into to help support the Club as a whole. I strongly believe that I have the ability to guide MSCA in this direction.

Any further information you would like the Membership to know about you?

I am a newer Maremma owner having been introduced to the breed in 2019. It was love at first sight and I've never looked back. Our farm is now planning for our first MSCA registered litter by early next year. My commitment to the Maremma Sheepdog breed can be seen through the extensive research I have done on health testing, genetic testing, and how to raise sound and confident working Maremmas.

What is your vision for the future of the MSCA?

If elected to serve on the MSCA Board of Directors, my vision is to achieve a positive and inclusive environment for all Club members. The focus of the Club should be on the welfare of the Maremma Sheepdog and making sure we do everything in our power to maintain, and in some cases improve, the health and stability of the breed. I am further committed to seeing the Maremma Sheepdog breed continue to hold jobs on working farms and ranches where they truly shine.

What are your top 3 priorities for the MSCA in the next three years?

One area I am dedicated to learning about is training methods for livestock guardian dogs. I am presently working toward completion of advanced coursework regarding modern approaches to training. I have found that Maremmas are extremely sensitive souls and respond best when encouraged and supported in their role. I am committed to learning the ins and outs of the application of training to the Maremma Sheepdog breed specifically. The goal is to share training information with future puppy buyers and Club members, so that those initial months on a new farm or ranch are successful and as stress free as possible. Second, I am committed to promoting the health of Maremma Sheepdogs as a breed. After unknowingly buying a Maremma with advanced hip dysplasia and osteoarthritis, we need to be putting more emphasis on hip testing incentives, as well as educating buyers on proper diets for growing Maremmas. My third priority is the creation of a MSCA presence on Instagram to better promote our beloved

breed and get the “younger” crowd interested in Maremma Sheepdogs. I recently joined Instagram and there is a strong community of farmers, ranchers, and homesteaders on the platform that are very interested in Maremma Sheepdogs. To better promote the Maremma Sheepdog breed, we further need to make it a priority to keep our MSCA website up-to-date and easy to navigate. I am more than willing to take on all of these projects, as well as establish committees that allow members to actively participate in the direction of the MSCA.