

# Maremma Sheepdog Club of America



Mark Engemann  
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Board

of

Please return this application to the above address.

## Directors Candidate Biography

Date: 10/05/2021

Position(s) running for: Treasurer, Correspondence Secretary, Board member at Large

Name: Colleen M Williams

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### **Please share a brief biography:**

I have been in the veterinary profession for 27 years and have managed a flock of between 90-120 ewes for the past 16 years. I also raise pastured poultry and assist my husband in his cow/calf operation. Together, we manage a 240-acre farm, with a focus on sustainable agriculture and humane predator control.

I was first introduced to the Maremma Sheepdog purely by accident, back in 2004 when I purchased a flock of ewes from a gentleman who was retiring from of raising sheep. Much to my surprise, a big white dog was tossed into the stock trailer right along with the sheep. I was skeptical at first, but it wasn't long before she won my heart. I was astounded by the kind and gentle nature of this girl, and the selfless loyalty she demonstrated to her flock. From that moment forward, I became an advocate for the Maremma Sheepdog, promoting its unique and unsurpassed working qualities.

Over the years I have mentored many new LGD owners, helping them to facilitate a successful partnership with their livestock guardian. One of the most rewarding experiences throughout my

journey is having the privilege to connect with folks who share a similar interest in agriculture and sustainable living. With the help of these majestic white dogs, it is my belief that we can live in harmony with nature, without sacrificing our precious wildlife and habitat.

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

I have been an active member of the club since 2006 and a board member since 2016. I have seen the club at its lowest points, and also at its highest. I have had the opportunity to observe some of the consistent patterns leading up these highs and lows and have witnessed the consequences of having one person running the entire show. I strongly feel that any organization needs to have an active participation of its members in order to be successful. A thriving, growing club requires a proactive membership with an active voice, and folks who are willing to dive in and take on new challenges even when they don't feel qualified.

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

I want to see this organization thrive, not just exist as a registry for breeders. I want to see the Maremma Sheepdog excel over every other livestock guardian breed and promote the qualities that I believe make this breed stand out above the rest. I want to ensure that this breed is protected from being exploited in any way that would jeopardize its inherent nature. I enjoy sharing my ideas and experience with other LGD owners and have found that I am often the one who comes away with new ideas to try or pass on. I also enjoy new challenges, especially those that require attention to detail and accuracy. One of my responsibilities as a veterinary technician is auditing our controlled drug logs, ensuring that every single dose is accounted for. If there is any discrepancy in the logs, then it is my job to find out why. This can involve a lot of detective work searching through medical records, but I do enjoy the challenge and take a lot of pride in keeping these records accurate and concise. I also enjoy working with Wordpress, Excel and Social Media, and possess the necessary skills to contribute to designing a website.

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

I actively participate in continuing education topics focusing on canine health and am passionate about protecting the overall wellbeing of the Maremma breed. I feel like there is a tremendous amount of conflicting information to LGD owners when it comes to diet, environment, early altering and genetic predisposition. One thing we know for certain, is that the medical field is an ever-changing world. What you believe to be true last year, or five years ago, may not be consistent with today's theory. My goal is to provide sound, factual, science-based resources for those who are concerned about the health and longevity of their livestock guardian dog. We all know at least one person who has lost a beloved LGD much too soon to some form of cancer or osteoarthritis. Maybe we have been on the receiving end ourselves. Most of us have a considerable investment in our livestock guardian, not only financially, but emotionally, so it is imperative we get as many years from our working partner as we can. There are ways we can increase the overall health and longevity of our LGDs and help reduce the chance of succumbing to one of these devastating illnesses. My desire is to help educate others so they can make an informed decision based on the current facts we have available.

### **What is your vision for the future of the MSCA?**

My hope is that we can come together as a team, to promote, preserve and protect the Maremma Sheepdog for its unique qualities and character. Also, my hope is that we will strive together as a whole, to keep the Maremma Sheepdog from being exploited by individuals or organizations that could potentially distract from the original working integrity of the breed. My dream is to see the MSCA become an educational resource for new members as well as for veterans. I think it is important to remember that everyone began their journey in a similar fashion, and we all have something valuable to share in terms of our individual experience with these incredible dogs. Together as a team, we can provide a strong network of support and mentorship.

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

- Accurate and efficient turnaround time on all paperwork
- Encourage member participation, ensure that all active members have an equal voice in the direction and goals of our club
- Provide current, science-based education on factors which are known to have an impact on canine health, including nutrition, environment, early altering and genetics

