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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. Gerard C. Penta

The revised application process has been finalized by the Committee appointed to take on the task of revisiting the current additional breed application process. Their work has recently been distributed. Since this newsletter was going to press as the policy was released, I have only had time to briefly review the new process, but even on a cursory reading, it is clearly an improvement over the approach of the past couple of years. It is not an ideal process, but it is a major step in the right direction.

It is too bad that the Committee took an approach that they described as evolutionary rather than revolutionary, for if ever there was a need for a revolutionary approach it was in dealing with the recent process. I suppose it is unrealistic to expect the AKC to admit that their recent process was a colossal mistake that, if left in place, would have wreaked havoc in the dog show world and drained it of any remaining credibility. To their credit, the Committee's revisions are a tacit recognition of the very serious flaws of the recent process and an important attempt to make significant changes in it. The revised policy is a repudiation of the underlying assumptions behind the free-for-all policy of the past two years. For that much, at least, we should appreciate the Committees' work and applaud their resulting policy.

That is not to say that I am in agreement with everything in the revised policy. For example, it is promoted as a process that emphasizes educational preparation, yet it reduces the credit for one of the most educationally valuable components in the list of educational experiences. Of course, I am referring to the ADSJ Advanced Institute, the CEUs for attending this program have been reduced from three to two credits. Apart from having bred and competed in a particular breed or having an in depth kennel visit with a knowledgeable breeder, the Institute is one of the most worthwhile preparatory experiences for judging a new breed. The same may be said of a well organized seminar and workshop held at a national. To reduce the credit value of the Institute by one third is more of a comment on the Committee than it is the Institute. Now this is not too surprising as none of the Committee members have attended the ADSJ Institute and so have no first hand experience of it. Nonetheless, they could have asked some of the many hundreds of past attendees how they would rate the educational value of the Institute. Of course, they do have experience with the AKC Judges Institute.

To return to the positive aspects of the revised policy, it recognizes the importance that one must be prepared to judge a new breed. It also recognizes the limitations on meaningful assimilation of breed knowledge. In other places I have preached that advancement in judging, as in most other fields, should be based on preparation and evaluation of performance. The revised policy is an important improvement in the preparation part of this equation. There is even a nod to the need for evaluation, however I suspect the devil will be in the details. We will have to leave such issues for a later date.

Speaking of details, please note that Mr. Tim Thomas, AKC Director of Dog Show Judges and a member of the above mentioned Committee has been invited to attend our ADSJ Membership Meeting at 3:00 pm on December 15, 2017, to answer some of your questions. I hope to see you there.