

From Vol. 31 No. 2. On "Judging Fees"

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. Gerard C. Penta

At our recent ADSJ/AKC Liaison meeting, the minutes of which are published elsewhere in this newsletter, the unequal treatment of delegate judges was discussed. The specific issue under discussion was the exemption of delegate judges from paying the fees for recertification. The basis for this decision was the fact that the delegate judges do not charge a fee. However, as we pointed out, there are many other judges who do not charge a fee. The ADSJ regards this fee exemption for delegates as discriminatory and self-serving. We believe all judges should be subject to the same fees regardless of whether or not they charge a fee for judging. It is the Judge's choice to become a delegate knowing the costs involved and the prohibition against charging a judging fee.

This is not to say that we are in favor of prohibiting delegate judges from charging a fee. Indeed we are opposed to such a restriction. This is an antiquated and unrealistic rule that should have been changed long ago. Sixty years ago group and all breed judges charged fees of \$125.00 to \$400.00 plus expenses. Although those fees have risen slightly, in relation to inflation they have actually fallen in value to the point where, for most judges, they simply help offset the many unclaimed expenses that can not be listed on a judging invoice. Perhaps an all-breed judge charging a fee of \$500.00 or more and judging over 100 shows per year is clearing something that could be considered a livable income, but who would wish to live that life. Believe me, that income is hard earned.

Nonetheless, in this day and age, to prohibit any judge from charging a fee is to require that the judge pay for the privilege of judging. My point here is that today, judging fees are just a means by which judges hope to cover all of the unenumerated expenses involved in maintaining one's status as a judge and advancing as such.

On the other hand, some delegate judges may wish to maintain the no fee rule. A not uncommon strategy for advancing as a judge is to become a delegate. Since all show chairs know full well that delegates can not charge a judging fee many will seek you out for their panel, at least to help off set the cost of hiring fee charging judges. The AKC will help advertise your free judging status by placing an asterisk in front of your name on your judges page. This arrangement can go a long way toward helping you get those required permit assignments out of the way quickly so that you can move on to multi group status sooner than otherwise. Once you have achieved the number of groups that will make you worthwhile hire for a club or cluster, you can resign your delegate position and turn "professional".

We were told at the Liaison meeting that the delegates were recently surveyed, and the results appear to indicate there may be support to consider a change to the bylaws that would allow delegate judges to charge a fee. We wholeheartedly support such a rule change. It will be interesting to see how the delegates come down on this possible change in their status.

Here's hoping you have a great new year.