

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. Gerard C. Penta

By now you are familiar with the proposal presented by the delegate committee and accepted by the AKC Board regarding a possible group realignment. Our members are closely divided between those who want to see a group realignment and those who do not. Consequently, the ADSJ has taken no official position regarding the proposed realignment. Also, we believe this is the province of the parent clubs working in cooperation with the AKC.

Eventually, the proposal which has been accepted by the AKC Board will have to be approved by the delegate body. This may not be an easy task. The last realignment, the division of the Working group into Working and Herding, engendered controversy and it was a relatively simple matter compared to the rather extensive overhaul envisioned by the delegate committee. This is not to say that the current proposal is undesirable, but rather to underscore the difficulty of such an ambitious move and hence the need for a thorough discussion of all the possible repercussions. There are, after all, some legitimate concerns, such as the lengthening of the show day or the problems that may be created for handlers should groups be judged concurrently. Also, there should be sufficient lead time prior to the implementation of the agreed upon changes so as to avoid creating problems for show-giving clubs.

While the ADSJ does not take a position on the proposed changes, we are very concerned about the possible impact these changes may have on some of our members. The ADSJ would like to see some flexibility regarding the approval of additional breeds when a judge's status has been negatively impacted by a group realignment. For example, if a Non-Sporting group judge is suddenly no longer a group judge because a breed or two from another group is combined with the some of the Non-Sporting breeds to form the new Companion group, why not allow that judge to attain the breed(s) the same way a group judge acquires approval to judge a new breed which has been admitted to a group the judge already has? For anyone involved in the sport long enough to be a group judge, the breeds involved in a realignment are, no doubt, much more familiar to them than the new breeds recently admitted to AKC shows. Approval via a standards test would not only benefit the judge but it will also help those clubs who may have already contracted for the judge's services.

With regard to newly created groups (e.g. Northern and possibly the Companion Group) where heretofore there have been no group judges per se, perhaps two components rather than four could be considered adequate if a judge is already approved for most of the breeds in the new group. This will help to provide a sufficient number of approved judges for these new groups and thereby satisfy the needs of the all-breed clubs.

We are certainly not in favor of watering down the approval requirements in general, but for a very limited time following the kind of realignment that has been proposed, some flexibility in the approval process may be in everyone's best interest. I am confident that the Judging Operations Department and the AKC Board of Directors will be sensitive to these issues and will make reasonable accommodations.