

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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RAISING THE NUMBER OF DOGS A JUDGE MAY ADJUDICATE

With the recent talk about raising the limit on the number of dogs a judge may adjudicate in one day and the prospect of two shows on the same day, it is important for us to remember that we are independent contractors. The AKC sets the maximum number of dogs that may be assigned to a judge, not the minimum number and certainly not the number you must accept. You may set your own maximum and that may be lower than the maximum set by the AKC. You may also put a limit on the number of groups, both regular and non-regular, you are willing to judge in one day.

Although I have written about this in an earlier column, it seems appropriate in the current climate, to raise this point again. The moment you are contacted by a kennel club inquiring as to your interest in judging their show, your availability on their show dates and your judging fee, you are involved in a negotiation. Most of us realize that even if you are interested and available, if you demand too high a fee, you will probably not arrive at a contract with the inquiring club. Of course, there are numerous other demands, which may make you unacceptable to a club. If you require that the club pay for first class airfare, a chauffeur-driven limousine for all ground transportation and an unlimited bar tab as part of your legitimate expenses, you will probably not get the assignment - even if you are a delegate!

So there are limits on expenditures for which the club will reimburse a judge. These restrictions vary from club to club. Some clubs will pay for a cocktail before dinner, some will not. Some will pay for a rental car, some will not. Some will pay for a companion's lunch, some will not, etc. These matters are, as they should be, the clubs' prerogatives. However, judges often forget that they are also entitled to place certain restrictions on the judging contract.

Just as there is some variety among clubs regarding their exclusions, limits and the like, so too, there are various restrictions that judges may require. Some will judge as often as possible, others limit the number of shows they will judge in a row. Some will take as many assignments as possible in a month, others limit the number of times they will go on assignment in any given month. Some will judge under any circumstances, while others will not judge under some conditions. Some judges would judge up to the maximum number of dogs allowed and will accept as many regular and non-regular groups as the club cares to assign, while others have elected to place a limit on the number of dogs they will judge in a day or the number of groups they are willing to judge at the end of the day.

Is there a right or wrong way regarding these alternatives? Of course not. Both clubs and judges must decide for themselves what they are willing to accept when it comes to the judging contract. Clearly, there are many things, which influence how the club and judge will each exercise their prerogatives when negotiating a judging contract. My only intent here is to remind judges that the negotiable items are broader than many judges seem to realize. The resulting contract is one in which you, as a judge, have an equal hand in creating with the club.

So after seven hours of breed judging, as you hobble into the ring to judge your fourth group, let's not hear any whimpering or complaining. Keep smiling - remember, you still have to do pictures!