

# Vol 25 No 1

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dr. Gerard C. Penta

The new approval process has been in effect for number of months now. The AKC Staff report on the number of conformation judging applications for the first quarter shows a dramatic increase over previous years. It has been reported that the applications are coming in at a rate that is three times the norm. This much was expected by everyone and is an outcome celebrated by some and decried by most.

What seems to have been a surprise in some quarters is the fact that the vast majority of additional breed applications have come, and will probably continue to come, from existing judges. The advocates of this approval process had hoped for an influx of new judges, but this has not happened. Nonetheless, at least one of the ostensible motives for this new give-away program is being realized. That is, satisfying the needs of the show-giving clubs whose entries have declined to the point that, like Canada, they need more multi-group and all-breed judges for their judging panels.

It really should have come as no surprise that judges already in the system, with an abundance of CEU credits, would immediately take advantage of the current process. Many of these judges may well have been turned down, or slowed down, by the previous repressive policy. If so, they must have been chafing at the bit as this approval process was under consideration by the AKC Board.

So now the flood gates are wide open but they could close at any time. Of course there is a tidal wave of new breed applications from existing judges. In the context of recent years could anyone really expect otherwise?

Well, the Judging Operations Department at least hopes, if not truly expects, that judges will slow down and prepare for each new breed as they would like others to prepare to judge their own breed. Of course the author of "The Tortoise and the Hare" in the Spring issue of *THE STANDARD* is right to make this appeal. Under the reasonable circumstances of a few years past it would have been embodied in the approval process itself. However that was before the AKC Board decided to throw out the old system that had evolved over many years and was based on sound principles rather than make a few necessary adjustments. After the deservedly speedy failure of the repressive system that followed, the current evaluation-free process was passed as a spineless capitulation to the persistence of its author.

When reading the above mentioned article one can sense the dismay on the part of the staff writer of who, forced by employee obligations, must defend the current foolishness but clearly knows better. This line was almost amusing: "While there is greater opportunity to advance, it does not mean that it is a sprint to the end." Oh yes it does!

Given recent history, hurry is exactly what it means. It is a sprint to get as many breeds as possible while this give-away program is in effect. If not, you may be left in the dust by other judges who recognize this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to acquire groups rapidly and possibly get to all-breed status in record time.

As a Canadian friend once said to me some years ago as we discussed the merits of our respective approval systems, “We may get our groups faster and easier than you do, but because we can quickly attain multiple-group and all-breed status we get to judge more, both in our country and around the world, so we have more opportunities to learn.” Perhaps this is what the author of the new approval process had in mind — get the groups first then learn the breeds on the job!

Now that the starting gun has sounded does anyone think the current free-for-all will last? If it does, will the sport survive with any credibility?