

## Are You Part of the Problem?

## Are You Willing to be Part of the Solution?

*It used to be that the purpose of dog shows was to showcase your best breeding stock. In my opinion those days are mostly a thing of the past. It seems that shows today have become so political and so money oriented that the dogs themselves have gotten lost in the shuffle.*

Sadly, the dogs are often stripped of their dignity by the "win at any cost" tactics put upon them. With that said, I believe it is reasonable for all exhibitors entered at a dog show to have the expectation that their entry will get an equal and unbiased assessment by the judge based on their breed standard.

An exhibitor has the right to expect that his entry has an equal chance of going Best of Breed whether his entry is a class dog (that includes 6-9 puppy!) or a Special. The AKC Judges Guide tells judges they should, "Always judge dogs solely on the basis of their condition as they are presented in the ring on show day." (emphasis AKC). **The judge is responsible for judging each dog by the Breed's Standard.** (emphasis mine)

In most cases, entry fees are the same for all dogs entered. (Some clubs will give price breaks to puppies and Bred by). The judging guide does not state that if there are price breaks for certain classes that those entries receive less consideration and are not eligible for Best of Breed. In fact, nowhere does the guide state that the Winner's Dog/Bitch shall receive less consideration for the award of Best of Breed.

In theory, since a dog show judge's duty is to select the best representative of the breeds exhibited to them, you would expect a dog show to be an equal opportunity sport. You would expect that every exhibitor should feel confident that they are getting a fair shake, but are they? With the above facts in mind:

*Are you a judge who, if you disagree with a breed standard, will not hesitate to award your personal preference, even in some cases when your preference is a fault? Just two examples are:*

1. having a preference for a specific color and never putting up other equally allowed colors.
2. ignoring the Breed Standard for minimum/maximum heights

**IF YOU ANSWER "YES". YOU ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM**

Judges should be professional and their personal preferences should be set aside. The breed standard is the rule not a guideline. If the standard states that there is no color preference, what right does a judge have to assert their preference for color? It is unfair to the exhibitors that have paid their money for equal assessment.

Judges should not penalize dogs for size when the size of the dog is in Standard. Statements like, "I prefer them bigger" (who cares?) is fine as long as the "bigger" is equal or better and preferably in the Standard. Too often, that is not the case.

For example, if a Samoyed looks to be the same size as an American Eskimo, that probably means that you have a Samoyed bitch at the bottom of the standard.

The bottom for Samoyed bitches is 19" and the top for the American Eskimo male is 19". Both are correct, neither should be penalized just because you dislike one end of the Standard more than the other.

In the case of the Samoyed, a judge will often put up a dog or bitch out of Standard, (on the big end) or a dog of lesser quality rather than reward the more correct dog that looks like an "American Eskimo". This is not judging a breed by its Standard and it hurts the breed when judges insert their personal preferences.

*Are you a judge who believes you have the right to interfere with a dog owner's right to decide what is best for their dog by withholding the award the dog deserves? In other words you have a dog/bitch that should win BOB, but you have decided that the dog is too young, too old, the owner too novice, etc., etc to go to the Group?*

**IF YES, YOU ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM**

**Judges are to judge dogs in their ring based on their Standard.** Whatever might happen in the Group should not be of any concern of the breed judge. The breed judge is supposed to award BOB TO THE BEST DOG. That is what exhibitors expect and that is what they pay for.

Exhibitors do not need nor want judges denying their dogs the award they deserve due to the judge's personal speculations on who is ready for the Group ring. A judge who does this interferes with the dog owner's right to make their own decisions regarding their dog. Judges who do not just judge dogs, but insert their personal feelings as to who might look better in the Group actually change the outcome because the Group judge is deprived of actually judging the best dogs.

*Are you a judge that knows or has strong suspicions that a dog has been groomed illegally and you ignore it? Examples might be wigs in Poodles or over trimming in the Golden Retriever and Pomeranian, etc.*

**IF YES, YOU ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM**

Judges have the obligation to investigate any suspicions they may have. The AKC guidelines state, "In reviewing a class, avoid excessive rearranging of a dog's coat, whistling, gesturing or baiting. However, do not hesitate to feel out a suspected fault beneath a highly groomed coat." Over grooming has become epidemic. Almost everything in a breed ring today is "sculpted". A friend of mine recently relayed a phone call she received from a friend of hers who is a Field Rep.

The Field Rep asked "What the %@\*#@ is going on with Newfoundlands?" She was very angry and said, "They all look like cookie cutters in the ring!!" Frankly, I don't know why breeders and handlers make more work for themselves on dogs that should be shown in a clean, groomed and natural state. If judges would not reward this, it would not continue.

*Are you a judge that faults a dog based on your speculation of what the dog's height, bite, or color might be later?*

**IF YES, YOU ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM**

The Guideline states, "Give absolutely no consideration to what a dog's quality may be at some future time, or what a dog's condition might have been were it not for some disease or accident" Enough said.

*Are you a judge who, regardless of the quality of competition, always puts up the ranked dog even though it may not be the best on that day?*

**IF YES, YOU ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM**

Please stop it. This common practice is a total disservice to exhibitors and to the sport of purebred dogs!

I have heard some lame excuses for this. One is they do it out of respect for the dog's show record. They do it because of all the money spent on advertising. IF there is a better dog, please do the ethical thing and award that dog what it deserves on that day. That is a judge's duty.

*Are you a judge that will not put up a dog unless it "asks" for it?*

**IF YES, YOU ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM**

Not all breeds are the bubbly, crowd pleasing, free stacking stars that "ask" for it. Several Standards state that the breed is reserved/conservative with strangers or when out of their territory. (Judges are strangers!) Some of those breeds are Rottweilers, Kuvaszok, Samoyeds, Clumber Spaniels, Bernese Mountain Dogs, Caanan Dogs and Anatolian Shepherds. The Rottweiler Standard specifically warns judges not to penalize dogs that are aloof or reserved, "as this reflects the accepted character of the breed."

The Mastiff Standard states, "Judges should also beware of putting a premium on showiness." If there have been a few dogs in one of these breeds that were exceptions to the Standard's description, that is all it is, an exception and the rest of the breed should not be judged and compared to the "exceptions". Since the "exceptions" are not displaying the typical character/demeanor as described in the "breed Standard" some might consider that in itself a fault. Judges should be mindful of the Breed Standards and the descriptions of character and temperament.

Frankly, I'm tired of hearing, "Well, it IS a 'show'". Unfortunately, it is that kind of thinking that has turned the purpose and priorities of dog shows (including the character and temperament of some breeds) upside down. As an experienced breeder, who would select the dog that simply has to "ask for it" over the dog that has the best overall qualities of the dog you're looking to breed to? Not all breeds are going to "ask" for it, but are still exquisite representatives of their breed and should be appreciated and rewarded when they deserve it. That is a judge's duty.

*If you answered "NO" to the above questions, most of us probably already know who you are and appreciate your dedication to our breeds and more importantly to our breed standards. It takes an honorable and ethical person to set aside personal feelings and reward the exhibitor what they deserve on that day.*

*If you answered "YES" to the above questions, one has to wonder why you decided to judge. You are taking too many liberties with the standards. People spend their hard-earned money for that "equal opportunity" in the breed ring. Please give it to them. Be part of the solution. It's just a thought.*

[<http://www.thedogpress.com/Columns/Addamo/Bio.htm>] ND/RL editor's note. I cannot track who forwarded this to us, but it is without doubt one of the most important summaries ever produced on the present state of the dog world - world wide.



**The RAS has confirmed that plans for the new dog arena are underway and announced a new exclusive trophy for the 2007 Royal Melbourne Championship Dog Show. The Dog section will be in a new and refurbished arena when the Show opens its gates on 20 September 2007.**

**The Royal Agricultural Society is also proud to announce that the winner of the coveted 'Best in Show' prize will receive a new silver trophy designed exclusively for the Dog Show.**

The new dog precinct will offer superb indoor and outdoor facilities for the dogs and will be

located on the Langs Road side of the Showgrounds. It allows plenty of space for two outdoor judging areas that can be divided to provide a total of four judging rings.

The Melbourne Showground's facility is also prepared for any rainy days during the 2007 Show with its offering of up to four indoor rings.

Construction (including levelling) of this new ring, which is positioned between the Wonderful World of Pets and the Indoor Judging Pavilion, will be completed in time for the Royal Show.

Many dog Shows have already been held in the new dog precinct and exhibitors have applauded the new facilities now occupied by the VCA. However, due to the number of dogs competing each day during the Show the entire dog precinct will not be fully utilised by the dogs at this event.

Benching will be located in the large hall on the Langs Road side of the facility, providing dog owners with easy access. On days when entries are very large some additional benching will be located in the indoor judging pavilion. While the existing benches will be used in 2007, the Royal Agricultural Society plans to progressively replace all dog benches over a three year period.

"We are sure that exhibitors will be pleased with the new facilities for the Royal Melbourne Championship Dog Show and Obedience and Agility Trials," said Bob Bell, Chairman of the Royal Melbourne Show Dog Committee. "We hope this news reassures competitors, who may have been hearing some false stories in the marketplace, that the new Royal dog precinct will provide excellent facilities and that the dogs can continue, as they do every year, to compete for one of the country's most coveted prizes."

The Royal Melbourne Championship Dog Show is the largest of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. With judging from a panel of international judges this prestigious event will now have an extra drawcard to competitors with the introduction of this unique silver trophy for the 2007 Best in Show.

The schedule for the dog section of the 2007 Royal Melbourne Show, was published in the May issue of 'VICDOG' the VCA's official publication. It has also been sent direct to all of last years exhibitors who provided an email address. The complete schedule is also located on the Royal Show Web Site - [www.royalshow.com.au/competitions-2007.asp](http://www.royalshow.com.au/competitions-2007.asp)

The 2007 Royal Melbourne Show will be held from Thursday, 20 September 20 to Sunday, 30 September.

Many breed enthusiasts enjoy having the opinion of a specialist judge, or an opinion by someone very familiar with their breed. The variety of involvement and experience by this year's judging panel is no exception. They have, or have had hands-on involvement with many breeds. Therefore, the Royal Melbourne Show this year can be considered a 'Feature Show' for many breeds indicated as follows.

Mrs Dianne Anderson from USA will judge Old English Sheepdogs.

Mr Antonio Capistrano from Brazil will judge Boxers and Dobermanns.

Mr Fernando Quillies from Brazil will judge Bichon Frise, Great Danes & All Poodles.

It is anticipated that devotees of the above breeds will be watching this year's Royal Melbourne Show with much more interest than usual.

**If you require any further information, please contact the Royal Agricultural Society of Victoria on telephone 03 9281 7444 or email [dogs@rasv.com.au](mailto:dogs@rasv.com.au)**