

Senior Conformation Judges Association, Inc.

Wallace H. Pedé *Chief Executive Officer* 7200 Tanager St., Springfield, VA 22150 (703) 451-5656 Fax (703) 451-5979

May 6th, 2007

Mr. Dennis Sprung, AKC President
Mr. Ron Menaker, AKC Chairman of the Board
All AKC Board Members
260 Madison Ave. 12th Floor
New York, NY 10016

Subject: AKC Staff Effort to Punish a Judge Covered in AKC Director of Judging Operations',
Peter Gaeta, Letter of March 13, 2007 to AKC Judge and SCJA Member, Ms.
Sandy Wheat

Contents of subject letter were made available to certain AKC board members prior to last months' AKC Board meeting. We had hoped that some definitive action would have been taken, and that we would have been advised of the outcome. Since we have received no word on any action, the SCJA believes it prudent to put this request in writing. We ask that either the AKC President take action on his own, or that one of the AKC Board members sees fit to make the necessary motion to correct the obvious grave errors contained in Mr. Gaeta's letter.

There are two main points made in Mr. Gaeta's letter, the most egregious being the confirmation in writing of his previous verbal threat to AKC judge Ms. Wheat for contacting the CEO of her judges organization to request guidance on a matter that she perceived needed to be addressed. While AKC should obviously keep judges' evaluation reports in confidence, it is counter productive to put a similar requirement on the recipient. AKC should want judges to discuss any problems in an effort to clarify or improve the situation. In fact, when we founded the SCJA twenty-four years ago, we set as one of our main purposes of the SCJA covered in our bylaws: to offer assistance and advice to our members. There are a limited number of the AKC Board and staff that are aware of the fact that the SCJA for the past twenty-four (24) years has represented any number of our judges in personal issues affecting individuals as well as general issues affecting all judges. The SCJA has done this officially in writing with fully coordinated letters or position papers.

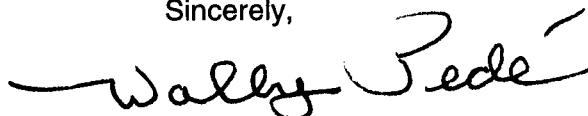
The SCJA finds it appalling that a relatively new comer to the AKC who has a responsible position within AKC would see fit to have published an article in the AKC Judges Newsletter declaring AKC judges' reports are secret. The article was written after the initial verbal confrontation with Ms. Wheat. It's as though Mr. Gaeta thought he could justify his comments by making a policy of his own after the fact. The Judges Department's own words in case of negative reports describe as "embarrassing, humiliating and degrading" to judges. Obviously, it is the negative reports that the judges find troubling and requiring guidance and advice. A call just days ago to the North Carolina offices to the author of the article garnered a reply that she was directed "...not to talk about it." This is a rather unusual response for a judge seeking clarification or advice on this matter. This item is serious enough that the SCJA will cover it in separate correspondence after a thorough investigation of our own concerning other individuals who, in their opinion, have been treated in an unprofessional manner by the AKC Judges Department and their representatives. We are discovering that things have gotten so bad that more of our judges have discarded the mantle of fear of reprisal and have come forward and agreed to state their particular grievances and unprofessional actions in which they were personally involved.

The SCJA request immediate action on the second point where Mr. Gaeta punishes Ms. Wheat by ordering her to "take a wicket test". It is a rather sad commentary when the AKC Director of Judging Operations, along with a Field Rep, are not aware of, or worse yet, disregard the rules applying to measuring a dog which has a height disqualification. As every judge on the AKC Board is aware (and for those who are not judges let it be known) that other than the provisions for an exhibitor in the ring requesting a measurement, the judge alone makes the decision to measure a dog, not when an exhibit is large (in this case as stated by the Director of Judging Operations) but rather when in the judge's opinion, it is too large, i.e. over the disqualifying height limitations for the breed. Ms. Wheat informed the AKC Rep that indeed the dog was large; but in her opinion was still within the maximum height allowed. Fortunately in making the matter unequivocal in this particular case, the dog in question was officially measured in at an AKC show and obviously confirmed Ms. Wheat's opinion. Neither the AKC Rep outside the ring nor Mr. Gaeta, hundreds of miles away in NC, decides when to measure a dog for a height disqualification. The SCJA thinks it is most unfair and downright wrong for the inference to be made that Ms. Wheat did anything the least bit out of line.

The SCJA requests that the necessary action be taken to have Mr. Gaeta revoke his order for Ms. Wheat to take a wicket test. It is one thing if tests were given to a large number of judges; it is quite another to single out a judge when she did not do anything not in accordance with the proper judging procedures. We will note with interest to see if the fact that Ms. Wheat having been so forthright will, in any way, affect her advancement in her judging career.

On a broader note, the SCJA believes that time has arrived for the AKC President and Board of Directors to consider the incongruity of having two former professional handlers with no judging experience in charge of the well over 3,000 conformation judges. The SCJA would like to suggest to the AKC President and Board that in the future both positions of the VP for Dog Show Judges and the Director of Judging Operations be appointed to individuals who have considerable judging experience. For now, consideration should be given for appointing an individual with considerable judging experience to the Judging Operations office. We say this with all due respect to the two present incumbents. They certainly cannot help that they have never been in the ring judging dogs.

Sincerely,



Wallace H. Pedé
CEO

WHP/kms

cc: Mr. Darrell Hayes, VP Dog Show Judges

Enclosures: Mr. Peter Gaeta's March 13, 2007 Letter to Ms. Sandy Wheat
List of Negative Actions by the AKC Judges Department Re SCJA & ACEF

P.S. The SCJA's CEO has been talking personally with AKC's Chief Operating Officer, John Lyons, concerning part of the issues mentioned above. John had requested that in the future he be copied on all correspondence sent by the SCJA to Darrell Hayes and/or Peter Gaeta. John graciously offered to meet at any time with SCJA representatives. We just learned of John's unfortunate setback, just towards the end of last week and believe it would not be appropriate to send this information for action to the VP for Dog Show Judges since his office is primarily concerned with this entire matter.



March 13, 2007

Mrs. Sandy Wheat
4301 E. Southern Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85042-4041

Dear Mrs. Wheat:

This is to address the situation that arose following the evaluation of your Dalmatian assignment at the Central NY KC, 11/17/06. In case you do not recall, Executive Field Representative Robert Fisher indicated that there was a dog in the Open Dog, Black class that appeared to be quite large. You acknowledged its size in your comments.

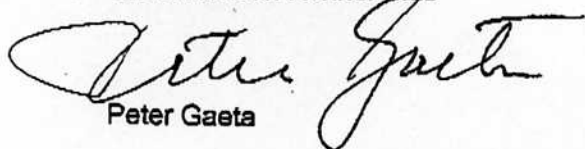
As you know there is a disqualification for size in Dalmatians, and it is your responsibility to measure an exhibit that appears to be large. The disqualification is not a matter of your discretion. You are charged with the responsibility to be able to recognize when one appears to be too tall and the responsibility to measure it.

Further, you committed a very serious breach of propriety and confidentiality when you involved Lt. Col. Wally Pede by discussing this evaluation with him. The result was that he contacted both the handler and the owner of the dog on a matter that should have been confidential and that you should have addressed as a judge.

Your failure to measure this exhibit, especially since you acknowledge that it was big, raises concern that you may not feel comfortable measuring a dog. Therefore I want you to meet with Delores Burkholder at the Fox River Valley KC show in Woodstock, IL on June 2, 2007 for a wicket test. Contact her when you check in that morning to establish a time that will work around your judging schedule.

If you have any questions, call me.

Yours truly,
The American Kennel Club



Peter Gaeta