



**SENIOR CONFORMATION JUDGES ASSOCIATION, INC.  
MEMBERS QUESTIONNAIRE  
JUNE 2003**

**RESULTS**

**This questionnaire dealt with the judges' approval process proposed last fall by the AKC Board. It also dealt with the relationship between the AKC Board and its judges as well as other related information. In a good many instances, we do not come up with 100% since all members did not answer all questions.**

**YES   NO**

Through the years, the SCJA has taken the position that with all due respect to our AKC Reps, they are not qualified to pass judgment on all the breeds that they have been evaluating the judges on.

**82% YES   1. Agree with SCJA's position that Reps no longer evaluate judges.**

**COMMENTS: This was no surprise since we have voiced this opinion for the past 15 years as indicated through the years by our members.**

On the question of individuals initially applying for a full Group, there were mixed views; however, most everyone agreed that if someone were initially allowed to apply for a full Group, that it should not be limited to one class of people. It is ridiculous to say someone can apply initially for a full Group, and at the same time, limit someone judging 20 - 25 years with one, two, three or four Groups.

**50%   2. Should individuals be allowed initially to apply for a full Group?**

**COMMENTS: The question itself indicated there were mixed views on this subject, and as you can see, it broke 50 - 50.**

The proposal, while allowing one to start their judging career by applying for a full Group, limits a judge judging 15-25 years and approved for one or more Groups to apply for only half a Group. We believe this makes no sense whatsoever.

**82% YES   3. If an individual can initially apply for a Group, then certainly someone judging a Group or more should be allowed to apply for a full Group.**

**COMMENTS: This was a no brainer, and it was incomprehensible that the AKC Board ever conceived this one!**

Those members contacted believe the proposal, as outlined, to take breeds away from a judge is ill-conceived, ill-advised and hard to believe it could ever be considered.

**NO   95%   4. Do you agree with proposal to have exhibitors' complaints against a judge trigger the process to take breeds away from a judge?**

**COMMENTS: Another one hard to believe ever saw the light of day.**

The general feeling concerning the staff taking over the judges approval process from the AKC Board was not objectionable as long as the Director of the Judges Department had assistants who had some previous judging experience (perhaps a job for retired judges).

**5. Do you agree the judges' approval authority should be granted to the AKC staff (circle one):**

**89% YES**

- a. Staff department having approval for judges should have one or more staff members with previous judging experience.**
- b. Staff should have approval authority irrespective of anyone with judging experience**

**COMMENTS:** For some reason, there was 11% that did not answer this one, but we didn't have any "yes" for selection "b".

There are many Delegate committees on various subjects. Since we have had so much trouble coming up with a workable judges approval process the past 20 years, it has been suggested that we have a Delegate committee appointed for judges' affairs, and that once an approved process is finalized that it not be changed for a minimum set number of years (at least 5).

**58% YES**

**6. Do you believe it would be wise to explore the possibility that the Delegates should get involved in the important subject of judges approval?**

**COMMENTS:** In view of less than a 2/3 majority, we will not pursue this. Some Delegate judges may bring this up on their own.

**96% YES**

**7. Do you agree that there have been far too many changes in the past 10 years to the judges approval process?**

**COMMENTS:** No big surprise here. We never check individual votes, but perhaps the remaining 4% are those just starting their judging careers?

**92% YES**

**8. Do you agree in principal with the SCJA administrative proposal to come up with a judges approval policy (see enclosure similarly titled)? If you do not agree, feel free to offer your own recommendations or changes.**

**COMMENTS:** Our members overwhelmingly agreed with the SCJA official recommendations to the AKC Board that the staff and all three judges groups work with the AKC staff to come up with a joint and coordinated proposal.

**NO 97%**

**9. Do you approve of the manner in which the AKC Board has administered all matters affecting their judges?**

**COMMENTS:** The 97% "no" vote equates to a 3% approval rating. As we all know, they recalled the governor of CA with an approval rating of approximately 40%. Can you imagine a US President with a 3% approval rating? We never had our members indicate such dissatisfaction

with the AKC's relationship with their judges. The AKC has been advised of their various low approval ratings through the years, both in writing and at various meetings that we have held with them. It is quite evident they have done little to improve things.

Consider an AKC Board member can sit around a conference table at headquarters with all its perks while collecting a reported \$12,000.00 a year plus a substantial allowance for travel, while an average AKC judge can judge from 4 – 7 hours often in the hot sun or rain for a pay of \$250 - \$400 a day for his judging.

**NO 73%** 10. Do you agree with AKC policy that disallows a professional judge from becoming a Delegate and hence an AKC Board member because he earns a fee for judging?

**COMMENTS:** On this one, in fairness to the AKC Board, in the past, they have attempted to affect a change. (Why not? They could charge a fee to judge.) It is usually the Delegate body that doesn't want the change. Apparently, the Delegates believe a good many of them would be replaced by judges?

**75% YES** 11. Do you believe the AKC Board and Delegates have given themselves an advantage in securing judging assignments by having a policy that says they judge for free?

**COMMENTS:** Can you imagine the AKC Board allowing themselves to judge for free while not allowing some multiple Group judges to judge one or two shows a year for free to help the younger provisional judges? They say for an SCJA member to judge one or two shows a year for free is a form of solicitation and gives them an advantage. But they don't have an advantage? A real conundrum.

The SCJA had a policy in effect for years whereby over 100 Group and multiple-Group judges volunteered to donate part or all of their judging fees to an all-breed club to reimburse the provisional judges for what usually was a part of their expenses. AKC Board members and Delegates donate their entire fee.

**94% YES** 12. Do you believe a judge should be permitted to voluntarily make a donation of any or all of his judging fee to an all-breed club to help our younger judges get started in their judging career?

**COMMENTS:** Apparently, the AKC Board has taken it on themselves to tell us what to do with our money and what and who we can donate it for and to. We are going to once again ask for reconsideration.

To their credit, the AKC Board recently appointed an independent Board to listen to appeals from regular trial Board decisions. Obviously, this was done to be fair by having someone other than the final authority (the AKC Board) listened to appeals. The SCJA has recommended through the years that the AKC Board should not be judge, jury and executioner for judges approval. The AKC Board finally realized how unfair the trial Board appeal process was for individuals meeting a trial board.

The SCJA is on record as recommending the same treatment be afforded the judges in their appeal process from being turned down for initial or additional breeds.

92% YES

**13. Should there be a separate committee or Board to take judges' appeals as opposed to the appeal being heard by the very same approval authority (the AKC Board)?**

**COMMENTS:** Let's see what the AKC Board does with this one. They have been extremely reluctant to give up the power they yield with the judges approval.

**14. In your opinion, how would you rate the overall performance of the AKC in its relationship with its judges?**

Excellent: less than 1%    Good 11%    Fair 43%    Poor 36%    Very Poor 9%

**COMMENTS:** A sad commentary when 45% of our judges believe the AKC Board's relationship with their judges is poor to very poor.

84% YES **15. For judges with ten (10) years or more seniority, has AKC's judges approval process inhibited you from applying for additional breeds? (Years judging? \_\_\_\_\_)**

**COMMENTS:** 84% of our judges with over 10 years have been inhibited applying for additional breeds. What a sad commentary!

What area concerning our judges do you believe should receive priority from the SCJA? Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary. List three areas in order of priority that you would like your Board to address.

As you might imagine, the members that took the time to offer their comments covered the obvious failings, most of which have been commented on above. We did have one member bring up a recommendation the SCJA made years ago when we questioned the legality of not allowing judges to solicit for their services. We recommended to the AKC Board a few years back that they should inquire as to the legality of preventing solicitation as opposed to having the judges groups question it. We made the point that it would look better if the AKC Board did it rather than the judges associations. As we all know, the Supreme Court ruled years ago that doctors and lawyers could advertise. In our opinion, the prohibition of judges soliciting assignments is in violation of federal statutes. With all the corporate wrongdoing going on in the country, wouldn't you think at least one AKC Board member would want to be assured that he or she is not party to a policy that some of their constituents have questioned and believe is violating the law? All we asked the AKC Board to do was to ask for an opinion to make sure they were not violating a provision of the law. You guessed it; they never did.

We will contact the other judges groups to see if they are willing to join us and pose the question to the New York Attorney General

for a ruling since the AKC Board has not followed up on the SCJA request.