



Senior Conformation Judges Association, Inc.

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December 29, 1998

Mr. Alfred Cheauré
All AKC Board of Directors
The American Kennel Club
260 Madison Ave. 4th Floor
New York, NY 10016

Subject: Darrell Hayes' November 18, 1998 Letter Concerning the AKC Board of Directors Proposed Procedures for Initial and Additional Breeds

Dear Al and Board:

SUMMARY

The Board of Directors of the Senior Conformation Judges Association (SCJA) recommends that the AKC Board of Directors reject the proposed revisions to the judges approval process. The SCJA finds many problems with this proposal. (This reply to Darrell Hayes' nine pages is lengthy of necessity since we are addressing in detail the most important subject concerning our judges.)

SCJA MEMBERS BELIEVE THE JUDGES APPROVAL PROCESS IS IMPORTANT

On the very first SCJA survey in 1983, our members gave #1 priority to the judging approval process, and nothing has changed in fifteen years. It is still their #1 priority. In accordance with our bylaws, we are bound to take positive action when 2/3 or more of our members take a position on a subject. Accordingly, the SCJA has made the judges approval process our #1 priority since our founding in 1983. For the AKC to infer to our judges that the SCJA agrees with this unfair treatment of our judges is offensive to all of us. The thousands of words we have furnished the AKC and the many meetings we have attended with the AKC on the subject of the judges approval process are too detailed to go into here, but we will include a few brief suggestions and comments we have made to the AKC through the years so there is not the slightest doubt where the SCJA Board and our members have stood, and still stand, on this issue.

We forwarded to a number of AKC officials copies of an 80+ page detailed study with 17 tabs on the judges approval process. We also sent a four and a half page letter with numerous attachments to Darrell Hayes on April 11, 1997 shortly after he assumed his present duties. In our letter to Darrell Hayes, we made reference to our previously forwarded study. For Darrell Hayes, after reading our input, to infer the SCJA was anything but super critical about the entire judging approval process is misleading, and we find his action reprehensible.

This is not the first time Mr. Hayes has misled the judging community. In this connection, we make reference to the June 10, 1998 joint meeting in St. Louis, MO called by AKC President Al Cheauré with two representatives from each of the national judges group present as well as Darrell Hayes, Bob Rio, Bonnie Clarke and others. We believe we were misled at the meeting, and since the subject of disciplinary action against AKC judges is not directly related to the judges approval process albeit extremely important,

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we intend to request clarification and an inquiry to clarify the apparent misinformation furnished us at the June 10, 1998 meeting. We shall do this under separate cover.

SOME SCJA COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE THROUGH THE YEARS ON THE JUDGES APPROVAL PROCESS

1. The AKC Board should not act as judge, juror and executioner on the judges approval process.
2. Mandating that judges could not apply for additional breeds once they had four Groups was not in conformance with AKC's own Charter, Constitution, and Bylaws.
3. Hands on testing was not a reliable or equitable method to test judges on specific breeds.
4. We furnished a comprehensive study on ringside evaluation together with a procedure to validate its degree of reliability utilizing judges and Reps. Our recommendation even included a form to be used. Those in charge at AKC did not even test the test, rather they went to the hands on testing. As we know, H.O.T. was later dropped as a routine test, and the AKC is back to ringside evaluation by Reps.
5. We have said over and over again through the years, the Reps are most certainly not qualified to pass judgement on all the breeds they are evaluating.
6. Your complicated proposal for BIS approval was not feasible or fair. It never was implemented.
7. We were opposed to closed book tests.
8. We were opposed to our judges being evaluated at ringside and not being given a copy of the form to sign.
9. Handlers should not be given an entire Group unless they have had extensive experience handling all breeds within the Group.
10. Miscellaneous breeds, when approved, should automatically be given to all Group judges since they were approved to judge them the entire time in the miscellaneous class.

THE FOLLOWING ARE EXTRACTS FROM OUR LETTER TO DARRELL HAYES IN 1997 AFTER A VERY CASUAL PHONE CALL ASKING US FOR SUGGESTIONS ON THE JUDGES APPROVAL PROCESS

We quote:

1. *"REMOVE THE APPEAL PROCESS FROM AKC'S JURISDICTION - Appointment of five senior judges for each of the seven Groups, the judges to have been judging the respective Group a minimum of 10 to 15 years. (Multiple Group judges could serve on multiple panels.) The judge initiating the appeal can select any three of the five judges on the panel for the respective Group. An AKC staff member to act as administrative recorder.*
2. *Judges approved for a Group for 10 to 12 years not be treated the same as individuals applying for their first few breeds. Some sort of credit must be given to individuals who have been judging year in and year out.*
3. *The entire application process, in particular the paperwork and forms, be greatly simplified. Consideration must be given to the administrative complexity that has built up through the years by applying one bandaid after another. The entire process, once in place, be made part of the Rules and Regulations, not to be changed willy-nilly every time we have a change in personnel at AKC whether it be Board or staff. History has proven that whenever a key person is replaced at AKC we come out with a different procedure for the judges to follow. Once the process has been approved, it should be in the Rules and Regulations, not to be changed without a vote by the Delegates. Judges approval should be treated at least as importantly as a class at a dog show which cannot be changed without a Delegate vote.*

4. *The practice of having unqualified AKC Reps, with no experience in the breeds they are evaluating, and more importantly, with no formal education in personnel evaluation techniques be discontinued and a substitute procedure found.*
5. *The cost factor and time required for judges to qualify themselves be given careful consideration in any new procedures. Consideration must be given to the fact that our judges spend a good many weekends of the year on judging assignments.*
6. *Requesting input on a judge's performance be requested independently and separately from various sources. The practice of 16 different individuals listening to others' comments on an individual while supposedly giving their own opinion is unheard of in corporate America, the military or the government as is the practice of not informing an individual of his weaknesses or areas needing improvement. There is no way an individual can improve his/her performance if they do not know the areas of weakness. The business of keeping an AKC Rep's comments secret on an individual is abominable and unacceptable. This is akin at promotion time to telling the individual he/she cannot be promoted because of their poor performance, but the individual has no idea of what needs improving. This goes against the very basic requirements for good personnel management. It is impossible to imagine that in this day and age, the AKC staff and Board can have such a reprehensible policy in effect. We cannot worry about protecting the Reps who have to make a few negative comments about a judge. They have to start acting more like the judges who make decisions every weekend in public by putting up or down the dogs.*
7. *In the event the Reps continue to be used to pass judgement on the judges, they themselves should be tested on any breeds that they themselves pass judgement on. Why not have four or five Reps grade and place the same dogs independently to see how consistent they are."*

The Senior Conformation Judges Association finds once again the AKC Board of Directors has treated AKC judges thoughtlessly and with a total disregard for the real needs of its judges. This is true for both the provisional judges and the more senior judges. Last year's Christmas present to the judges was Bob Slay's abominable disciplinary list. This year's Christmas present is the Board committee's proposal to make things more difficult for our provisional, and still advancing, judges. Your pretense at making things easier for three-Group judges is hard to comprehend. As is usual, no one has analyzed the ramifications involved. Where did the committee come up with the three-Group requirement for a less complicated advancement procedure? This did not come from the SCJA, ADSJ or the AKC Delegates Committee. Our best information leads us to believe the ADSJ and the SCJA were supportive of the Delegates Committee recommendations. Outside of the reinstatement of the judges in-ring observation program, which the SCJA recommended years ago and which we and many others **DID NOT** want abolished, we see little positive criteria in the new proposals.

It is one thing for the Judges Review Committee of the AKC Board to come up with still another proposal that supposedly is designed, and we quote "with a primary goal of improvement in the quality of judging". Really! How does one conceive that mandating the poor maligned provisional judges to judge more provisional assignments will improve the quality of judging? Judges will improve and learn by judging. Generally, the more one judges, the better one becomes. It is called experience. **Mandating two more provisional assignments has little real substance other than to hold up our younger judges and have them spend another thousand dollars or so.** Let them advance. Most of us agree one learns most about a breed by judging it. Having some unqualified Rep passing judgement on two more assignments accomplishes nothing. It is time we all realize a crisis is at hand because a large number of AKC's multiple Group judges are in their 60's, 70's, and yes, 80's. Where does the AKC Board think the Admirals and Generals come from if we don't appoint young Ensigns and Lieutenants? The AKC has no regard at all for the provisionals who often spend \$300.00 or more for air fare, \$80.00 @ night for hotel and \$75.00 for food often to judge fifteen to as little as one dog. They invest all this money and time to get in just **one**

of their required provisional assignments. These costs of attending the shows to do their provisionals is in addition to the thousands of dollars the average provisional judge spends on travelling to accomplish the expected educational requirement. It is time the AKC Board realizes the provisional judges, unlike members of the AKC Board, are not paid expenses plus \$300.00 or so a day for their attendance at a meeting.

PROPOSAL RELIES TOO MUCH ON UNQUALIFIED AND UNAVAILABLE REPS

Often times at the show, the provisional judge (having invested a good bit of money and time) is told nonchalantly by the AKC Rep that there are not enough dogs for them to make an evaluation, or they don't have time to observe them. A good many of these provisionals are secretaries, teachers and homemakers; yet with little thought to financial burden, you have these individuals spending additional hundreds of dollars proposing still more required provisional assignments.

We want to reiterate we strongly object to the fact that Darrell Hayes indicated to every judge that the SCJA supports the procedures for the more experienced judges. We quote from subject letter, "included in the recommended changes is a suggestion from the three national judges groups for an advanced process for multiple Group judges". (underline ours)

The SCJA has been critical of the approval process through the years, and especially the use of unqualified AKC Reps to pass judgement on a judge's placements (**and please don't tell us again Reps don't question a judge's placements**). Another case of the judges groups being misled by an AKC official both verbally and in writing. Some of our senior people have more time in the ring judging than some of the Reps have time on the job!

Having unqualified Reps make career decisions on senior judges is as incongruous as the hospital orderly passing judgement on the surgeon or the aircraft mechanic deciding on who is qualified to be a pilot. We all know the Reps are decent doggie people, but they have **NO** professional training in personnel management, and for the most part (by comparison), little experience in judging and in some cases, no judging experience at all. Most every judge contacted with over twenty-five years experience judging does not feel qualified to pass judgment on another judge's placement of a breed. **The Judges Review Committee in this very proposal insists that only breeder judges and those judging a breed ten years or more can have an observer judge in the ring. How hypocritical can you get? A judge needs ten years judging experience to instruct a prospective judge; yet your Reps need zero experience to stop the advancement of an approved judge!** Once again, in one of our many previous letters, we suggested the Reps be tested for their breed knowledge by breeder judges. We must add, however, we have always questioned whether one person can pass judgement on another person's opinion. And that is what judging is – someone's opinion on the day.

THE PROPOSAL FOR ADVANCING THREE-GROUP JUDGES IS NOT WORKABLE AND SHOULD BE REJECTED

While the Reps often say they are too busy at the shows to accomplish their mission of observing and interviewing provisional judges, we wonder how the AKC Board expects the Reps to have time to fulfill your proposed procedures for judges with three or more Groups which mandates they have "positive observation from a minimum of ten field staff members"? This means ten different field Reps. Has anyone taken the time to figure out the time involved for the Reps, and how many shows it would take for a senior judge to meet up with 10 different Reps? No doubt the Reps would tell the senior judges what they tell the provisionals - "I don't have time to observe you today." We have AKC Reps who, in the majority of cases,

will be interviewing judges with a great deal more experience than the Rep interviewing them. **No doubt, the Reps have been given some magical potion which gives them the experience of an all-breed judge. We have suggested previously through the years that AKC share this magic potion with us so we can make it available to all judges in order that our judges might advance at the same pace the Reps qualify to pass judgement on the judges.** Amazing that a Rep with three to fifteen years experience is allowed to pass judgement on judges with over twenty-five years of experience and very recently one with over forty years experience. Members of the Board, this is indeed hard for your judges to accept.

Darrell Hayes' words are an attempt to leave the judges with the impression that somehow the three national judges groups proposed the "requirement for judges with three Groups or more". The SCJA thought one Group coupled with the length of time an individual was judging was a better test. Who pulled three Groups out of the air? It certainly wasn't the Delegates Committee, and it certainly wasn't the SCJA.

WEAK REEVALUATION PROCESS IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR DUE PROCESS

The crowning blow is your proposal "**THERE IS NO APPEAL.**" What happened to the **due process** for our judges which the entire AKC Board and the three national judges groups agreed to at the February 1998 meeting in New York? **Of course, what can we expect when the Chairman of the AKC Board, with all of the Board concurring, makes the point that the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution does not apply to those of us in the dog world?** The SCJA is of the opinion this position is in violation of AKC's own Charter, Constitution and Bylaws. We are in the process of seeking a binding opinion on this issue as requested by the AKC Board Chairman. We believe this is another instance of the AKC Board abusing their power. The current proposal offers less of an appeal than current procedures which are in serious need of correcting.

OVERALL PROCESS IS TOO COMPLEX AND PROTRACTED

Whatever happened to AKC Board member Carmen Battaglia's recommendation to the AKC Chairman of the Board and his fellow Board members in his memo dated September 12, 1994 in which he pointed out that AKC's relationship with their judges was a major problem and that "AKC judges should be treated like employees rather than outsiders"? Whatever happened to Dennis Sprung's recommendation going one step further when he said the judges should be "treated like family members"? What a family! More like the Mafia - one missed step and you are dead! (Happily, not your life; just your judging career.) We brought both these up at an AKC meeting over two years ago, and we still must ask these questions.

When is AKC going to realize life is tough enough on new judges (save for a few anointed individuals)? We hope we can all agree our judges' decisions each weekend are important, but they are not quite in a class with an NFL football referee whose missed calls decide which teams attend the multimillion dollar Superbowl. SCJA believes one should be able to become a Group judge in less time than it takes to become a brain surgeon. Yet, the AKC Board wants to pile more requirements on the provisional judge. Additionally, a good many of us do not believe breeding more champions is going to make one a better judge? Most of us believe it is more indicative of a person's ability to select a top specimen of a breed if he or she selects and buys a good dog. It takes years and years of breeding to establish a line. You don't do it with three litters. So why talk about three litters? What one produces in their first three litters is up to province and a bit of luck. For over 115 years, there was no mandate to breed dogs. We covered this in great detail in one of our many letters through the years. PETA would sure have a field day with this one – the AKC forcing people to breed dogs so they can make more money from registrations (that is the way PETA would play it).

There was a time when AKC judges were respected and envied throughout the world. In 1998, the rest of the world laughs at us. Stop and consider this. We have a system which allows a Group judge authorized to judge *Best in Show* to be turned down for breeds because, in the opinion of the AKC Reps, they were not qualified for particular breeds. In spite of AKC saying they are not qualified for breeds, they can still judge BIS where one of the "flunked" breeds could appear. We want to stress, however, that the SCJA is on record in great detail to say the BIS approval process should not be changed. No doubt we would still be blessed with the routine "hands on testing" if the SCJA had not hammered and hammered on this subject.

At the February 1998 meeting, we announced to every AKC Board member that 65% of our judges believe the relationship between AKC and their judges was poor to very poor. We also mentioned that when compared to President Clinton's 65% approval rating, it should give them pause for thought. We assumed the AKC Board might be somewhat concerned. Nothing has happened to improve the relationship.

MANAGEMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE JUDGES APPROVAL PROCESS WAS POOR

It has been over three years since the Delegates Committee was formed, and our input was furnished. After all this time, Darrell Hayes sends the proposed new approval process with a lengthy questionnaire to the judges over Thanksgiving weekend, and he asks it be returned by December 15, 1998. We notice too, the survey was sent to individual judges knowing full well that a good many of them will be inhibited in using the tough language they use when talking to their respective national judges group.

We, and others, have devoted much time and effort in evaluating this process with little real exchange from AKC. From speaking with AKC officials the past year or so, we cannot ascertain whether our detailed tabbed study containing numerous suggestions was ever furnished to the Judges Review Committee. We would like to know if it ever was furnished to the Judges Review Committee. We have been waiting for years for an official copy of the Delegates Report on the Judges Approval Process. Although promised a copy of the Delegates Report on two different occasions, it was never sent to us. We believe the AKC Board committee should have adopted more of the provisions of the Delegates Report which we concurred with at the December 11, 1996 AKC-SCJA meeting. When we indicated our agreement and complimented the Delegates Report, the Chairman of the Board literally laughed at our approval comments indicating words to the effect, "of course you like it, they want to make life easy for the experienced judges". What a sad commentary! The Delegates Committee set the criteria of approval for one Group or more as a cut for considering anything but past judging ability. Whatever happened to this criteria?

CONCLUSION

It is time the AKC Board and its officers started treating their judges with respect and a little compassion. It is time the AKC realizes the dog sport belongs to all of us, not to those in temporary power. We are a club of clubs, and the clubs have members. Most of your judges are members of a member club. History has proven that when those that govern lose touch with those they govern, they tend to abuse their power. We believe it is time for a wake up call for the AKC Board and staff. Remember, you do not own the American Kennel Club. The member clubs and their members do. Most governing bodies serve those they govern. True, there are thousands of clubs that the AKC has disenfranchised through the years by not allowing them to become members.

It should be apparent from our comments through the years that the SCJA has been critical of the judges approval process. Also, that the SCJA has made the case that the AKC Board and staff have been applying bandaids to the judges approval process when what we need is MAJOR SURGERY! One example of the glaring shortcomings of the AKC judges approval process is self-evident in the number of Group and multiple Group judges turned down month in and month out for new breeds applied for.

As to the observation part of the advancement process, the Reps make their recommendations based, not on the judge's knowledge of the breeds applied for which they obviously have never judged, rather the Reps' observations are based on the judging of the breeds the judges have been approved for. It is axiomatic that one of two things is occurring:

- 1) the AKC has approved a number of really poor Group judges, and the U.S. does not have the world's best judges, or
- 2) the system for approving judges has been and is deplorable. (**We believe it is #2.**)

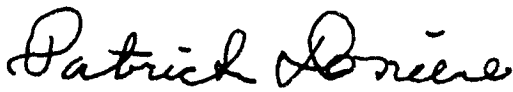
Stop and consider. The first echelon of observation for our judges is made by AKC Reps (their qualifications will not again be mentioned). The Reps themselves are supervised right up the chain of command by three individuals with no judging experience.

Fortunately for all of us, you are following part of the judges' groups advice. You are seeking input before implementing it. We are glad, too, that you followed the suggestion given at the St. Louis meeting with a questionnaire. A giant step in the right direction!

Let us start the major surgery ASAP! We would like to suggest we go back to the drawing board once more on the judges approval process, and we again suggest you follow the administrative procedures that was suggested years ago to accomplish the mission. **We can assure your job as an AKC Board member would be greatly simplified, and the final results would be accepted by the vast majority of the sport.** Our administrative recommendations are enclosed for the Board's consideration. In a recent conversation between Pat Doniere, Wally Pedé and ADSJ President, Jim Moran, we were assured by Jim that he endorses the administrative procedures enclosed.

We have not addressed the questionnaire at this time. However, we have encouraged all of our members who have contacted us to submit their answers to the questionnaire.

Sincerely,



Patrick N. Doniere, Jr.
President



Wallace H. Pedé
VP/Exec.Sec.

WHP/kms

RECOMMENDED ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR THE JUDGES APPROVAL PROCESS

Each of the three national judges groups will prepare their independent proposals for the revamping of the judges approval process to be exchanged with each other. The first stage will be an outline covering the major areas to be incorporated. Obviously, the thinking of each national judges group will include the views expressed by their members through the years as well as their experienced Board members. This would identify the major areas of agreement from which to work out the details. In this day and age of computers, phone, fax and e-mail, there would be a minimum requirement for face to face meetings. The major areas of agreement between the three judges groups and the Delegates Report would, in all likelihood, be 80% to 85%.

In the final stage, the representative from the three judges groups could meet much as committee members representing the U.S. Senate and Congress do to iron out differences when writing legislation. Unlike Congress, however, there would be an understanding from the start that each national judges group would be able to include their independent position(s) which was not agreed to by the other two judges groups.

The final report would be submitted through the AKC staff to the AKC Board. The staff would make no changes, but would comment on each major area of the finished white paper as well as commenting on all areas of the report as well as the differing positions. The staff's comments would make clear to the Board the points they agreed with as well as the ones they differed on.

Obviously, the AKC Board has final authority on this matter, but would it not make things a lot easier for each Board member to vote on a document that clearly showed the areas in which there was complete agreement on or the very small percentage of areas there was a difference of opinion given? Now that the Delegates Report has been submitted, the three national judges groups would, of course, consider it and representatives of the original Delegates Committee could sit in on the final compromise session. Anyone with methodology analysis experience should realize that while offering everyone the opportunity for input seems fair, you nonetheless have created an administrative overload in attempting to meaningfully analyze the input from over 3000 individuals.

We believe it is in the best interest of the AKC, and the sport in general, if we take advantage of the filtering process and the vast experience within the three national judges groups. The AKC Board, in our opinion, should not be literally working on the details; rather, they should act as the final approval authority on procedures submitted to them usually referred to as "*finished staff work*".

Note. These procedures were submitted years ago prior to the conclusion of the Delegates Report. We were told by three different staff officials that it was not proper for the AKC to go out seeking the advice of the three national judges groups. We never could figure out the rationale of this decision, and we wonder to this day if our proposal was ever forwarded to the AKC Board for their decision.

After all the extensive coordination, the final product would be submitted to the Delegate Body (in accordance with the bylaws) for what should be a super majority vote of approval.