

July 21, 2006

Dear Members:

First, I hope that all of you have read the letter (posted on ARC website) dated July 11, 2006 in which Mari Beth O'Neill explains that unless the verbiage "must be" is removed from the standard revision proposal submitted by the ARC; it would not be accepted by the Board of Directors of the American Kennel Club. Please note, that this doesn't necessarily mean that if we did remove 'must be' that it would then be accepted.

Also, I want all of the membership to know that during this entire process of working with the American Kennel Club that Mari Beth O'Neill, AVP of Special Services has been a tremendous advocate in our quest for a standard revision.

Every one of your Board members is very cognizant of the time, effort, money and emotion that have been exerted over the past few years with regards to the standard revision change. In conversation and through emails, over the past few months, the Board has dialogued endlessly about this proposal

We struggled over the last revision submitted on June 16, 2006 and believed that it would be accepted by the AKC, which then meant we could ballot our members. The turn of events with the New York legislation, which is still pending, regarding docking and cropping may have been a huge catalyst to why AKC was not receptive to our language.

Also, please realize that this type of legislation in New York would prohibit owners from docking their dogs. What does the parent club do if some of our members in particular states aren't allowed to dock their dogs? How do they come to any show and participate? I am posing these questions because situations like this could occur.

Another factor which may have caused AKC's rejection is their perception that the word 'must' was a way to create a disqualification without using the term disqualification. Think about it people, members bombard the AKC with negative letters, phone calls, emails, ads and you don't think they perceive member's actions as subversive.

Even with all of these things to consider, the Board did contemplate dropping 'must be' and inserting 'is docked'. The standard revision committee when asked for their response to AKC's letter did not have consensus either on whether dropping 'must be' would be an option.

As President, I phoned each Board member to take their vote on whether we conclude or continue with the standard revision. The majority of the Board voted to conclude our standard revision on the tail. Those members who voted to continue the standard revision change were Bob Busby, Juan Griego and Diane Garnett. Treasurer Kelly Fadel was on vacation and was unable to vote.

Where do we go from here? Do we need to keep rehashing the past or do we move forward with a more positive outlook for our club?

Personally, I think as a club, we need to cleanse our minds and immerse ourselves in the work of educating council members, legislators and general politicians on how legislation needs to be constructed with regards to dangerous dog laws. Look at New York's pending legislation; don't be so cavalier as to think it couldn't happen.

Of course, many members will still be interested in continuing their efforts to make the standard clearer to AKC judges. But will that change the bottom line with an AKC Judge's autonomy in his/her ring to do as they choose?

I think we all know the answer to that question but it still doesn't negate the fact that we need to impress, very positively, to all-breed judges that we are a docked breed. Please know that I am not advocating that we TELL judges what to do with an undocked dog, this is where we first found ourselves in trouble with AKC, trying to tell judges what to do.

What we do is present a strong Judges Education Program, we use take-away CD's showing a docked Rottweiler; we educate prospective judges on how the majority of our membership want our dogs judged – tail docked short, close to body. All of this can be done through our Judges Education Program, well-written articles for the Dog News and AKC Gazette stressing what our standard already says.

There is a lot to do now, our main goal is to have the membership let go of the negative and accent the positive – our work is cut out for us, there are huge problems all over the country with BSL, insurance denial for homeowners and our huge overpopulation of rescue dogs.

Please let us know how you feel, we want to do the best job we can for the entire membership. We are very interested in hearing from you.

Thank you,

Diane Garnett and the Board: Bob Busby, Kelly Fadel, Deborah Shibley, Juan Griego, Joan Klem, Lew Olson, Becky Sumner & Jeanette Tonini