

The New Delegates

Guidelines

for Attending

AKC Delegate

Meetings

Prepared by the Delegate Advocacy
and Advancement Committee



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUBSM

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How Delegate Meetings Are Structured

All meetings are governed by one of the best-known parliamentary procedure guides, *Robert's Rule of Order*, which simply sets down the way business is transacted, how motions are introduced and seconded, etc.

The AKC Delegate Meeting is held in a very large room (usually a ballroom) at the “host” hotel. There is a head table with a speaker’s podium at the front of the room. The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board, the President/CEO, the Executive Secretary and the licensed Parliamentarian, as well as the court reporter typically sit at the head table and face the delegate body, who sit in ranks of chairs set up in the ballroom. There are a number of standing microphones set up at intervals in the aisles between the delegates’ seats. Members of the delegate body may go to the nearest microphone to speak, if they wish to address their fellow delegates and the Senior Staff in attendance during the meeting.

In the lobby area outside the ballroom, the staff will have tables set up, at which the delegates may check in and pick up their delegate identification badge. It is extremely important that all delegates check in and sign their attendance card prior to the start of the meeting, as this is their official record of attendance. Seating in the ballroom is open and it has become customary for every seat to have another meeting packet containing copies of all the work sheets sent in the original call package. This is done to insure that every delegate will have all materials they need to participate fully in the meeting. So if you inadvertently forget to bring your call packet, don’t be alarmed, you will be provided with a full set of copies at the meeting itself.

There may or may not be a Delegate Forum presentation prior to the meeting itself. On occasion, the forum has been used to present information to the delegate body on matters pending before it, or as an informational presentation on issues the staff is working on for possible future implementation. Depending on when the meeting itself is called to order by the President/CEO, the meeting will begin with a ratification of the minutes of the previous meeting. This is followed by reports from the Chief Financial Officer and may include reports of the Chairman and President. The seating of newly elected delegates will take place,

with each new delegate being introduced by a senior delegate to the rest of the delegate body. This will be followed, as the meeting progresses, by the President bringing items of business before the delegate body following an agenda that you will have received in your call letter. For example, there might be a vote on the election of new member clubs or proposed Bylaw changes, which you will already have had a chance to study, and which was published in the AKC Gazette. (You will receive a complimentary subscription to the AKC Gazette as long as you are a delegate.) Business is generally conducted in the following basic order: Approval of new clubs, Bylaws and Rule changes to be voted on; Bylaws and Rule changes to be proposed; Reports; and New Business.

At an appropriate point during the meeting, the President will temporarily adjourn the meeting for the delegates' luncheon. The luncheon is usually held in adjacent rooms, which are set up with tables that seat 10. Seating is open, meaning you can sit at whichever table you wish, and all seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Speaking at Meetings:

If you desire to be heard on a subject while it's being discussed, it's easy to do so. Obviously the room is too large for everyone to be heard if they speak from their seat, therefore microphones have been placed at intervals throughout the room. Delegates wishing to speak on an issue merely have to go to any one of the microphones. If other delegates are already there, wait in line to be recognized by the President in the order you arrived at the microphone. However, where practical and if there is no urgency, delegates should consider announcing the intention of making a proposal at the meeting prior to the actual meeting where the proposal or motion is made, to allow other delegates more time for review with their club. All speakers should identify themselves, by name and club affiliation, before they speak, and should address their remarks to the President.

Voting:

When debate on an issue ends, the President will call for a vote. This can be done in several ways. The most common type of vote at the meeting is a voice vote, with the President determining whether the ayes or

nays carried. At other times, the President may call for a standing vote, in which the delegates stand while their votes are counted.

On rare occasions, the delegates may want an official record of how each club votes. This is done by a roll call vote, in which the name of your club is called and you respond with your vote. A simple majority of the delegates is required for a roll call vote; the issue on which the roll call is taken still requires a two-thirds majority to pass. These various types of ballots are explained in *Robert's Rules of Order*.

The AKC Bylaws expressly require one vote to be by ballot. This is the election of members of the Board of Directors. It is also customary that the election of candidates to the Delegate Standing Committees is handled as a ballot vote. Ballot votes are secret votes, and since the AKC Bylaws specify the one vote cited must be by ballot, the delegates can not change the method of voting even if there was unanimous agreement.

Other items of business in the meeting may include proposals for rule changes, reports (such as the Treasurer's report) and new business. Throughout it all, it is the President's job to keep the meeting moving smoothly, to cover all items on the agenda, and to be sure that everyone understands what is being done. To explain a proposal involving, for example, Dog Events, the President might ask a member of Executive Staff from the appropriate area to explain it.

At the end of the meeting, the President will ask if there is any further business to come before the body. If there is not, he will ask for a voice motion and vote to adjourn, and after receiving them, will declare the meeting closed. Your official responsibilities as a delegate have been concluded for that meeting. The average meeting may last over two hours, ending sometime around 4 p.m.

A Few Extra Details:

If you are a new delegate, here are a few additional details you should know. For instance, at each meeting location you'll find a special AKC information booth set in the lobby area outside the ballroom. This booth, which opens before the meeting begins, is there to provide delegates with breed standards, rule books

or any other AKC-published materials they might need. AKC staff members are available to help solve the delegates' problems.

During each quarterly meeting, all first-time delegates are given the opportunity to have a photo taken. These photos are published, along with profiles of the new delegates, in the AKC Gazette.

Every September, an Orientation for new delegates will be held; all newly elected delegates are invited to attend. The orientation involves a tour of the New York Office and includes an explanation of AKC operations, departments and department heads. The orientation will conclude with dinner, attended by members of the Board and AKC Senior Staff.

Finally, don't forget that you can keep up with delegate issues, learn about your fellow delegates and keep abreast of other items of interest through the Delegates' newsletter, "Perspectives." Delegates are invited to contribute articles to the newsletter. For details contact Jim Crowley, who will give you the name of the current Newsletter Editor. "Perspectives" is produced by a committee of 12 delegates (elected by the Delegate Body) who serve two-year terms. Six members of the 12-member Perspectives Editorial Committee are elected each year. Members of this committee may also serve on another Standing or Special Delegate committee. Requirements for service on this committee are tenure as a delegate for at least two years; attendance at 50% or more of the meetings during this tenure; and some background in writing, journalism or publishing is preferred.

Frequently Asked Questions:

As a first-time delegate what should I wear to a delegates meeting.

While there is no specific dress code, this is an official business meeting and most delegates feel comfortable in wearing typical business attire. This means suits (or dress slacks and sports coats) and ties for the male delegates and "career" dresses, suits or pantsuits for the female delegates.

Should I take notes during the meeting?

You may wish to do so, depending on the issues being discussed and how detailed a report you want to make to your club members after the meeting. However, minutes of the meeting will be mailed to all delegates by the Executive Secretary's office after the meeting, and they will also be published in the Secretary's pages in the next issue of the Gazette. They are also posted to the AKC's web site, where anyone with Internet service can access them.

How can I best prepare to participate effectively as a delegate?

Reading all mailings sent by the AKC prior to meetings, and reading the issue of Perspectives sent with the call letter, will give you a good sense of the topics being covered and the sentiments of different members of the Delegate Body. Another excellent source of information is the Delegates' E-list. This is a private electronic discussion list established for the use of sitting AKC delegates exclusively. Once you have been notified that you have been approved as a delegate to represent your club, you can subscribe to the list by contacting the list administrator and ask to be added to the list. Currently Nina Schaefer at **OSAKANUC@aol.com** has taken on this responsibility.

The Delegate Advocacy and Advancement Committee (formerly the Delegate Strategic Planning Committee) has also worked to establish a mentoring program for new delegates. This program will match one or more senior delegates, who have volunteered to participate, with new delegates. These Mentor-Delegates will make themselves available to new delegates to answer any questions you may have, help you decide on travel arrangements and make suggestions on how to approach your first Delegate meeting. They will also meet you at your first meeting and "show you the ropes", as well as introducing you to many of your fellow delegates.

Finally, an excellent way to prepare for the meetings is to plan on attending the Delegate Caucus and the Delegate Standing Committees meetings the day before. Very important discussions take place at both the Caucus and the Standing Committee meetings, and attendance at these meetings will give you a strong sense of "what is going on" at the AKC at that time,

and what is being considered for the future. This will enable you to keep your club members informed as fully as possible about events that may affect their lives as lovers of pure-bred dogs.

Attending AKC Delegate Meetings

The AKC Constitution and Bylaws do not place any restrictions on where the meetings may be held, except that the annual meeting must be held in New York because The American Kennel Club is incorporated under the laws of the state of New York.

Initially, all meetings were held at a major hotel in New York City. The quarterly meetings were generally scheduled for the second Tuesday of the month in March, June, September and December (sometimes Labor Day changed the day for the September meeting). Elections for the Board of Directors always take place during the annual meeting in March.

A few years ago, at the request of the Delegate Body, a change was made to allow some Delegate meetings to be held outside of New York. This was done on an experimental basis to make it more convenient for delegates representing clubs distant from New York City to attend more meetings. At first, one meeting was held outside New York and because this proved popular, a second meeting was added. It is now customary that the (annual) March meeting, at which the Board of Directors is elected, and the September meeting, at which the members of the Delegate Standing Committees are elected, are held in Manhattan, with the June and December meetings held outside New York. In 2003, the Delegate Body voted to allow the dates of the fourth quarterly meeting to be flexible, in order for the “December” meeting to be held in conjunction with the AKC/Eukanuba Invitational show. Because of this change, it may be possible that the fourth quarterly meeting of the Delegates could be held the following January on some occasions.

About three weeks before each meeting, you will receive a set of worksheets along with a call letter from the AKC Executive Secretary. The worksheets will give you a better idea of the background of some of the issues you may be called upon to consider at the meeting. If, after you read these worksheets, you find you have additional questions, members of the AKC staff can help you find the answers, and delegates may call James Crowley at (212) 696-8234 for assistance in reaching the correct source at the AKC. The call letter is an official notification of the meeting’s location, date, time and agenda. In addition, since

Delegate meetings include a luncheon, you'll receive a R.S.V.P. card enclosed for you to return, acknowledging whether or not you plan to attend.

You'll also receive information and instructions about making reservations for flights and at hotels offering corporate rates to AKC delegates, as well as information about any location-specific events that may be held. For assistance, you may contact AKC's Conference and Travel Planning department at (212) 696-8389 or (212) 696-8396.

Many delegates decide to arrive a day early to talk to other delegates and catch up with friends. When the Delegate Standing Committees were created, they arranged to meet the day before the AKC Delegate meeting itself. Because the delegates are welcome to attend the Standing Committee meetings as observers, the delegates have an additional reason for arriving early – so that they have an opportunity to attend these very important committee meetings, if they wish. In addition, it has become customary for the delegates to hold a Caucus meeting, open to all delegates, the morning of the day the committee meetings are held. Typically the Delegates discuss items pending before the Delegate Body, and other items of concern to the Delegate Body at the Caucus. Because most delegates choose to arrive a day early in order to attend the Caucus and Delegate Committee meetings, a hospital-ity room (with a Cash Bar) is available the evening before the Delegate meeting at the same hotel where the meeting will be held.

The Delegate Forum

The Delegate Forum was instituted several years ago as a venue for open communication between members of the Delegate Body and the AKC Senior Staff and AKC Board of Directors. The Forum is held in the morning prior to the start of the actual Delegate meeting itself. No official record is made of any discussions that occur at the Forum and it was originally seen as an opportunity for members of the delegate body to ask questions of the staff and the Board of Directors about decisions that had been made or items under consideration, so that they could report back to the members of the clubs they represent.

In time, the Forum evolved into a more formal event, often being used as an informational tool by the Board to inform the delegates about issues facing the AKC or new programs it was planning to institute. There is no Forum held at the March meeting, however, since this is the annual meeting where delegates are elected to the Board of Directors; the time normally given over to the Forum is used for candidates to make a campaign speech to their fellow delegates prior to the election.

The Delegate Coordinating Committee officially “runs” the Forum and chooses the topics covered. However, in the absence of a planned program by the Coordinating Committee, the Board of Directors, the Senior Staff, or any group of delegates wishing to discuss a particular topic, may request permission to hold a forum to cover the issue at hand. Such requests should be directed to the Coordinating Committee for its approval.

The Delegate Caucus

As the Forum evolved into a more formal event, this made the previous open “give and take” discussions that were the original intent of the Forum, impossible. A number of delegates felt this was unfortunate, and a little over 15 years ago an informal gathering of delegates began that would allow for candid discussions on any issue of concern to the Delegate Body. Initially these “gatherings” were held in a delegate’s hotel room, but as the popularity of the Caucus grew, it became necessary to expand the space in which the Caucus was held to accommodate the increasing number of attendees. The Caucus is usually held the day before the Delegate meeting, in the morning before the Standing Committee meetings are held in a smaller conference room at the host hotel. Information on where and when the Caucus will be held is sent to all delegates, along with the other meeting information, prior to the meeting, but it is also available from the hotel desk. The Caucus is managed solely by delegates. Staff does not attend and members of the Board of Directors do not attend in any official capacity as members of the Board. However, as delegates themselves, the individual Board members may attend to represent their clubs in their capacity as delegates.

The Delegate Caucus is an excellent way for new delegates to hear the opinions and concerns of their fellow delegates, and they can often learn a great deal of “background information” about items that may be on the agenda of the next day’s meeting. It is strongly recommended that new delegates try to attend both the Delegate Caucus and, if possible, some of the Delegate Committee meetings the day before the actual Delegate’s Meeting. In addition to providing you with another opportunity to meet your fellow delegates, it can help you “get up to speed” on the many issues with which the Board and Delegate Body are dealing.

The Delegate Standing Committees

At the June Delegate meeting in 1992, a proposal was made from the Delegate Body on the formation of standing committees made up of delegates, to assist the AKC Board in evaluating ideas or proposals of possible merit, which upon recommendation of a committee, would be presented to the Board for further review and action.

At the following meeting in September 1992, the Delegate Body voted to form an Ad Hoc (temporary) committee to study the proposal further and to report back to the delegates at a later date. The Ad Hoc Committee on Delegate Committees reported back to the Delegate Body at the March 1993 meeting and their report was published.

At the next Delegate meeting in June 1993, the Delegate Body voted in favor of the proposal and created a standing rule on delegate committees. At the September 14, 1993 Delegate meeting the following delegate standing committees were created:

Coordinating Committee

Special Committees:

- Future Nature and Structure of the Delegate Body committee
- Canine Population Issues committee
- Judges Approval Procedure committee

Standing Committees:

- Parent Clubs committee
- All-Breed Clubs committee
- Constitution and Bylaws committee
- Dog Show Rules committee
- Field Trial Clubs committee
- Health Research and Health Education committee
- Obedience Clubs committee.

Over the years, the names of some of the committees have been changed. Some of the special committees like Judges Approval and the Canine Population Issues committees have ceased to exist. On the other hand, the special committee originally called the Future Nature and Structure of the Delegate Body became a permanent standing committee and was renamed the Delegate Strategic Planning committee. In 2004 the name of this committee was again

changed to the Delegate Advocacy and Advancement committee. The Health Research and Health Education committee was renamed the Canine Health committee. The Obedience Clubs committee took on additional responsibility when Agility became a titling sport and was renamed the Obedience, Tracking and Agility committee. The Field Trial committee was also renamed to become the Field Trial and Hunting Test Events committee.

As the need arises, new committees can be formed. The most recent addition to the delegate standing committees was the formation of the Herding, Earthdog and Coursing Events committee, which was created in 2003.

Election to these delegate committees takes place at the AKC Delegate meeting every September. Delegates who are interested in running for a seat on one of these committees are asked to self-nominate during the preceding summer. After the nomination period ends, a mailing is sent to all delegates, listing the candidates for each committee, with a brief biographical write-up each candidate has provided as their “campaign speech”. Election is by secret ballot (like the election of delegates to the AKC Board). The length of a committee member’s term is based on the number of votes they receive in the election, with the highest number of vote getters receiving three-year terms, followed by those receiving fewer votes getting two and one year terms. Because some members will sit on a committee for a longer period, while others must seek re-election sooner, and because terms expire in different years, there is an excellent balance between continuity and turnover on each committee.

The delegate standing committees have proven to be an extremely valuable asset to the AKC, by providing intelligent, well-researched proposals for action to the AKC Board of Directors and Senior Staff. This concept of including the vast, talented Delegate Body in the planning and development of the AKC is helping the organization to tap into a valuable and knowledgeable resource with minimal expenditure. It also allows delegates, who care passionately about the issues facing the AKC and the purebred dog fancy, to contribute to the survival and success of this wonderful sport.

Delegate Standing Rules on Committees

Adopted June 8, 1993, Amended September 14, 1993,
June 13, 1995, September 10, 1996, June 10, 1997,
June 11, 2002, June 7, 2004, January 17, 2005

I. This rule shall be known as “The Standing Rule on Delegate Committees.”

II. The goals of these committees are:

- A.** To provide the broad-based independent involvement of the Delegates in matters affecting the dog fancy.
- B.** To identify and utilize the expertise within the Delegate Body and within the fancy.

III. The Delegates establish the following standing committees and charge them as follows:

A. Parent Clubs

- 1. To share information and procedures useful to parent clubs.
- 2. To find ways of making parent clubs and parent club events more effective and efficient in serving the needs of their members, their breeds, and their local specialty clubs.

B. All-Breed Clubs

- 1. To share information and procedures useful to all-breed clubs.
- 2. To find ways of making all-breed clubs and their events more effective and efficient in serving the needs of their members and their communities.

C. Obedience, Tracking and Agility

- 1. To share information and procedures useful to obedience, tracking and agility clubs.
- 2. To find ways of making obedience, tracking and agility clubs and their events more effective and efficient in serving the needs of their members and their communities.

D. Field Trial and Hunting Test Events

- 1. To share information and procedures useful to field trial and hunting test clubs.

2. To find ways of making field trial and hunting test clubs and their events more effective and efficient in serving the needs of their members and their communities.
3. To support the role of field trial and hunting test clubs and events in enhancing and preserving the working skills of the breeds involved.

E. Canine Health

1. To gather and share with the Delegates scientific information vital to the improvement of canine health.
2. To recommend to the Delegates educational programs, procedures and research relevant to canine health.

F. Bylaws

To review and make recommendations on proposed amendments to the Bylaws.

G. Dog Show Rules

To review and make recommendations on proposed amendments to the Dog Show Rules.

H. Delegate Advocacy and Advancement

To review and make recommendations on issues and proposals affecting the future structure of the Delegate Body, Delegate empowerment, changes relating to Delegate meetings and Delegate eligibility.

I. Herding, Earthdog and Coursing Events

1. To share information and procedures useful to the clubs that conduct herding, earthdog and coursing events.
2. To find ways of making herding, earthdog and coursing events and the clubs that conduct such events more effective and efficient in serving the needs of their members and their communities.
3. To support the role of herding, earthdog and coursing events and the clubs that conduct these events in enhancing and preserving the working skills of the breeds involved.

J. Coordinating Committee

1. To determine the scope and jurisdiction of Delegate committees.
2. To establish procedural guidelines for committee operations.
3. To coordinate, control, and facilitate committee requests for staff resources and committee expenses.
4. To ensure the timely submission of committee annual reports.
5. To review committee effectiveness and make recommendations.

IV. The membership of the committees, with the exception of the Coordinating Committee, shall be elected by the Delegates as follows:

- A.** Elections for standing committees shall be held at the Delegates quarterly meeting in September of each year.
- B.** Members of the Board of Directors are not eligible to serve as voting members on Delegate committees.
- C.** A Delegate may self-nominate for only one committee.
- D.** Each self-nominated Delegate shall submit to AKC a statement of not more than 150 words indicating his or her qualifications.
- E.** AKC shall furnish to the Delegates, with the call for the meeting at which the election will be held, the list of nominees for each committee, the statements of qualification, the record of attendance at Delegate meetings, incumbents' attendance records at Delegate Committee Meetings, and the length of tenure of each nominee.
- F.** If the nominations for any committee are equal to or less than the maximum number of committee members to be elected, there shall be no election for that committee and the nominated candidates shall be deemed elected.

G. Elections shall be by written ballot at a regular Delegates Meeting.

1. Those nominees receiving the most votes shall be elected.
2. If at any annual election the number of nominees would result in a committee of less than five members, that committee shall not function for that year.
3. Standing committees shall consist of not less than five nor more than eleven members.
4. In case of a tie for the last position on any committee, the tie will be resolved by a standing vote of the Delegates.

V. The committees shall be organized as follows:

- A.** At the conclusion of the Delegates Meeting at which they are elected, each committee shall elect a chair, then a secretary.
- B.** The Coordinating Committee shall be comprised of the chairs of each of the other Delegate standing committees. The Coordinating Committee shall, at its first meeting, elect a chair, then a secretary.
- C.** Committee members shall serve terms determined as follows:
 1. Upon initial committee election, committees shall be divided into three classes, as follows:

Committee Size	Terms		
	3 years	2 years	1 year
5	2	2	1
6	2	2	2
7	3	2	2
8	3	3	2
9	3	3	3
10	4	3	3
11	4	4	3

2. Thereafter all newly elected members will serve three-year terms.

D. From time to time, the Delegate Body may establish and charge additional standing committees. Staffing of additional committees will follow the procedure described in *Article IV*.

VI. The following operating rules shall apply to committees:

A. Committees may, at their discretion, invite non-Delegates to participate in a non-voting capacity.

B. Committees may, at their discretion, seek liaison with Board members.

C. All committee reports shall be directed to the Delegate Body with copies to the Board of Directors.

D. An annual written report shall be submitted to the Delegate Body by a date designated by the coordinating Committee.

E. Interim oral or written reports may be submitted by committees at their discretion, or as directed by the Coordinating Committee.

F. Committees will consider and respond to Board requests for input. In instances where a committee is responding to a Board request, their report will go directly to the Board.

G. No committee shall speak in the name of the Delegates or the American Kennel Club.

H. Each committee shall respect the powers designated to the Board of Directors in *Articles IX* and *X* of the Bylaws.

I. All committee meetings shall be open to Delegates as observers only.

J. Committees shall utilize *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.

- K.** In the absence of the elected chair, the committee members present at a meeting shall elect an interim chair.
 - L.** Three consecutive absences without the approval of the committee chair shall constitute a resignation from that committee.
 - M.** Vacancies on a committee shall be filled, until the next committee election, by a vote of the committee.
 - N.** Committees shall meet in conjunction with the quarterly Delegates Meetings. Special meetings may only be held at other times with the prior approval of the Coordinating Committee.
- VII. None of the above provisions shall be presumed to limit the power of the Board of Directors to appoint committees as specified in *Article X, Section 2* of the Bylaws.**

Frequently Asked Questions:

How are the committee meetings structured and when are they held?

Typically, the committees meet the day before the actual Delegate meeting itself. Therefore most of the committees meet on Monday, when the Delegate meeting is held on a Tuesday.

The meetings are usually held in conference rooms with a large conference table in the center, at which the committee members sit, and rows of chairs around the walls of the room for the use of any delegates who wish to attend as guests/observers.

Can delegates attending a meeting as an observer ask questions or offer comments?

Yes, most committees welcome input from the audience on any matter before them so that the committee can better represent a broad spectrum of the dog fancy. Customarily, when a matter is being discussed, all committee members who wish to comment will do so first, then the committee chair will open up discussion for questions or comments from the audience.

Can delegates approach a committee, if they have an idea that falls within that committee's charge, and ask that it be reviewed?

Yes, the Delegate Committees serve the Delegate Body and any delegate, at any time, may approach a committee and ask that a particular issue be added to their agenda for research and review. Committees will often have delegates come as guest speakers to present topics to the committee, that they feel fall within that committee's area of responsibility.

How long do the committee meetings last?

The length of any committee meeting will depend on how many items are on the agenda for that meeting, and how sensitive a topic may be. Typically, committees will meet for about two hours, but a committee with a very heavy agenda, or one dealing with a sensitive or controversial topic that may necessitate longer discussion, may be scheduled for a lengthier meeting.

Will delegates be able to attend all the different committee meetings if they wish?

Usually this is not possible, since several committees are scheduled to hold their meetings at the same time. Most delegates find it necessary to “pick and choose” which committee meetings they will attend at any one Delegate meeting. For this reason the committee agendas, which are included in the call packet sent for every delegates’ meeting (along with the site and time each committee will meet), are particularly useful to the Delegate Body in choosing which committees they want to observe and report back upon to their clubs.

Are the committee meetings ever “closed” to non-members?

This can happen occasionally, if the committee is dealing with a particularly sensitive matter that requires privacy. In a case like this, the committee chair will announce that the committee will go into “executive session”. Should this occur, observers will be asked to leave the room until the committee has dealt with the confidential matter.

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AKC Code of Sportsmanship

PREFACE: The sport of purebred dog competitive events dates prior to 1884, the year of AKC's birth. Shared values of those involved in the sport include principles of sportsmanship. They are practiced in all sectors of our sport: conformation, performance and companion. Many believe that these principles of sportsmanship are the prime reason why our sport has thrived for over one hundred years. With the belief that it is useful to periodically articulate the fundamentals of our sport, this code is presented.

- Sportsmen respect the history, traditions and integrity of the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen commit themselves to values of fair play, honesty, courtesy, and vigorous competition, as well as winning and losing with grace.
- Sportsmen refuse to compromise their commitment and obligation to the sport of purebred dogs by injecting personal advantage or consideration into their decisions or behavior.
- The sportsman judge judges only on the merits of the dogs and considers no other factors.
- The sportsman judge or exhibitor accepts constructive criticism.
- The sportsman exhibitor declines to enter or exhibit under a judge where it might reasonably appear that the judge's placements could be based on something other than the merits of the dogs.
- The sportsman exhibitor refuses to compromise the impartiality of a judge.
- The sportsman respects the AKC bylaws, rules, regulations and policies governing the sport of purebred dogs.
- Sportsmen find that vigorous competition and civility are not inconsistent and are able to appreciate the merit of their competition and the effort of competitors.
- Sportsmen welcome, encourage and support newcomers to the sport.
- Sportsmen will deal fairly with all those who trade with them.
- Sportsmen are willing to share honest and open appraisals of both the strengths and weaknesses of their breeding stock.
- Sportsmen spurn any opportunity to take personal advantage of positions offered or bestowed upon them.
- Sportsmen always consider as paramount the welfare of their dog.
- Sportsmen refuse to embarrass the sport, the American Kennel Club, or themselves while taking part in the sport.

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