



AKC/BCOA Delegate Meeting September 11& 12, 2006

The Delegates met in Newark NJ at the Sheraton Newark Airport Hotel. It took some doing to drive to the same location on the five year anniversary of the horror of 9/11. Many delegates had been present for that most awful of meetings where we watched the towers fall, later struggling to find a way home with most transportation shut down. My worst memory was actually seeing the second plane hit just as I reached the Newark turnoff. Even so a large gathering of 345 Delegates were present. On Monday I attended the final meeting of my term of office of the Herding Earth Dog Coursing Committee, of which I was one of the founders.

Tuesday morning is devoted to a Forum. This morning was a program on Veterinary Outreach. This idea was formed by the Delegate's Canine Health Committee, and has become an important program for AKC. In order to acquaint new veterinarians with AKC purebred dogs the program includes visits to veterinary schools, scholarships for veterinary technicians, and representatives even give a copy of The AKC Complete Dog Book to each graduating vet student. Each book has an insert giving the student links to Parent Clubs. They also give the AKC breed posters to help veterinarians with identifying breeds. Since Hartz Mountain has withdrawn their support as contributing sponsor of the program, AKC will continue to help with support until a new sponsor is found.

The 2,500 veterinarians in the program also have the benefit of a complimentary office visit for new puppy owners.

The formal meeting then began with the election of Delegate Committee members. Chairman Ron Menaker gave a talk on Responsible Dog Owners Day, held Sept 16, of which over 350 member clubs were signed up to hold events in Madison Square Park in NYC.

President Dennis Sprung then spoke, remembering 9/11 and Katrina. He commented on the generous outpouring of care, support and love given by the fancy.

The third quarter financial report was given by Chief Financial Officer Jim Stevens on the state of the AKC budget. We learned that overall revenues are down for the year even with investment improvements. Registrations continue to decline and AKC events lost \$10 million over the year.

Voting was next on the agenda. One amendment to the by-laws was passed overwhelmingly by a standing vote. In part this amendment will deny AKC judges the eligibility to judge non AKC events. Of concern is how this may affect us in the future. We were assured, by our Chairman that AKC judges will still be allowed to judge non AKC ASFA or similar events in the future, when the question was raised from the delegate body as to what would happen in five years or so when the by-law is taken literally. It might be wise for those who participate in outside events to keep a copy of the minutes of this meeting on file for possible use in the future if needed.

After lunch it was if a bombshell had hit when Delegates were told that AKC had signed a contract with Petland pet stores to provide AKC registration materials for their customers. Petland was to encourage their customers to register with AKC and not one of the competing registries, and their employees would be instructed as to filling out papers. I doubt if there is anyone reading this who does not know of the furor raised, or the outcome. The firestorm which began at that meeting continued with a ground swell from the fancy until AKC officials announced that the deal had been scrapped.

The comments from the floor that day continued for nearly another two hours. This contract was something the Delegates would not accept. Minutes of the meeting are published in the October 2006 issue of the Gazette. They make for fascinating reading of an amazing meeting.