



Mr. Winn

## DISSENT and "The GOOD OLD DAYS" Robert H. Winn

The past is prologue. The direction and purpose of the future is determined by the thrust of that prologue. The Cat Fanciers Association, Inc. has sixty one years of prologue which are today effective guide lines to the future service and contributions which this organization can and will provide to that portion of life which is its field.

To some, the past is not so much prologue as it is a substitute for the reality of the present. Nostalgia, and the wish to return to a simpler, more insular association appear to be attractive goals to some who are disheartened by the growing pains of the present. Differences in approach, and the determination of the procedures which will best serve all those who look to CFA for service, involve conflict. This conflict is distasteful. Viewed in retrospect, the past appears to have been devoid of this war of ideas as the past rushed through the years toward the present. Looking back to see the joys and the unity which growth and strength had for nurture is a pleasant, almost narcotic, pastime. There is only one problem which confronts the seeker for "the good old days." The good old days never were.

The birth of CFA was achieved in conflict. On matters of principle, this Association split away from the preexisting registering body, and formed its own organization which has now lived and functioned for sixty-one years. What have these sixty-one years been? Do they provide a cemetery of memories, and a source of grief for the lost rappings of the unanimity of those who marched, arm in arm, in unity toward the obvious benefits which lay ahead? A study of the sixty-one years reveals no such memories. The stated purposes of the organization were always generalizations of high resolve which were acceptable to all who were a part of the organization. When these purposes were applied to particular problems, as is true today, the applicability of the purpose to the problem was often heatedly questioned. On more than one occasion, the representative form of government which the CFA Constitution provides, has been under attack. At the 1953 and 1954 Annual Meetings, the proponents of change and supporters of the status quo clashed with resulting lacerated spirits. When the status quo was victorious, the split resulted in a permanent cleavage, and one of the splinter registering bodies came into existence.

Interpretations of the CFA Constitution have often been a cause of trauma. As early as the 1933 Annual Meeting, an interpretation of the voting provisions and limitations resulted in wholesale resignations of member clubs, and voluntary separations of judges from the organization.

Over the years, problems of registration rules have separated avid and unyielding groups of breeders. The acceptance of hitherto unrecognized breeds of cats has always presented opponents as well as proponents of that action. The questions presented by unrecognized breeds are as nothing when we consider the problems which the proposed recognition of new colors of existing breeds pose. Friendships of long years totter and fall as arguments grow not only heated, but personal.

Show Rules, and changes in Show Rules, have provided many of the conflicts which have marked CFA over the years. New Show Rules, and objections to existing Show Rules have been limited only by the breadth of the imaginations of the breeders and exhibitors.

The CFA Judges, and the procedures used by the Judges have not been without question. The training of Judges, and their activities, both in and out of the ring, have provided the basis for discussion and criticism. The discussion and criticism is often aired in corners, and around tables at which warnings that any attempt to ascribe such criticism to those who aired it, will be met with prompt and vociferous denial, invariably are heard.

A large source of the unpleasantnesses which denies to the "good old years" the rosy hue, is the plain unvarnished pique. Those who make up the members of CFA member clubs are human, and all the frailties of humanity are theirs. Will Rogers to the contrary, some people just do not like some other people. When a certain person is disliked, any story, no matter how far-fetched, is acceptable as true as applied to that person.

All that I have written above has been to demonstrate that the sixty-one years of CFA's prologue have not been the halcyon care-free time which would be so appealing. We must remember that the March 1970 Board Meeting, and the 1970 Annual Meeting in Niagara, with its attendant Board Meetings, are now a part of our prologue. There are some relative newcomers to the CFA national scene who are appalled by the lack of unanimity, and the conflict which these meetings engendered. It is possible to be disturbed by a feeling that in some way, CFA can be permanently damaged by the internal differences which were demonstrated at these meetings. We can expect calls calculated to bring us together. Actually, the strength of CFA has been hammered on the anvil of dissent. These meetings for all the problems which were there presented, were in the tradition of CFA. Within a relatively short time, the 1970 meetings will be a part of "the good old days" which will be the subject of yearning by the romanticists who would return to them.

Inasmuch as the days of our years have not been filled only with enlightenment, unity and love, and any attempt to so characterize them must fall before reality, what is their meaning?

I must here return to the theme of my first paragraph. They are the prologue to the tomorrow of CFA. As of any moment, this prologue carries us to the instant which is now. Tomorrow and tomorrow are ready to open as time ticks its moments toward the past. The prologue carries the promise of the direction and the purpose.

The future will be built on the prologue. There will thus be no surcease of conflict. Unanimity will be conspicuous by its absence. Differences of opinion, and personality differences will continue to plague. The anvil of dissent will occupy the place of honor at the center of the podium at all meetings. And either because of, or in spite of the differences, and in the face of all the conflict, CFA will continue to fulfill the promise of its sixty-one years of prologue.

In addition to the war of ideas, what specifically can we look for as the further developments of the future, based on the past?

CFA presents several facets of activities to the members of the general public, and the cat fancy. One of the most obvious is the series of shows licensed by it in the succeeding show years. Involved in the acceptance of the CFA licensed shows, are several important considerations. First, and probably most important, is the necessity that the Judges approved by CFA to officiate at its shows be recognized as professionals. The three words on the seal of the Judges' Association come to mind. The Judges must have "Proficiency, Integrity and Showmanship." The clubs must have know-how, and be able to make a show function smoothly and in accordance with the Show Rules, and the Show Rules themselves must be acceptable and functional. The story of CFA's shows over the last eight years is graphically told by the figures.

	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970
No. of Shows	38	49	49	50	62	73	90	97
Entries	7,555	9,155	9,844	11,352	13,747	15,827	20,132	23,642

In the eight years listed above, the number of shows increased over two and one half times, and the entries increased over three fold. Interest in cats has increased over these years, and in all areas, but this show activity is in excess of the overall increase in interest. During the 1969-70 show season, exhibitors spent nearly a quarter of a million dollars in entry fees alone, and even after allowing for the dilution caused by multiple entries, it is apparent that exhibitors spent a total in excess of half a million dollars in entry fees and expenses to have their cats judged in CFA shows by CFA judges.

There are today nine registering bodies for cats in North America. Each of them duplicates the functions of the others. For the first time, in the 1968-69 Show Season, more cats were entered in CFA shows than were entered in all the shows of the other eight associations combined. This supremacy was continued and the difference between the total entered in CFA shows, and the total in all other shows was, in 1969-70, greater than it had been in the previous year.

Another CFA service which is indicative through its acceptance by the public, is the registering function. For many years the Recorder for CFA was a housewife, who kept the pedigrees and other records of the cats registered with the association, on three by five cards which were literally maintained on her kitchen table. The Central Office keeps not only the genealogical records, it also issues Show Licenses, maintains a running inventory for the purpose of determining Championships and Grand Championships, scores shows for the All

Star Award, and is the place of business of the corporation. In the summer of 1963, CFA found that the volume of business conducted by the Office made a move from the home of the recorder essential. Office space was found in Red Bank, New Jersey. Since 1963, CFA has taken additional space twice, and has now moved to another and larger building. Its genealogical records, some two hundred thousand of them, are now stored in the memory of a large computer, from which they can be instantly retrieved for purposes of new registrations. The work of the office now requires the full time services of eight employees.

The acceptance of this part of the services, over the years, offered by CFA is indicated by the following table :

Year	Registrations	Transfers of Ownership	Champion Confirmations	Ordinary Income
1959	6,977	1,182	424	\$ 20,523
1960	7,831	1,405	507	24,420
1961	8,176	1,396	604	27,430
1962	9,470	1,607	673	31,329
1963	9,380	1,770	731	30,723
1964	10,039	1,980	966	34,398
1965	12,004	2,308	1,002	40,707
1966	14,125	2,594	1,220	50,163
1967	19,343	3,520	1,390	66,608
1968	22,579	4,652	1,693	78,052
1969	26,223	5,781	2,108	93,431
;1970	30,997	7,317	2,412	113,654

(The fiscal year ends on January 31 of each year in the table)

The acceptance which lovers of cats, all cats, have given CFA as exemplified by the use of the services provided, is almost unbelievable. The shows licensed by CFA, and the services of its office are recognized as the best by all cat lovers. The picture as set out in the relatively few figures given above, constitute the prologue of CFA. The years that are past have their stories in the books. The years to come will find their direction and purpose in this prologue.

The past is prologue, but the die is cast for the future. Humble before its acceptance, but proud of the quality of its services, CFA will continue in the years ahead as it has grown in the past. There will be no ponderous movements, backed by a unanimous controlling group. Rather, the steps will be slow, and the gait appears to be halting. Each step forward may well be accompanied by another, but hopefully shorter, step backward. Each Board Meeting will have an accompaniment of "Shouts and murmurs offstage," and each Board member will be aware of these background noises. Each Annual Meeting will bring out the controversial problems, and will refer them to the hard pressed Board for action ; action which will result in more controversy, no matter what that action may be.

The net result of it all will be more steps forward in direction and purpose, and the accumulation of ever more prologue to which historians in future generations will refer as road signs for the future.