

# KNOW YOUR JUDGES' ASSOCIATION

## Marion Hall

Now in the 11th year since its inception, the CFA Judges' Association is a vital living organization dedicated to the cats and to the exhibitors. The origin of the Association for all CFA judges stems back to two judges: Mrs. Genevieve O'Neill and Miss Stella Harlos. In the days when the entire CFA operation was still pretty much of the "kitchen table" variety, these judges had the foresight to realize the future need to correlate the activities of the CFA Judges.



Proving that it is a very normal and active group, some discussion as to the value of the Association came up as a part of the business at our annual meeting this year in Niagara Falls. I suggested that people should know more about the Judges' Association: as is most usual in such cases, our president, Mrs. O'Brien appointed me to write a new article on the CFA Judges' Association to appear in the 1970 Yearbook. (See 1969 Yearbook for article written by our president, Mrs. O'Brien). I regret that I was not one of the charter members, and I am certain that there are many other judges who could better describe the J. A., however I will draw upon my judging experience, and nearly two decades of breeding show cats to attempt to show you what this Association means to me.

If any of you have wondered why there is a Judges Association, permit me to quote the purposes of the J. A. as set forth in our constitution:

1. To enhance the image and dignity of the CFA Judge, and to further the professional aspects of CFA judging.
2. To assist in the dissemination of information regarding rules and regulations affecting the judging profession, and compliance therewith.
3. To offer the services of the Association as a sounding board for proposed policies or rules affecting CFA judging.

The constitution provides that our annual meeting be held on the eve of the first day of the CFA Annual Meeting.

A Director of the J. A. is elected from each CFA Region and is responsible for disseminating information to the judges in his region; when feasible, he arranges Judges seminars where the judges may meet and discuss any problems, perhaps have a "learning session", with each discussing their experiences in the breeds they raise, the problems of breeding, illnesses, etc.

And to keep all judges well informed, the J. A. publishes a newsletter sent to all members. Kudos to Mr. Charles Victor for his fine job as Editor of the Newsletter.

To the exhibitor and to the general public, the CFA judge is the representative of CFA itself, and should always be conscious of this fact. The judge to be fair and impartial must keep abreast of trends with existing breeds, and be aware of new breeds being recognized. The conscientious judge exhibits or attends as many shows as possible to add to his knowledge. We may never feel that having been approved as a judge our knowledge of cats is complete. We must continue to breed, show and learn. There is constant change and we must be aware of it, thus there is a continuing need for the Judges' Association and its programs.

Judges don't happen automatically — first a love of cats leads them to the role of exhibitor and breeder, then their dedication to cats and the cat fancy further leads to the training required to judge. Thus, it is understandable that judges and the Judges' Association are continually interested that the clubs giving shows have the most successful shows possible ; for in such cooperation between judges and show committees smoother running, more enjoyable programs evolve, resulting in pleasure for all.

At any meeting of the J. A. there is discussion, perhaps informally — or perhaps as a formal part of the meeting agenda, about shows and how they may be bettered. Covering broadly some of the recent meetings, I recall discussion on such show matters as size, layout, or general convenience of show halls, and dear to the heart of every judge is excellent lighting ; for poor lighting does no entry justice, and indeed certain types of lighting will apparently change eye colors so that what really meets the standard appears to be far from it. Speaking of things that judges like or don't like, one of the judge's most common gripes is the show committee that does not furnish information as to where the judge will stay. Most judges do like to leave a contact at home where we may be reached in case of emergency while away judging. Most of us also like comfortable and convenient eating facilities and lodging, for after a day of lifting a ton or so of cat flesh and fur it is truly enjoyable to be able to quickly clean up and relax. (A big hint to clubs that are keeping on a tight budget — try to have restaurants in mind that offer a variety of prices, for if the judges are quartered so that only high priced meals are available, then the food costs will soar.)

A very practical problem has arisen within the past year, and the J. A. is most naturally concerned regarding the procedures of relicensing judges in. C.F.A. With CFA growing by leaps and bounds, we feel that up-to-date licensing and relicensing procedures must be found before this question comes before the board again. There are many facets to this problem which will require work toward a satisfactory solution.

By having their own Association, judges are drawn more closely together, each judge willing to help another on any breed of cat. The panel of judges as a whole breed almost every recognized breed (and

some that aren't), and within their ranks the judges feel free to discuss the various breeds so that all gain knowledge by listening and asking questions.

Most judges are very conscious of the fact that there are many excellent specimens of each breed, and it is quite obvious that the overall quality of cats being shown grows better year by year. We know that we must keep abreast of all changes in the standards, and particularly with those in the mechanics of the show. We are aware that a mechanical error can be a costly mistake for an exhibitor, who may have traveled a long distance for the show, and strive to avoid such error.

The question may occur to you "Why be a judge?" I can answer this in my own mind, and I am certain it would apply to any other judge. It is our true love for cats, of all breeds. The many facets of the cat fancy; breeding, exhibiting, care of cats, association with other cat lovers, and the intricacies of the show room completely fascinate us, else we would not be so heavily involved. I personally delight in the healthy, bright eyed cat of any breed, as I am sure do all other judges.

Our aims as a J. A. are to further cats of all breeds. We are vastly concerned with the good health of the cat. We must remain familiar with each standard as it is written. We are interested in furthering the aims of the Cat Fanciers Association, and in keeping aware of Constitutional amendments. We wish to be available to help any breeder or exhibitor with their problems, and we strive always to assist anyone needing help.

Each year the J. A. presents medals to the top 20 CFA All-Star award winners, and presents certificates to the breeders of their fine cats, in recognition of their achievement. We take pride in these awards, recognizing the excellence of the featured felines in the consistency of their show wins.

At the last annual meeting of the J. A. discussion was held regarding the merits of a judge clerking for another. Since the Clerking program is providing a large pool of trained clerks, there is no longer the extreme need for judges to clerk. As a result of the discussion the J. A. requested that the CFA Board rule that no club should solicit a judge to clerk, however if the judge volunteers to clerk, and there is a clerk needed, then it would be permissible.

The founding purpose of the CFA J. A. was for the betterment of cats and cat shows. By compiling information on each breed, by discussion with breeders, by comparing these experiences with other judges, by training apprentice judges in proper handling of cats and in judging points, by cooperating with the many show committees to obtain best type of organization, and by cooperation with the CFA Executive Board, the J. A. is attempting to meet the problems of the ever changing Cat Fancy. The Officers names will be found in the J. A. ad.