

NZDJA

Social Media and Judges - Where to from Here?

by Lavina Diamanti

Last month Ray Greer wrote a very thought-provoking article on Social Media and the effects on judging. Quite rightly he identified that many of the posts on social media are advertising and, like all advertising, are designed to persuade the consumer to buy their product. In our case we, the judges, are the consumer.

The whole subject of social media and the effect on dog shows and judging raises some questions. The first one is how different is advertising on Facebook to placing an advertisement in a dog magazine? One could argue that they are both advertising and therefore it is up to the consumer (in this case the judge) as to whether they buy into it. The counter argument, and one that is very valid, is that with a dog magazine the judge purchases it knowing full well there will be dogs advertised. With social media, and Facebook in particular, advertising is received by the judge unsolicited. The magic of Facebook is its ability to spread messages far and wide, and that includes all the messages regarding a particular dog's achievements. Many of these brag messages are intended to influence judges that may judge that particular dog in the future and this includes 'tagging' a judge in a photo.

So where to from here? Social Media is here to stay, that is undeniable. But can we, or should we, attempt to regulate it? Should there be some guidelines around unsolicited advertising. Should there be a remedy for judges who are subjected to this and feel their reputation has been unfairly affected. If we were to write some guidelines around social media for judges, what would they look like? Would they be a list of who you should accept friend requests from, what posts you could comment on etc? Would they include enforceable penalties for those responsible for attempting to influence a judge. In researching this article, I could find no countries that published any guidelines for judges around social media and the effect of advertising.

As judges, we will always be subjected to exhibitors attempting to persuade us that their dog is worthy of an award. Be it the Facebook news feed, the advertising in a dog magazine, or dare I say it, the unscrupulous exhibitor who sends you photos and a resume of their dog just before a judging appointment. As a judge, you have a choice. You can accept the friend requests that hit your in box from exhibitors you hardly know (usually just before an appointment) or you can hit the delete button. You can pour over everyone's wins as they hit your Facebook news feed or you can continue scrolling. You can strive to have as many Facebook friends as possible or you can have friends who you also connect with on Facebook. The choice is yours.

As judges we are bound by the NZDJA Code of Conduct which states, in part, "Judges must impartially evaluate each dog they judge and award each animal the appropriate placing relative to the written NZKC standard, regardless of the dogs record, advertisement, friendship, or any other consideration." That says it all.

Postscript

If any judge feels they are being pressured by an exhibitor via social media, contact your Regional Chairperson for support and guidance.

For the full judges Code of Conduct visit our website www.nzdogjudges.com

All NZKC members have a responsibility to help combat unscrupulous behaviour. If you think a judge is being pressured by another exhibitor talk to a representative of the Judges Association or contact NZKC.

Region Chairpersons

- Region 1: Kathleen Hardwick Phone: 07-826 4554
Email: daxford@xtra.co.nz
- Region 2: Linda Strongman Phone: 07-828 4750
Email: lynmar@xtra.co.nz
- Region 3: Betty Parker Phone: 06-355 9126
Email: bettyparker@clear.net.nz
- Region 4: Lavina Diamanti Phone: 03-578 6998
Email: lavina.diamanti@gmail.com
- Region 5: Kaye Finlayson Phone: 03-347 0059
Email: kenterprizes@xtra.co.nz

Important Dates

- 31 January 2017 Applications for promotion close
- 21 March 2017 Theory Examination
- 15 & 16 July 2017 Auckland Practical Exams
- 22 & 23 July 2017 Wellington Practical Exams (if required)
- 29 & 30 July 2017 Christchurch Practical Exams