

WORDS OF WISDOM ABOUT SHOWING

Following are some thoughts about the world of showing and dog show people. Have a look.....

SOME DIFFERENCES TO PONDER

“OLD SCHOOL” PEOPLE...	vs.	“NEW SCHOOL” PEOPLE...
want to become master breeders and thoroughly learned dog people		want to win shows and get their dog in the rankings
are patient, and accept that achievement and recognition are not going to come easily or happen instantaneously		are impatient and want it all now
revere the high achievers		resent the high achievers
are willing to sacrifice		are not willing to sacrifice
think they must prove that they deserve “the best” – they must earn it		think they are entitled to “the best”

The plural of “anecdote” is not “data”. This tenet applies to both the pursuit of science, and gossip.

In training, remember that repetition builds endurance while resistance builds strength. Always build endurance first.

Keep your priorities straight. People *are* more important than dogs. In the event of war, famine, natural catastrophe, or economic collapse, nobody cares who the #1 Appalachian Puddlejumper is.

“Do. Or do not. There is no try.” – Yoda, from Star Wars, Episode V: The Empire Strikes Back

Nothing great in the world has ever been accomplished without passion. -- G. W. F. Hegel

“It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes up short again and again, because there is no effort without error or shortcoming, but who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself for a worthy cause; who, at the best, knows, in the end, the triumph of high achievement, and who, at the worst, if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly!, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who knew neither victory nor defeat.” – “Citizen in a Republic,” from a speech at the Sorbonne, Paris, April 23, 1910

“...a gold medal is a wonderful thing. But if you're not enough without one, you'll never be enough **with** one.” – John Candy as Coach Irv, from Cool Runnings

To brag little, to lose well, to crow gently if in luck, to pay up, to own up, to shut up if beaten. These are the virtues of a sporting man.” – Oliver Wendell Holmes

THE EXHIBITOR'S PRAYER

Dear Protector of Dogs and Fools,

When that intelligent, hardworking, honest judge finally sees what I see in this dog I've worked so hard and long with, help me to accept my win with grace and dignity. And when that blind, clueless idiot – I mean “judge” – somehow fails to see what a fine job we've done (well, at least better than the so-and-so he placed ahead of us!), help me to accept my defeat with some of that same grace and dignity.

Lord, you alone know how I've sweated blood over this dog, the hours I've spent getting him ready (and, Lord, are any of them ever ready?!). You and probably only You understand why I've spent good money on this animal – money I could have spent on lots of other things – things that just might have afforded me a little more pleasure and a lot less frustration. Lord, tolerate my disappointment when I lose and help me keep it all in perspective. Help me remember that when some dog show judge gives me the gate, it's not as if St. Peter just gave me that pearly one.

Lord, clear my eyes and help me see, **before** I open my big mouth, that the so-and-so with that cow-hocked, pony-gaited dink, walking out of the ring ahead of me is actually a fellow exhibitor who has also worked hard, maybe even sweated blood over **his** dog too, and probably deserves to enjoy this moment to its fullest while it lasts.

Lord, you know there are sometimes – but not nearly as often as I tend to suppose when I lose – such ugly things as Politics, Prejudice, and Unethical Practices, which may cause my dog to get beaten unfairly – sometimes. Help me, then, to remember that several wrongs won't ever make a right, and that none of the wrongs gives me an excuse to act like an idiot.

You know I'm a competitor, Lord; I make no bones about that. I love to win and I hate to get beaten. There are few things more abhorrent to me, Lord, than placing fifth out of four. If I didn't love to compete, I'd stay home and knit afghans. But then, there are probably afghan shows, and people who hire professional knitters with high-tech knitting machines, and most likely there are afghan show judges who raise sheep whose wool goes into some of the winningest afghans, and there I'd be – still frustrated, still getting beaten, and without a dog to share half the blame.

This year, Lord, help me to have a little more faith in my fellow dog folk, and for Heaven's sake, help me win, or lose, with a little class.

Amen.