

MEANINGFUL MENTORING

by Kitty Steidel

Everyone is mentoring. Prospective judges waving papers ringside, papers needed to fill in the blanks for applications. Disseminating information is good, if it is accurate. However, my experience is that Judges Education Committees waste much valuable time arguing about who is qualified to mentor and who is not. AKC's rules are less stringent than Parent Club qualifications. Individuals, who qualify, through Parent Club or AKC approbation, are going to mentor. Given this fact, rather than exclude them, Parent Clubs could equip those interested with a plan to mentor efficiently. An outline of what to cover, meaningful mentoring could benefit student, mentor, club, and ultimately your breed.

In organizing the mentor program, the JEC might prepare a one page Mentor Notes. First in the notes is a thank you to mentors for giving their time and expertise. Next give him the specifics. The PBGVCA JEC developed a laminated card: 4" x 8 ½", the card can fit in any business envelope. One side is a color photo of a PBGV along with descriptive words from the standard. The other side a lovely head study and a photo of another PBGV. You have all you need.

Determine the student's experience with the breed. Regardless of his prior experience he should have read the standard. Take an extra copy of your standard with you. Together, refer to the first paragraph of the standard pulling out the most descriptive words. Next to ringside: Discussing each dog is unnecessary. Instead ask general questions as you survey the class: "Which dogs in your opinion have the compact, tousled outline while stacked?" Note the armband numbers of the dogs you would like to go over later and arrange with the handlers. From a distance it is really not the time to discuss details.

Having determined which exhibits approach the rustic, compact overall, next watch how each moves and make a further determination as to whether this dog is balanced or lacking somewhere. Some dogs that did not stack well may surprise you in motion. The overall carriage, especially head and tail, reveals much about the character of the dog. Called the happy breed, which dogs exhibit animation, confidence and exude enthusiasm? You have just established the first important type consideration -- overall outline.

In the hands on after the show, consider the details of the head (ear, eye, mustache, beard); the expression-friendly; the coat coarse, the topline -level, the medium tail set -high. Other details that will be discussed: the dark hair is not as profuse as the white; color and markings deceive the eye; the legs appear straight from the front but feet may turn slightly; what shape to the head and oval from the front; the oval eye; the little fan graduating from mustache to corners the eye. Note that the muzzle is shorter than distance from stop to occipital and ear does not reach the nose.

You may not realize it but you have just gone from general to specific; determined the silhouette, the head, the tail, the character and the movement of the PBGV. You have started on your journey of "[Solving the Mysteries of Breed Type](#)". A wonderful book to further your education is Rick Beauchamp's 2nd Edition by this name. (Bow Tie Publications)