

Pekingese Club of America Specialty Critique
December 16, 2016 - Dr. Ray Lo

It is an honor and distinct privilege to have been chosen to judge at a national club specialty, and sad as it may be, especially one dedicated to the memory of our recently departed president, Mark Warren. As with many of us, I was devastated to learn of the passing of a highly regarded and esteemed pillar of the club, who I have come to consider as a good friend. Rest in peace, dear Mark. I would like to thank the membership and the board of the PCA for this opportunity. Few have been given the honor and I appreciate your trust and confidence. As a judge, I have always said that the main, if not the only purpose of judging is to select stock for the purpose of improving our breeding. Thus, it is important to keep this in mind while judging. This is especially true of my own breed. My question to myself while judging would be: "Would I want to use this dog or bitch in my breeding program?" Or put another way, "Would I want to take this dog home with me?"

A few general statements regarding the state of our breed as seen in the entries shown to me is in order here. First, the positive points. There were no instances of noisy breathing and nostrils were generally more open. Hopefully, this is indicative that our breeders have become more aware of the dangers of the brachycephalic syndrome and that we are selectively breeding out this problem in our stock.

Second positive point is the absence of crowded faces, thick over nose wrinkles obscuring the nose and weak chins. The faces were generally open with good width between the eyes. There were very few with less than level top lines as well.

Ear and tail sets were generally good, as were rears and rear movement. Coat texture is not much of a problem either.

On the other hand, there are areas in which we need to work on to further improve the breed. As far as structure is concerned, I have always looked for overall balance in a specimen, where all the elements line up to give the impression of a well- put together dog. Nothing should stick out or be exaggerated. Some specimens tended to be longer in loin and others have more length of leg or up on leg. Neither will give the impression of a balanced Pekingese.

Another problem that seems to have crept up on us is the prevalence of faulty front assemblies. Many have elbows that are out at shoulders coupled with a lack of rounded chests. Some are severe to the point where you can put several fingers between the chest and the elbows. This fault translates into faulty movement where the dog lurches from side to side, rather than exhibiting the desired smooth, effortless rolling front movement stated in the standard.

With a few exceptions, substance seems to be slipping away from us. When lifted slightly off the table, we expect to feel the dog to be heavier than they appear. This was not the case in most of

the entries. The pear-shaped body has likewise become few and far-between.

A short note on appearances: While most are asking if Pekingese have too much coat, my impression is that too many exhibitors are falling behind with their dogs' grooming and conditioning, leading to badly presented specimens with sparse and lackluster coats, some lacking ear fringing and skirts, while others appeared to have suffered hair loss due to matting and being cut out. We must learn how to properly groom and maintain show coats. After all, it is a show and you must present your entry in the best possible condition. I like to see my entries with bright eyes, clean faces and as good a coat condition as possible at that stage of a dog's life. Perhaps, grooming and conditioning seminars are in order at this point in time. And I may add, it is not only right before the show that you should consider conditioning your dog. It is a constant effort and one that must seriously be adhered to in order to have the desired results.

In general, my winners reflect what my philosophy in breeding says. All were in good condition and groomed and presented properly. Most had elbows tight against the chest and moved well with the breed - defining rolling front gait. They have pear-shaped bodies falling away to lighter rears.

Winners Dog, Best of Winners and Best Bred By Exhibitor, Moonglow Clap for the Wolfman. Medium sized fawn, well balanced, low to ground good substance, great width of chest, firm rear. Moved correctly.

Reserve Winners Dog, Best Puppy, DeLuna Hulk. Slightly larger than the WD, but compact and balanced. Nice coat of coarse texture. Good bone and width of chest, short loin. Would prefer tighter shoulders but his movement appeared correct.

Winners Bitch, DeLuna Cruela. Medium sized fawn brindle with rectangular head, open nostrils, short neck, good chest, level back and firm rear. She stood out from the rest by virtue of being correct in most aspects and moving correctly.

Reserve Winners Bitch, H.T. Don't Cry for Me Argentina. Small black bitch of quality. Did not move well at that moment.

Best of Breed, Gr. Ch. Hi-Win's Lucas at Da-Buew. Beautifully balanced red-fawn brindle of larger size. Beautiful outline, very tight shoulders, level topline, pear-shaped body, short loin and high tail set. Nice open face with pleasing features. Moved with correct effortless and smooth rolling front motion. Presented professionally.

Best of Opposite Sex, Gr. Ch. Follow Me Just Call Me Empress. Grey brindle of medium size, compact and picked up heavy, tight at shoulders, firm rear, level back, high tail set with ample coat of correct texture. Would take her home in an instant.

Select Dog, Ch. Daiquiri On the Edge of Fame. Light fawn, smaller than BOB winner but of high quality, compact, balanced, great chest tapering to lighter loin, elbows tight at shoulders. Coat in full bloom and condition. Pushed the winner very hard for the win.

Select Bitch, Gr. Ch. Dragonfly Sparkling Imagination. Another high quality bitch of similar type with BOS winner. Also nicely presented and in full bloom. Moved correctly.

Award of Merit, Gr. Ch. Pequest Pickwick. Beautifully presented and groomed to perfection. Golden fawn, broad chest, picked up heavy, level topline, firm rear.

I would like to thank the exhibitors for allowing me to evaluate their entries. I had endeavored to find the best specimens of our breed with typical features of a rectangular head, open facial features, round lustrous dark eyes, pear-shaped body, tight elbows, and smooth rolling movement. Would Mark have approved? I certainly hope so.