

I drove six hours from Pittsburgh to Virginia to meet Glens for the first time. Some breeders make an in-person visit a required step before placing you on their waiting list. It may require an overnight trip to finally get your hands on a Glen—but if you're anything like me, you'll never want to let go.

—Jo Lynn, *irishglen@aol.com*

Glen of Imaal Terrier Club of America website: *Glens.org*

## Irish Terriers

### That Question

I could tell before I hung up the phone that Ms. D was ready to crack the whip. “What?”

Ms. D's eyes narrowed. “I'm going to make a flow chart for you to use when that temperament question comes up.”

“Why?”

“Because it's better to overexplain than underexplain canine temperament.”

“I agree that it's a complex subject.”

“Particularly since many prospective clients are looking to own the universal dutiful, perpetually sweet canines portrayed on TV—and your dogs are not that.”

“Well, yeah! But you really need to lay the groundwork that establishes how sweet and desirable this breed can be.”

“And then right after, explain dominance?”

“Yeah—why not?”

“Shouldn't you try to determine what type of dogs the caller has previously owned? Then you could explain dominance as being either similar to or different from the dogs they've already had. And you have to explain the difference between a dogs displaying dominance toward a person as compared to dominance over other animals.”

“That should cover the basics.”

“What if they already have a dog?”

“Well, that makes things complex.”

“Doesn't the presence of another dog bring out the concern about status that is the hallmark, if not the obsession, of dominant dogs?”

“It does show a whole different side of the dog's character.”

“Or what if the caller would end up with three or more dogs?”

“Then you'd have to get into a discussion of gender-driven conflict and generalized pack behavior.”

“After the caller has had dominant behavior explained, wouldn't it be a good time to ask specifically whether any of their previous dogs have been dominant dogs, as you've redefined them?”

“Couldn't hurt.”

“And whether they've had any experience in training a dominant animal?”

“Or whether they've ever had a dominant animal who could run the whole show.”

Ms. D's eyes crinkled. “That too.”

—Ellis West, *e.f.west1@att.net*

Irish Terrier Club of America website: *itca.info*

## Kerry Blue Terriers

### Judges' Education

You have all heard this before: If you lose in the ring, it is the judge's fault.

If you don't place well, I would like to suggest that maybe we really should blame the system rather than the judge. What system? The judge-approval system.

Between the required seminars and assignments already necessary, the system appears cumbersome and lengthy enough. So what is missing?

Recently, the AKC has asked for feedback on this very issue, and for that they should be praised. The problem is that a person can attend numerous lectures, get 100 percent on a breed-standard test, and still not be able to transfer the knowledge practically in the ring. The show's AKC rep can comment on a judge's ring procedure but cannot be expected to be qualified to comment on the dog placements made for every breed. This is where I believe the breed's parent club should be asked to take a more active role.

Perhaps after judging a sweeps, match, or class in the breed, a detailed

written review—substantiated by excerpts from the breed's standard—is compiled and given to the judge by the parent club's representative, with the judge being given the opportunity to discuss the review with the person who wrote it, should further clarification be sought.

The possibility of instant feedback from knowledgeable sources could only improve a potential judge's understanding of the breed. Everyone would benefit. More exhibitors would be motivated to enter, being assured of a more breed-knowledgeable judge, as well as the fact that this caliber of judge would be more sought after for future assignments.

One problem would be coming up with a procedure that would be completed tactfully and objectively. After all, no one likes to be criticized or reviewed. Some argue that a written and published judge's critique of his placements would allow the exhibitor to understand the judge's interpretation of the breed standard and help the exhibitor make future entry decisions.

I believe this kind of written critique is done in other countries. This procedure would also allow the AKC and the parent club to assess a judge's need for further breed education.

This written critique would give additional work to the judge, but if the comments were limited to a brief sentence or phrase, perhaps it would not be too taxing for the judge, yet still informative enough to the parent club and the future exhibitor. This would require that the parent club become more actively involved, but the protection of the breed's standard is indeed one of the responsibilities of a parent club, and this should be evidenced by what is going on in the ring, not just on paper.

As a retired educator, I am confident that immediate and informed feedback is a sure way of improving understanding and eliminating misconceptions of interpretation of the breed standard. This improvement in judge's education would benefit all.