

## Ring Steward

**STEWARDS:** The steward is the person sitting at the table by the ring gate who isn't the judge and isn't an exhibitor. As is the case in most walks of life, this most unobtrusive person, with the dullest plumage, is actually the one doing most of the work. The conformation ring steward hands out armbands to the exhibitors, lines up the exhibitors for the classes, arranges the ribbons and trophies on the table for the judge, and calls for clean up and for the photographer as needed. The obedience ring stewards perform all of the above, also stand as "posts" for the Figure-8 exercise, diddle about with gloves, and dumbbells for various retrieving exercises, adjust jumps, and generally see to it that the judge stays on time and the ring runs smoothly. Stewards dress strictly for practicality, as they have to work at the show all day. Indeed, on a rainy or cold day, the stewards may be the only people who seemed to have had common sense enough to wear boots or a proper coat, since everyone else is concerned with looking elegant. They generally carry a largish sort of bag with them, and this bag has every possible emergency item in it, from weights for holding down ribbons on a windy day, to an extra pair of socks, to a fully equipped first aid kit. The steward's job is to be prepared for any eventuality, which might befall them, their judge, or their exhibitors, and the good ones are so prepared. Stewards have a distinctive call, and one of the most highly valued assets in a good steward is a loud voice. In the conformation rings, it consists of the announcement of a breed name and class, such as "Dalmatians! Puppy Dogs!" used to summon the entrants into the ring for judging. In obedience, they quietly call out the armband number. (They call quietly because obedience exhibitors are usually at ringside when it's their turn, ready to go in. Conformation types are more likely to be carrying on some incredibly important conversation with someone and not paying attention to what class is in the ring). If an armband remains unclaimed, the steward will wave it overhead while shouting the number out. If an errant exhibitor has picked up the armband but has not reported to the ring for their class, the steward will shout out that number as well. Then he or she will fall silent, turn to the judge, and shrug.