**DO THE MATH! DID THE NO VOTES COUNT?
An Open Letter Regarding FBFC Voting Results That Don’t Add Up**

**TO: Members of the French Bulldog Fanciers of Canada (FBFC) most directly involved in the July 2013 vote on revisions to CKC’s French Bulldog standard, namely:**

* **Bev Anderson,** Former Acting President, Current Non-Elected President (as of Jan. 1, 2014)
* **Karen Cram,** Chair of the FBFC Breed Standard Committee, Former Treasurer and Current Non-Elected Vice President (as of Jan. 1, 2014 )
* **Jan Casselman,** Former Quebec/Atlantic Director, Current Non-Elected Secretary (as of Jan. 1, 2014), FBFC member appointed as Returning Officer and Teller (vote-counter) for the third membership vote on proposed revisions to the standard
* **Daphne Goodine,** FBFC member and Teller No. 2 (i.e. the other member responsible for counting votes)

**RE: The Curious Case of 3 Different Totals for the NO Votes, a.k.a. Where did all the NO votes go?**

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**Dear Bev, Karen, Jan and Daphne,**

Consider these three numbers: 11, 13 and 17. All of these things are not like the other, right?

Of the 3 Rs, arithmetic isn’t my strong point. Yet even someone as mathematically challenged as myself knows that 11 votes is less than 13 votes and 17 votes is more than either. Then how is it possible for three different groups to come up with three different totals when counting the NO votes cast in FBFC’s most recent re-vote on the breed standard? Which is correct—11, 13 or 17 NOs? And depending on the factual results, did the revised breed standard actually pass?

In October 2013, when then-Acting President Bev Anderson announced that CKC had approved the new standard following the membership re-vote in July, many of us wondered what the final tally was. How many YES votes vs. how many NOs? Unfortunately the answers weren’t disclosed at the time.

So of course members began comparing notes. By the time Karen Cram, Chair of the Breed Standard Committee, released the club’s official answer at December’s online AGM, we discovered her total for the NO ballots was less than what others had determined from personal research. Confused and concerned, I contacted Elio Furlan at the CKC for clarification—and received yet another total!

You wouldn’t think it would be that difficult to correctly count less than 50 ballots, but somehow three different groups arrived at three different totals for the nay votes. NOs. Which made me wonder … *Which number is correct?*

**Was it … The 17 NOs—compiled by The Skeptical 17?**

How most FBFC members feel about proposed revisions to the standard isn’t much of a secret. A great deal of open debate followed the first vote in September 2011, and anyone paying attention wouldn’t find hard to predict how most members would vote the second time around.
[NOTE: The 2011 vote was later declared invalid since it included four members still in their 60-day probationary period who were ineligible to vote.]
As members who voted NO talked to others who they thought would also have voted NO, a list of confirmed votes against the revised standard emerged. By the time of the AGM, *17 members had confirmed they voted NO in July.* And many can prove this, having kept the confirmation receipt emailed back to them by Jan Casselman.

**Which raises the question: *Did all 17 of these NO votes count?***The Skeptical 17 decided to email Elio Furlan this week, asking CKC to confirm their vote was included in the summary sent by FBFC—and that a NO was recorded beside their names.

**Or, was it … The 11 NOs—reported by the Breed Standard Committee Chair?**

At the online, recorded AGM, held Dec. 11, 2013, Karen Cram confidently stated: “Yes, I can answer that question*. There were 49 eligible voters. We got* ***33 votes back: 22 YES votes and 11 NO votes****. 16 people did not vote*. [Note: these figures account for all voters, leaving no room for spoiled ballots.

**Which raises the question: W*hat happened to the other 6 NO votes?***

**Or, was it … The 13 NOs—as reported by Elio Furlan on behalf of CKC?**

When I called Elio Furlan on December 16, 2013 for clarification, Elio related the numbers CKC has on record for the vote as: *A total of 34 votes: 21 YES votes and 13 NO votes.*

**Which raises the question: *Why did CKC tell FBFC the revised standard had passed?***Perhaps Elio’s math is as weak as mine. I had to get out my calculator to translate these numbers into percentages. Remember, any change to a breed standard must be approved by a 2/3 majority, i.e. at least 66.66% of the votes must be YES ballots.

I was shocked to see that, according to Elio’s numbers, the tally came to 61.76% YES and 38% NO votes. In other words, according to CKC, the required 2/3 majority of 66.66% was not reached … meaning the revised standard wasn’t approved!

I quickly called Elio back and we checked the calculations together. Elio agreed something didn’t jive. “This raises questions,” he admitted. “We will call the appropriate officers of the club to request an explanation.”

Elio promised to act quickly. That was back in mid- December 2013, so surely FBFC has received CKC’s request for an explanation by now? Yet I’m still waiting to hear how—or if—this discrepancy was resolved.

There you have, Bev, Karen, Jan and Daphne—three groups, three different totals for the NO vote. Whose numbers should I trust? The Breed Standard Committee, which already had to redo the vote once? The CKC, which is usually correct, but didn’t seem to notice that 21 YES votes out of 34 overall doesn’t equal the 2/3 majority required for approval? Or The Skeptical 17, who can either produce hard-copy proof of their NO vote or are willing to sign a sworn affidavit stating their vote was NO?

What will others think when they read this letter and discover there is cause to doubt the ballot numbers officially reported at the AGM? Surely the actions of those involved in something as sacrosanct as a vote on the French Bulldog standard, the bible for our breed, would be above reproach? Surely they’d never stoop to destroying ballots, vote-tampering or ballot-rigging?

However, following the vote, the ballots were never forwarded to the club’s Secretary for archival safekeeping, our club’s usual protocol. And the two Atlantic members who counted the ballots never gave an independent tally of the votes. All questions were referred to then-Acting President Bev Anderson. Would we hear yet another set of numbers if the actual vote-counters spoke out?

No one wants to ask these questions. But until the discrepancy between three different totals for the NO vote—11, 13 and 17 (at minimum)—can be explained, it’s very hard to understand what really went on with the July vote.

I freely admit I have been an open and vocal critic of the proposed changes to our standard. Yet I was willing to concede that if two thirds of our membership voted in favour, I would have to accept the revisions, like them or not. Until, that is, questions were raised by trustworthy members and I looked more closely into the results.

Because there are three conflicting sets of numbers for the NO votes, and because it’s no longer certain FBFC’s membership actually passed the standard, I am sharing my concerns with Canada’s two regional French Bulldog clubs—the French Bulldog Club of Western Canada and the Eastern Canada French Bulldog Club. A new standard would affect French Bulldog breeders and fanciers across Canada, and I feel both national and regional club members deserve to know that some explanations are needed before we can agree the new standard was truly approved.

Bev, Karen, Jan and Daphne—I look forward to your prompt response. Hopefully you and the CKC will provide satisfactory answers and confidence will be restored in the outcome of the breed standard vote. Until then, my non-mathematical but curious mind will continue to ask: Did 11, 13, 17, or more members vote NO?

Since I strongly believe the final vote count is now in doubt, I volunteered to write this letter on behalf of The Skeptical 17. However, this letter is not intended to accuse individuals of wrongdoing or point the finger of blame. It’s simply a sincere request for answers to vexing questions, driven by a desire to discover the truth.

Thank you for your consideration. The FBFC membership—and the Canadian French Bulldog community at large—await your response.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ricciotti
LISA RICCIOTTI

**CC:**

* All additional members of the FBFC’s Current Non-Elected Board of Directors
* Brenda Anwyll, President of the French Bulldog Club of Western Canada
* Carol Gravestock, President of the Eastern Canada French Bulldog Club
* Elio Furlan, Staff Liaison of the CKC Breed Standards Committee and CKC Director, Events and Operations
* Wendy Maisey, Board Liaison, CKC Breed Standards Committee
* Alan Ewles, Chair, CKC Club Relations Committee
* Lance Novak, CKC Executive Director