

Lines From Linda

BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR

INSIDE THE IVORY TOWER PART TWO: View From The Top *A Visit With John Mandeville*



New York's Empire State Building is one of the skyscrapers in the view outside John Mandeville's office at 51 Madison Avenue. It is an awesome sight!

When I arrived, John and AKC attorney, Sam Perry, were brainstorming. They welcomed me and began our visit by showing off some of the treasured pieces of dog art adorning the executive offices.

John Mandeville is an interesting man whose conversation can jump from current events to breeding dogs to campaigning champions...and not the kind you'd expect. He's a beaming father who proudly talks of his son, Henry, a champion competitor in the tennis world. See...not all of the Mandeville champions are canines.

Henry finished Rutgers University on a tennis scholarship and was nationally ranked, losing his biggest battle to the well known Michael Chang. Just in case you think campaigning a dog is an expensive endeavor, imagine the cost of campaigning a young, nationally-ranked tennis star. ...Lessons, practices, coaches, travels to matches, equipment -

and have you priced outfits from Fila lately? When John Mandeville speaks of breeding, he may be talking about dogs or Day Lilies as he and his wife enjoy gardening, having a couple hundred varieties of Hostas and more than

half an acre of solid Day Lilies. That's another view I can only imagine.

For someone whose decision to go to work for the American Kennel Club started out as a lark, it has turned into a career for Vice President of Planning, John Mandeville. In the late spring of 1971, he had turned in his manuscript for *The Complete Old English Sheepdog* to Ab Sidewater at the Howell

younger people to bring in as management trainees. Ab said he would be glad to call Jack and a couple of interviews later, John Mandeville was hired. On the last Monday in June 1971, a new life had begun for the Mandevilles.

One thing John didn't know then was that the real moving force behind getting AKC to hire some middle managers was then controller,

Bob Maxwell, who had been with AKC just two years at that point. Now, AKC President Bob Maxwell is the only senior executive who has been around longer than John. Anyone who spends time with John Mandeville soon finds out he has a story for every occasion and an encyclopedic memory: "Yeah, you could say I like to talk, and I even think I've gotten a lot better at listening. But I'll tell you one thing that's essential, is that you've got to keep your sense of humor. As soon as you start taking yourself too seriously, I think you're headed for trouble." Having been around AKC as long as he has, John has a lot of sto-



Book House and was grouching to him about being the most junior faculty member at Montclair State College.

Ab was a good friend to Jack LaFore, who was then the Executive Vice President of the AKC. Jack told Ab the AKC was looking for

ries about the lengthy list of people he has encountered over the years, including all the way back to the legendary Al Dick, who was AKC's president when John first went to work for the organization.

It is almost impossible for today's fancier to



appreciate the authority exercised by the top people at the American Kennel Club in the not-too-distant past. Al Dick was renowned for his authoritarian ways and his temper! It is reported that it was finally decided not to replace the glass top on his desk after he broke it for the umpteenth time by pounding on it. Typical of John's perspective is that of his two favorite stories about Al Dick. One is at his own expense: "As the new guy in the office, and 'nobody' to boot, I was really pleased when I was told that Mr. Dick wanted me to attend the luncheon he had brought in most days. It was set up buffet-style in the board room. On my first day, there was a bowl filled with scoops of ice cream on a side table. No one said anything to me and I helped myself, including some of a creamish-colored scoop with raisins in it. As it turned out, this was rum raisin, Al Dick's favorite, which no one touched, at least until after Al Dick helped himself first. Needless to say, I was more than a little chagrined when Mr. Dick let me know what he thought of anyone taking the rum raisin before him."

John's other favorite story about Al Dick offers insight into the kennel club's effort to cope with older judges who are attempting to hold on past the

point at which they should retire. In John's words, "Al Dick, who was I think seventy-one, was asked (told) to retire by the Board in August 1971, just six weeks after I started. Not too long after, I was asked to look at some correspondence to decide where it should be filed. Included was a letter from Al Dick to

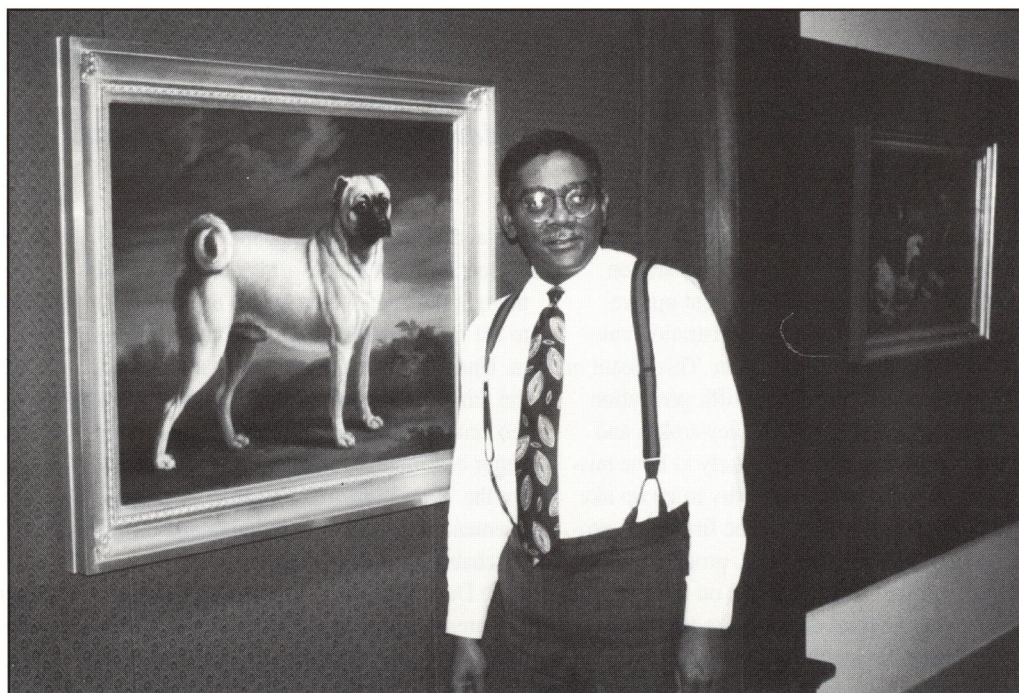
response to your letter of the fifth, Al, you are right. As soon as you step down, I will too.' Of course what happened was AKC's Board forced Al Dick to retire and Forest Hall kept judging for quite a few more years." John considers himself typical of many people in the fancy, he just happens to have gone to work at the kennel club. He grew up in Northern New Jersey, in a family having mainly Dachshunds and Boston Terriers. After John left for college and his family relocated to California, they also owned a Puli. St. Bernards are a long way from Dachshunds, although, as John explains, his involvement with big, hairy dogs, was a detour on the way to the Terriers. Just married and living in St. Louis, John wanted to get a Terrier, preferably a Scottie. His bride, Mickey, wanted a Saint. He made arrangements to visit Scottie and Westie breeders and ended up with a couple of Saints! Then, as sort of a compromise, they became involved with Old English Sheepdogs,

Forest Hall, the irascible elderly all-breed judge from Texas. Dick's letter said in effect that Forest had enjoyed a long career as a judge, but there came a time when everyone had to step aside and now was the time for him to retire. By return mail was a letter from Hall, saying, 'In

principally with the help of Deedy Abrams of Chesterfield, Missouri, who was then Vice President of the Old English Sheepdog Club of America and the Gazette breed columnist. Living in New Jersey, John and Mickey became very friendly with Hendrik and Serena Van Rensselaer of Fezziwig Kennels and ended up doing what so many newcomers do, running all over the map to shows week in and week out, spending more than you can afford on dogs and, of course, ending up with more dogs running around than you should have. John served a couple of terms on the Old English Sheepdog Club of America's board, edited the newsletter and wrote *The Complete Old English Sheepdog* for Howell Book House.

Writing *The Complete Old English Sheepdog* was a natural outgrowth of John's professional training; he had attended the University of Vermont and San Francisco State University and received a Danforth Foundation Fellowship for Doctoral Studies in History at Washington University. "My area of interest was American History. To get really specific - administrative history, the study of how organizations change over time. My dissertation was titled 'Politics and Diplomacy, The Department of State, 1869-1909'. I think the work I did in that highly-specialized administrative history field did me more good in my career at the kennel club than it ever did me as an historian. I actually think the best pure historical research I ever did was on the Old English Sheepdog. You know how it is, every breed has got their pedigree and title fanatics. Well, Mickey and I were the ultimate Old

Samuel N. Perry, Vice President and Chief Counsel, in the entry hall at AKC Headquarters



English buffs, we had a card on every Old English ever registered with AKC from the first right through the 60s. Of course, you were talking only dozens of registrations a year. We had also gone through every published show result and had cards on every champion, every Best In Show or Group winner, and every Specialty winner and we knew the pedigrees up one side and down the other."

At the American Kennel Club, John has worked in all of AKC's operating areas. "The first title I had was Director of Systems Planning. I was supposed to work as a go-between, between the data processing people and the registration departments to facilitate AKC's initial computerization efforts. It would be more truthful to say that working with Bob Maxwell, what we did was try to bring some order and management to the system, which basically consisted of hundreds of clerks being supervised by people who had been around the longest. Naturally, when you're talking about hundreds of people - AKC had nearly 750 employees when I started - doing what they've been used to doing for years and years, there was more than a little resistance to change.

"One of my favorite examples of how people resist change had to do with the

Certified Pedigree Department. At that time, all certified pedigrees were hand-typed. Orders were backed up probably months behind. We looked at the problem and saw that one big slow down occurred because there were lots of mistakes made in typing dogs' registration numbers. In an effort to get caught up, we decided to eliminate typing registration numbers except on the sire and dam. This meant in the second, third, fourth and fifth generation we were eliminating a lot of keystrokes and those were the places most likely to have mistakes. We expected productivity to go up like mad! I couldn't wait to see the first day's production figures. What a thrill, production was actually down. This continued on the next day. Finally, on the third day, I spoke to the supervisor who, after looking at me like I had three

heads, explained what was obvious to him, the typists have to get used to the new way. That's why their production's down.

"I wouldn't call that experience one of my triumphs, but I had come to the attention of Jack LaFore, who, aside from having been responsible for hiring me in the first place, had become AKC's president in September 1971, after Al Dick was retired. Jack made me Assistant to the President in 1973, a position I held throughout Jack's tenure and into the first couple of years Bill Stifel was AKC President." It is obvious that John has a great deal of regard for John F. LaFore, Jr., thirteenth president of the American Kennel Club serving from 1971 until 1978. "Jack had been a Congressman, from Pennsylvania, and he was a classic politician. He had a smile for every-

Show in 1973, and followed with others in San Mateo, Chicago and Fort Worth. At the largest we had more than 1,500 people. I still think in many ways the Days With AKC were ahead of their time...in that they were a major effort to explain the everyday workings of AKC and its programs to the average fancier.

One thing we knew we couldn't do if we were going to have people for an entire day, was to just have one speaker after another talk to the audience. We developed some pretty elaborate visuals, eventually combining a whole array of slide projectors, multiple screens and integrated motion pictures."

John believes strongly AKC's film, and now video, programs have been among the most valuable educational activities AKC has undertaken. "I happened to have known AKC had

produced some films for use at club meetings. These films, which were titled *211* and *The Dog Show And You* had been done in the middle 1950s. I remembered seeing them at a club meeting at some point, although by the time I got to AKC in 1971, no one really remembered them, other than vaguely. The person who helped me find some old prints tucked away in a back room was Ben Peterson, AKC's Librarian, who had been with



Bill Garvey and John Mandeville enjoy judging at Westminster

one and genuinely liked people. I think one reason Jack and I hit it off is that he basically thought the kennel club had to be more open to the fancy. Something I very much believe in. Under Jack I had a chance to do three of the things I'm proudest of since I've been with the kennel club and they all have to do with better communications with the fancy. They are the "Day With AKC" programs, the development of AKC's film program and the effort to rehabilitate the Gazette.

"The Day With AKC symposiums were all-day presentations about AKC. We did the first one in Atlantic City before the Boardwalk

AKC since the 1930s. I tried, without too much luck, for a couple of years to get permission to make an AKC office operations film. Finally, as we were getting ready to go up with an important part of the computerized registration system, I made a ten minute film using my wife's super 8mm camera. The film, if you can call it that, was shown only once, at the Delegates meetings, but it was very well received and, as a result, the Board authorized funding for a professionally made 16mm film on AKC office operations.

"In looking for a producer, we found Dan Wise, who later joined AKC's staff and produced a whole string of really good films, including award winners on gait and Retriever Field Trials. We also made a film entitled *AKC And The Sport Of Dogs* which we put in

circulation for schools. It was being requested more than 5,000 times a year for the more than ten years it was in circulation.

Eventually, we got permission to make some breed films, which was really the goal I'd always had for the film program, an AKC breed film for every breed. We actually made projects on the Irish Setter, Doberman and Sheltie. But costs were high and I was unable to get a go-ahead to continue. Later, with Bill Schmick running the show area, we did get the go-ahead to start breed slide shows which, when Chet Collier came on to the Board in the mid 1980s, became the breed video series. If the present production schedule is met, 1994 will see the completion of a breed video for every AKC recognized breed. I think that's a great accomplishment."

AKC's monthly magazine, the Gazette, is widely known in the fancy today as an impressive full-color magazine with an indispensable, for any active exhibitor, calendar of upcoming events. When John started with AKC, the Gazette had fallen on hard times. It was a dull black and white magazine containing little more than the secretary's page, show results (which have since 1980 been an entirely separate publication), and a few pictures of recent winners. John was actively involved in all aspects of the effort to improve the Gazette.

"I never did fully understand how the Gazette went from being such an impressive publication in its heyday under Arthur Frederick Jones in the 1930s to the relatively meaningless magazine it was in the early 1970s. Now we take the Gazette's cover for granted. In 1971 the Gazette had had a dull two-tone blue and gray cover for years. Just getting color on the cover, even though there was paid color advertising on the other pages, which meant it wouldn't have to cost AKC anything to use color on the cover, was a long drawn-out proposition. We had worked on Jack LaFore to let us use a color picture on the cover for months. Finally, after a couple of Martinis at

lunch in May 1974, Jack agreed to let us try color on the cover. We rushed a shot of a Beagle oil painting onto the June cover and never looked back.

The best thing that happened to the Gazette, at least in those days, was when Pat Beresford came to work for AKC. I think Pat deserves a world of credit for turning the Gazette into a magazine that was attempting to talk to dog people. Pat and I were really the first people to work at AKC in anything but the top most spots who had any experience actually breeding and showing dogs. Pat knew dogs and dog people. She did a heck of a job for the magazine. I would also like to make sure I put in a good word about Connie Vanacore's contribution to the Gazette. She actually started helping out several years before Pat came along.



*Planning for the future
amidst glories of the past...
Mr. Mandeville's office*

Connie only worked part time, but again, because she was really involved with dogs, she was able to start taking the steps needed to make the magazine useful to dog people." Spend any time talking with John Mandeville and you will quickly find out he genuinely likes dogs...all dogs. "I don't think anyone can really like all breeds equally, but I'll tell you there are an awful lot of breeds I'd own in a minute. I've always said show me someone who doesn't like puppies and I'll show you someone with real problems." Sitting at ringside in the early 70s watching the judging of the Norwich Terrier National

Specialty in the classes at the Greenwich Kennel Club Show, Mickey told him she thought they were a cute breed, especially the drop-eared ones, and she said she could own one. That started a more than twenty-year love affair with the breed.

"Of course, when we first got involved, Norfolk Terriers were just the drop-eared type of Norwich, although they'd been a separate breed in England for many years. Our first one was a monorchid from Barbara Fournier called Bethany's Sam I Am. Like all of the breed I have ever met, he was a character. When we decided we might like to breed some, we were really lucky because Anne Winston had a beautiful specialty-winning bitch who was constantly getting into fights with her mother. Mrs. Winston knew we had a bunch of Old

English in the house and she wanted to be certain Vesper would get along well. When we first took Vesper home she was somewhat taken back by the Old English. In less than a week she was boss. *I mean boss!* We actually let her get away with way too much, but she eventually was able to stand at the bottom of the stairs in a doorway and lift her lip and keep two, or sometimes three eighty-pound Old English out. Sam and Vesper actually

produced the first Norfolk litter and the first Norfolk registered with AKC when the breed was given separate status in 1979. Naturally, that was an accidental breeding. Sam was pushing five and, of course, had never been bred, although we hadn't had him fixed. You know what happened! Vesper had had a litter her previous season and we had no intention to breed her. That previous litter she'd been bred back to her grandsire. She had three pups. We had fading puppy syndrome, lost one of the pups, hand-raised the other two, who were only so-so quality. Sam, aside from being a monorchid, was undershot a good half inch and was ugly-headed. But he had a great topline, excellent front, beautiful coat and good ears. Vesper, who was a really great bitch, had a beautiful head, soft topline and

funny front. And, of course, Vesper and Sam were a complete outcross. Naturally, they produced four beautiful pups, all of who thrived. "It was because the Vesper-Sam mistake litter, which was a complete outcross, actually turned out so well that we decided to breed Vesper to the dog we thought was the best match for her regardless of pedigree. I probably would not have gone to a really complete outcross if it hadn't been for the mistake litter. The dog we ended up breeding Vesper to was an English import owned by Joan Read. In two litters Vesper produced some really great dogs, including a Westminster Best of Breed-winning bitch and Group winner owned and shown by Beth Sweigart."

At AKC John worked as Director of Public Communications and Education in the first half of the 80s. "In those days AKC's activities in the public communications and education areas didn't amount to much. I think the progress we've made in the last dozen years is great. Now we have Wayne Cavanaugh's entire communications division devoting their energies to these types of activities. I think they're all doing great work, from Wayne to Noreen Rubin to Stephanie Robinson in Legislation and Marie Kochanski in Public Education. In fact, I get uneasy about naming names, because I think every single person in the communications area is doing a great job! "One thing I don't have any difficulty with is resolving whether AKC should or should not be involved in a much wider range of activities than ever before. I know some traditionalists think AKC should only register dogs and do show-related activities. To me that is naive. I know what AKC's core activities are and I think the leadership of the kennel club does too. It is breeding and exhibiting, no mistake about it. But, and I think that is a big but, if we don't pay attention to all these other issues swirling about us, our ability to do what we want - the core activities - could be seriously impacted.

"In the past couple of years, both Wayne Cavanaugh and I have spent a fair amount of time involved with the so-called surplus dog (and dare I say it) and cat problem. In many ways this is no fun. But the fact is the anti-breeding activism in this country stems from the numbers of unwanted animals being destroyed in shelters. Anti-breeding activism will not correct the problem, but it can surely impact serious, responsible breeders who are all too readily identifiable."

It's typical of John's perspective that he finished that last quote with the comment "enough of the soap box. Let's talk about the

fun stuff."

During the second half of the 1980s John worked for Terry Stacy as Director of Judging Research and Development. "I think working for Terry as the first Director of Judging Research and Development was a fun job! We got to do good things from starting the Judges' Newsletter to the whole idea of a judges education program to the Judges Institute. And, since I really didn't have anything to do with the judging approvals I got to do the fun stuff without the stress!

I think the development of the judges' educational areas has been really done

"I think the future of the sport will be exciting. This is a country of dog lovers. It is our job to make sure it stays that way. Everybody who's seriously concerned about purebred dogs has to be committed to making certain the reservoir of goodwill toward dogs in this country remains that way."

John Mandeville

well.

Jim Edwards

and his staff are doing really

exciting work. The

Judges Institute has made great strides and, of course, the computer imaging program and pilot breed-specific seminars offer great potential."

Since he had worked in almost all of AKC's major operating areas from registration to communications to events, it was a logical step to name John as AKC's first Vice President of Planning, a position he has held since 1991. "AKC has become a more complex operation than ever before. It is really necessary to have someone whose job it is to think about what we do and how we do it. Given my experience, and frankly my somewhat academic bent, it's a good fit having me do what I do. It's really just part of making AKC a better-functioning, contemporary organization. In many regards that's how I characterize Bob Maxwell's presidency - an effort to upgrade

AKC's professionalism at the staff level, broaden what we do and how we do it, and at the same time make sure we understand what AKC's core businesses are all about."

As much as John can talk about the people and events he's come in contact with in his years with AKC, he can talk every bit and probably with even greater passion, about the future.

"Obviously AKC has undergone considerable change. We've got a very active delegate body that is in the process of redefining itself. Just a year ago there was no delegate committee system and, of course, elections to AKC's Board are hotly contested every year now. I

think it's the staff's job to provide the Board with professional service. It's wrong for the staff to get involved in the politics of the delegate body.

Sure, everyone's got friends. But I think the staff's job is to provide professional, objective conduct of the day-to-day business. Certainly that's what Bob Maxwell's been trying to do, and his additions to staff, like Sam Perry (VP and General Counsel) and Tom Murphy (VP and Controller), have done a great deal to enhance this. And, by the way, I'm no Pollyanna. I know there are still lots of improvements needed and possible.

I think the future of the sport will be exciting. This is a country of dog lovers. It is our job to make sure it stays that way. Everybody who's seriously concerned about purebred dogs has to be committed to making certain the reservoir of goodwill toward dogs in this country remains that way."

With people like John Mandeville at AKC, it is obvious there is a great deal of effort being put into making certain AKC is a professionally-managed organization, dedicated to preserving and protecting purebred dogs.

From the outside looking in...I like the view!■

Linda Ayers Turner Knorr