

# L I N E S F R O M

Golden rust, the color of fall is richly reflected in this month's feature breed the Vizsla. These aristocratic sporting dogs always bring to mind my friend Dr. Bernard E. McGivern, Jr. "Bud" to his friends is known in the dog world as the Vizsla breeder who, along with an outstanding committee was instrumental in changing the Vizsla Standard to that which is currently accepted by both AKC and FCI.

Dr. McGivern is a member of four all-breed clubs: Westminster, Westchester, Morris & Essex and The Staten Island Kennel Club for which he serves as delegate to the American Kennel Club. He is also a member of the Vizsla Club of America and the Vizsla Club of Greater New York.

Since a rare few contribute so much to our sport and to life, I asked Bud to share his history with us.



# Bowcot Kennels DR. BERNARD E. MCGIVERN, JR.

by *Linda Ayers Turner Knorr*

An avocation in dogs was avidly born in me at age eighteen when my parents became originally involved in the breeding and exhibiting of Standard, Miniature and Toy Poodles. As a cheerleader in college at the University of Notre Dame, I volunteered to take charge of the two Irish Terrier mascots for football games. We led the team onto the field at the Notre Dame Stadium for three years and as a senior we traveled to the Army game in Philadelphia, where there were 102,000 screaming fans cheering us on to victory. The team won that game in the last seconds on a



*Dr. McGivern*

field goal. After I was given charge of "Pat and Mike" I made it my business to learn the care of a terrier coat and how to pluck it. I began showing my charges along with a Weimaraner and a German Shorthaired Pointer I picked up, in local Northern Indiana shows and one year at the International in Chicago. I quickly learned that the terriers were not the best conformed dogs but they had great spirit and feistiness and that's what the University's Athletic Department wanted in its mascots.

As a house officer in Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Bellevue

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Hospital in New York, my wife Diane and I, purchased our first Vizsla in 1962. Shortly afterward, we became involved in exhibiting both in conformation and field events. Our first win of any consequence was Best Puppy in Match under judge Marjorie Seibern at the first Vizsla Club of America Sanctioned match ever held. Our second big win was with that first Vizsla, Diane's Golden Karratz at Westminster in 1965 when she took BOW and BOS for a three point major (You could do that then). She finished her Championship at the first Vizsla National Specialty that year with a five point major WB.

Outside of the canine world in 1969, I was a founder of the Dental Service at the Staten Island University

*The McGiverns love of gardening is reflected in the lovely grounds of their stone cottage Bow-Cot.*





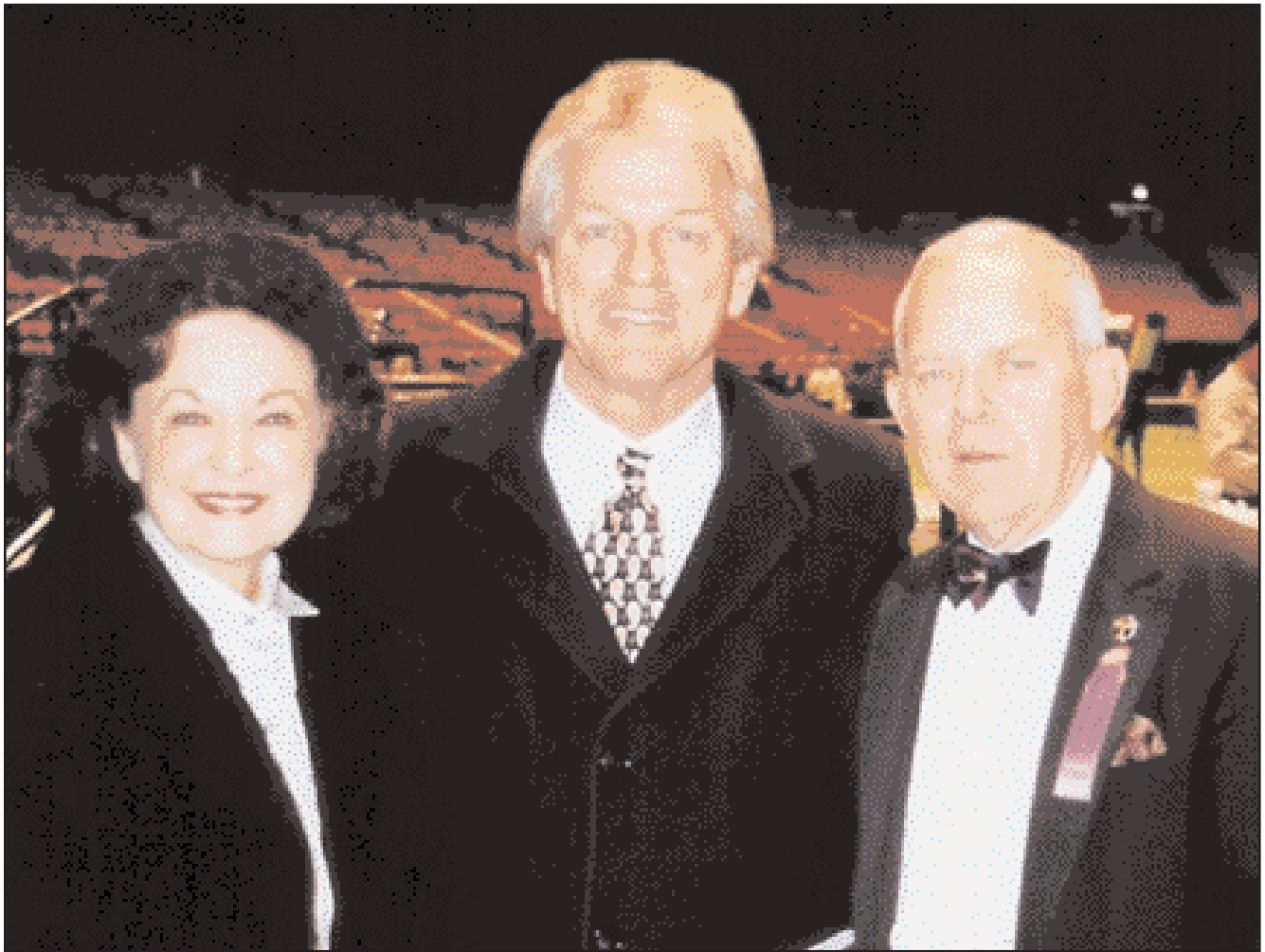
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Hospital was then appointed to the position of Associate Director, Director of the General Dental Residency Program and Chief of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. I have also been Chief of the Oral and Maxillofacial Services at St. Vincent's Hospital both in Manhattan and Staten Island. I was named Chief of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in East Orange New Jersey in 1999 and am retired as Associate Clinical Professor of Oral Surgery at New York University. I am on the Visiting Committee of the Case School of Dental Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio and have spent six years as an Examiner for the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons. I am

*More photos of the beautiful stone cottage Bow-Cot.*





*Celebrating at Westminster, Hazel Ayers, Jim Knorr and Bud McGivern.*

now semi-retired and spend much of my time doing committee work as secretary of The Atlantic Shore Memorial Cluster and Specialty Chairman of the Westchester Kennel Club. Gardening and golf are also favorite passions.

Diane is Professor of Nursing at NYU and is former Vice Chancellor of the New York State Board of Regents. She still serves as a Regent having been appointed to that position by the New York Legislature in 1991.

The AKC approved me as a judge for Vizslas in 1968. Currently I judge all Sporting and Non Sporting breeds. Judging assignments have taken me to Ireland, Hungary, Mexico, Canada,

Australia, New Zealand, Spain and South Africa. Westminster has included me on their panel twelve times and in 1983 and 1997 I judged the Sporting Group. I've judged in nearly every state in the US and most Sporting Breed National Specialties, some twice. I also judge field trials as well as conformation.

In 1968, Diane and I moved into the stone cottage we presently occupy on Staten Island. The house was named Bowcot in 1918 by architect Ernest Flagg for the curious way it bowed around a previously constructed stone retaining wall. We thought having a named house was a nifty way to

start a kennel and promptly registered the name with AKC. Thus, Bowcot Kennels became the first AKC registered kennel prefix for a Vizsla breeder.

Since our start in Vizslas we've limitedly bred twenty-seven litters and finished thirty-two Vizsla bench champions, one Vizsla Dual Champion and two German Shorthaired Pointer Field Champions. At least two Vizslas of our breeding have won Best In Show. Diane and I were very lucky with our foundation bitch Karey, who produced eight champions out of two litters in the sixties. Those progeny became Specialty and National Specialty win-





*Dr. McGivern's favorite puppy picture is of a dog he bred, Ch. Bowcot Pekogait One Man Band, SH.*

ners.

What most attracts us to Vizslas, by far, is their affectionate nature and temperament. Owning a Vizsla means having an enormous Velcro patch on your body because they must have that closeness at all times. This is NOT an aloof breed. They'll do anything to please you and please, don't withhold praise and affection.

When I'm judging the Vizsla, I first concentrate on size and moderation as part of type which gives me the overall picture. If the dog is too tall or short, out comes the wicket. Soundness is found in movement and reach. Annie Clark is fond of stating that type should be most paramount to a judge. If you find correct type, you have a dish of ice cream. If you combine soundness with that type, you get chocolate fudge and whipped cream on the dish of ice cream. I like to go one further and state that correct ring atti-

tude puts the cherry on top. The great dog looks you in the eye and demands to be put up.

As to moderation; It is part of our standard that's most frequently neglected by both novice and more experienced judges. There's a reason our standard asks for it: The Vizsla is not a heavily built, lumbering pointing dog. It's built for both speed and endurance. It's hard to define the phrase, "robust but lightly built" but once recognized and put together with the smooth light-footed gait, it must be rewarded in the ring. Its derivation is in the moderation of front and rear angles. This makes a balanced dog. I can preach on this for hours.

Overreach in the front should be heavily penalized as well as overangulation in the rear. The correct topline rounds off slightly over the croup and the tail is ideally carried at the one or two o'clock position. Although not a

"head breed," the Vizsla should have a pleasing headpiece with no rounding of the back skull or low set hound-like ears. The body appears square but should be slightly taller than long.

The past few years have witnessed an epidemic of high tail carriages and sets. The tail root begins straight out of the back and points straight up to the twelve or even eleven o'clock position like a Smooth Fox Terrier. I'd love to know where it arose but several weeks ago was pleased to have a large entry of Vizslas in the Midwest and delighted to judge an entire breed all carrying proper tail carriage and set-on. Most exhibitors know by now that the high tail annoys me to death. The Vizsla is a hunting dog and another annoyance to me, is amputated facial whiskers. They're a sensory organ and should never be removed. Rarely, do I see a shaved face any longer. The standard allows it but prefers they be left on.

I haven't attended a VCA National Specialty in many years. Back when I was on the Board and the Delegate, I spent many, many hours both in preparation and attendance. Vizsla Nationals now take ten very concentrated and stressful days if you're an officer or Director. It's time to let others get into trouble.

I'm sometimes asked if winning the National has a big impact on a dog or bitch. Winning both the National Field Championship, the National Amateur and/or the National Specialty should be confirmation that your breeding program is on track — or that you're just lucky.

I've always contended that judges of nationals should be made up of a pool of those judges with the most experience in the breed, similar breeds and at the very least, the analogous group. As far as the Vizsla Nationals go, the membership constantly tends to

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hire judges who seem to have done the most for those in charge of the selection committee, whether their dogs are

correct or not. We've been witness recently to some very knowledgeable Nationals judges who have unfortu-

nately had origins in the Working Group and have no concept of the correct carriage or movement of our breed. Analysis of their placements confirms it. In other words, a knowledgeable Vizsla judge can dump Saturday's National Specialty winner on Sunday — and has.

When Diane and I started in this breed in 1962, we were fortunate to encounter people (soon friends) in the Eastern United States who had a great deal of practical knowledge and experience in Vizslas. They were, in a couple of instances, educated Hungarian nobility who had immigrated with their Vizslas after WW II. We would sit for hours listening to tales of the breed, discussing breeding programs and arguing faults pro and con. I was fortunate to have been invited to Hungary on two occasions and witnessed significant changes in both Vizslas and the people. In 1985, the General Secretary of the Hungarian Kennel Club with his wife, spent nearly an entire summer at Bowcot. Hundreds of ideas were discussed and plans formulated from both sides of the Atlantic that Summer. Most have borne fruit.

Today's American bred Vizsla is a far cry from some of those old foundation "huntin" dogs of the fifties and sixties. Because of the foresightedness of the VCA's Breed Improvement Committee in the '60's, today, almost no American dogs fail OFA certifications. We've almost eliminated white from the chest. "Our breed classes are almost universally uniform in size, color, movement and temperament. I'm happy! Things are good!" ■



*Ch. Bowcot Pekogait One Man Band, SH winning Best In Show at the Union County Kennel Club, May 27, 2002 under Judge Bob Sharp.*

We at ShowSight are thankful for the friendship of The McGiverns and their contributions to the breed we celebrate in this issue.

Happy Thanksgiving!  
Cheers,  
Linda Ayers Turner Knorr