

Lines FROM Linda

BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR



Pack your bags!

KEEPING PACE WITH ROBERT L. VANDIVER

Global travelers, AKC judge Robert Vandiver and his wife Nancy relish a versatile calendar of activities

Driving out to their spacious brick home in Fox Hollow, a lovely group of homes all with acreage in Simpsonville, South Carolina, I was looking forward to being greeted by their Dobermans. After owning the breed for twenty-five years my last red dog Remington had passed away three years earlier. Loving kisses from happy Dobs are a thrill I miss every day.

Their Mistel dogs did not disappoint me. Mistel means mistletoe in German. Way back when Bob and Nancy bred their first litter of Dobe puppies their calculations predicted arrival on Christmas Day and thought Mistel to be a unique memory of their beginnings. Obviously they must have counted from the wrong breeding and the pups were born on New Year's Eve. They kept the German prefix anyway.

Fluor Daniel, the largest engineering construction firm in the United States has profited from the talents of Bob Vandiver for the past twenty-six years. An engineer by degree from Texas A&M, Vandiver manages all aspects including engineering, procurement and construction of major industrial projects in the \$100 million dollar range.

A native of Marshalltown, Iowa

Nancy captured the heart of the young engineering student. The soul mates have been married for thirty-three years.

After graduating from the University of Northern Iowa, Nancy became an elementary school teacher for twenty-eight years. Being adored by so many children

satisfied her need for young ones. Now that she is retired Bob and Nancy enjoy their four legged kids.

"Pepe," or Pip Pip Cheerio, a Wire Fox Terrier, was the first show dog owned by the Vandivers. Pepe's conformation did not match his wonderful



LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR, NANCY AND BOB VANDIVER ENJOYING A NIGHT OUT IN GREENVILLE



**NANCY AND BOB SIGHTSEEING
RHINE VALLEY IN GERMANY**



**1984 AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND
BOB ATTEMPTING BRACE TRAINING**

Spanish. The Vandivers mastered a combination of both which aided them when they joined the Santos Kennel Club.

Pip Pip Cheerio was entered one time in Brazil.

In those days dogs in Brazil could get multiple championships. One of the country's top winning dogs was another Wire Fox Terrier who had earned fifteen championship titles. Pepe was of the same quality of some of their best and the Vandivers knew that he was certainly groomed much better.

Members of the Santos Kennel Club traveled to São Paulo on a bus with no crates. Everyone's dog was either on his owner's lap or in the aisle of the vehicle. Two hundred and fifty competed and each dog required a written critique. Pepe

won the group!

Last year when my husband Jim and I were planning a visit to São Paulo, Bob warned us that driving in Brazil would be an adventure in itself.

"The first time Nancy and I went out we had an accident," he said. "After getting out to examine the damage, the driver of the taxi we hit got back in his car and took off. We guessed he didn't want to mess with English-speaking imports! Later I learned the rules to driving. Be extremely aggressive; indicate to other drivers what you are going to do, then force your way in. Beware of big busses. They don't care what you want to do."

Luckily Jim nor I ever had to drive there.

Returning to America in 1969 the couple lived in Houston, Texas. They purchased their first show Doberman Pinscher, Fontaine's P.G.T. Beauregard. The new center of their attention was not of finishable quality, but Bob found his canine companion well suited for obedience, scoring in the high 190's and earning one high in trial.

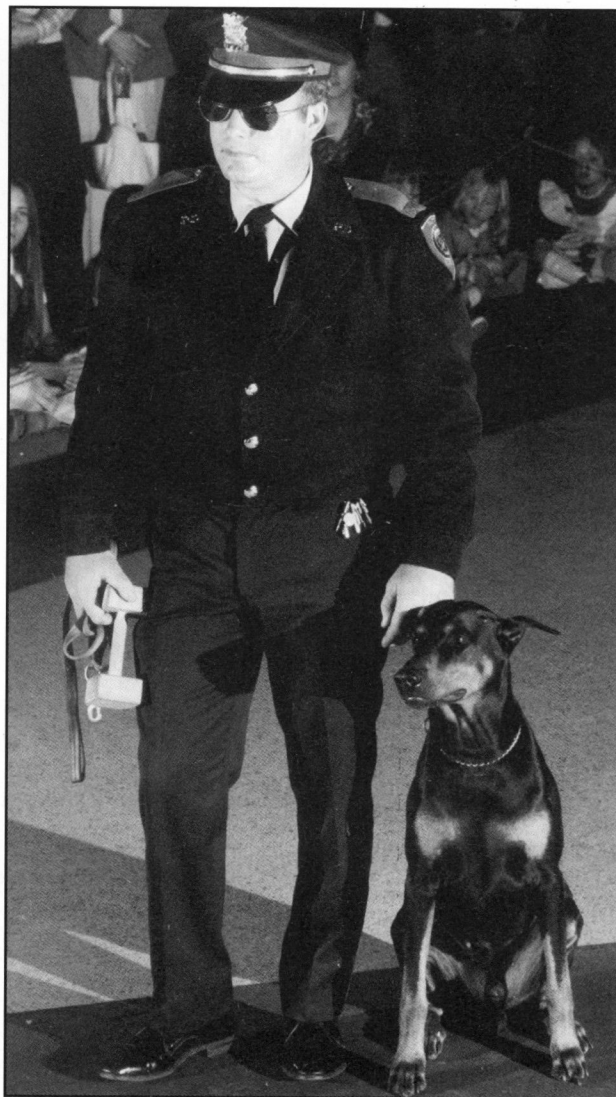
personality and his success in the ring was limited. However, he afforded the young couple the opportunity to make new friends with all of the great pro Terrier people who made the old Texas circuit.

In 1968 while employed as an engineer for Union Carbide International, Bob was transferred to Brazil. For one year the Vandivers enjoyed living in the tourist resort of Santos, one hour from São Paulo on the South American coast.

This was one of seven moves over a six-year period. Pepe would just go and sit on a suitcase whenever he saw them packing with that "you're not leaving without me" look in his eyes.

The Vandivers' Fox Hollow home is full of reminders of their traveling adventures. Several Brazilian paintings are constant reminders of the fun Bob and Nancy shared while browsing the artists' displays on weekends in São Paulo.

Portuguese is the language of Brazil yet all of the rest of South America speaks predominantly



OFFICER DON KANKEL AND VANDIVER'S "BO" THE HOUSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT CANINE PR DOG

A life in public relations took the Vandivers' Dobe as he went on to a career as a working police dog, becoming the Houston Police Department's canine PR dog. "Bo" visited schools and served as an ambassador for the police canine team.

"I spent a few nights 'on the beat', with Don Kankel, the dogs officer. Night shift on canine patrol in a big city like Houston makes you appreciate the dangers police face daily, especially K9 cops. Whenever it gets tough with a 'bad boy' they can't see or it's too dangerous to risk a human life in a dark warehouse or something, they call in the Canine officer. These guys and their dogs earn their way," Vandiver told me.

Ch. Alhena of Marks-Tey, WAC was purchased essentially "by mail" and was the first female champion the Vandivers finished.

Next they acquired a male out of a top producing dam, from Florence

Williams in Dallas. He became a champion as well. Both Dobs finished with most points coming when shown by professional handlers.

From their first breeding Bob handled a homebred bitch to her championship in 1975, and all of their subsequent dogs have been owner handled. That same year Bob received an AKC professional handler's license.

Fluor Corporation had Bob working on very large petrochemical projects which called for more and more international travel.

During the Cold War Bob flew to Russia three times spending about a month each visit. He remembers jogging around Red Square one November with the temperature at twenty below zero. "I was always being watched. There were lots of police usually armed with machine guns," he recalled.

Japan, Hong Kong, and Europe were other countries benefiting from the

engineering expertise of our dog world judge.

The Vandivers have finished seventeen champions and bred twelve litters to date. Hanging over the fireplace in the living room of their home is a lovely painting of a girl with her horse. While enjoying refreshments there, I called into the kitchen to tell Nancy how much I loved the painting of her. "It's not me," Sue said. She and Bob had enjoyed seeing the artist work at the Harris Art Gallery where Bob also thought the oil painting bore a striking resemblance to Nancy. Well as it turned out, Pauline Howard, the artist, wanted to purchase a Doberman from the Mistel Kennel. They exchanged a dog for the painting. Pauline was later commissioned as the official artist of Galveston County Texas.

Professional handling for Bob came to a halt in 1984 when he was transferred to Holland. Living near

Amsterdam afforded the Vandivers a chance to attend the World Show. They owned two red bitches, one a champion, the other a puppy while they were in the Dutch city. Nancy had custom loden coats made for the dogs to wear when jogging with them in the park during Holland's cold winter.

After visiting most of Europe's tourist attractions, Bob and Nancy got a compass and maps and hit the back roads.

Meeting the locals and finding their way became their fun weekend hobby. Even the dogs had passports for traveling on the trains. Dogs were welcome

everywhere including restaurants. An ultimate memory is of one particular New Year's Eve. Bob invited Nancy to spend the evening in a very exclusive restaurant. It was equal to one of our five star establishments. They enjoyed the finest food, wine, prewarmed coffee cups and after dinner the waiters brought expensive Cuban cigars. What Nancy remembers most; however, is the sign on the door that read: - dogs must be on a lead!!!

You can imagine why a Dutch tour director was puzzled when Bob and Nancy showed up as the only Americans on a Dutch tour for a dog show in London. Attending Crufts was cut short for, as Bob put it, "Nancy is a shopper and I had to protect my credit card."

Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Switzerland, Luxembourg, and even Liechtenstein were other Western European countries the Vandivers enjoyed during that two and one half years of residence in Holland.

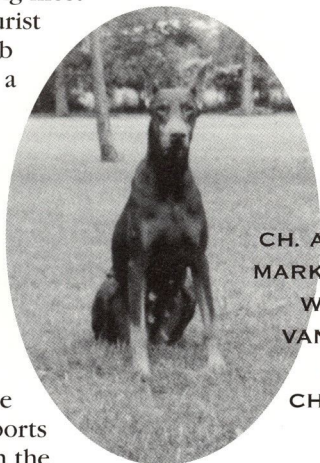
Rochester, New York was the next stateside home for Bob and Nancy. Deciding not to return to handling as a professional, Bob showed only homebred dogs. With a laugh he says, "You get a better client base that way. It is wonderful to handle for someone you always agreed with!!!"

The Doberman Pinscher Club of America's top champion producing dam for 1987, Ch. Mistel's Derrick Doll, was owned by the Vandivers. They are proud of their six consecutive generations of breeder-owner-handled champions.

For seven years Bob served on the board of directors for the national breed club and is a past president of the Doberman specialty club in Houston.

I had the privilege of serving as his vice president when Bob was elected president of the Greenville Kennel Club. South Carolina has been their home for the past decade.

Approved as an AKC judge in July 1995, Bob's respected opinion has been called on by such prestigious specialty shows as Lake Shore DPC (Western Reserve), Cabrillo DPC (Carmel, CA), Mount Hood (Brush Prairie Circuit), Houston Specialty at the Astrohall, Baltimore Specialty on Cherry Blossom Circuit, DPCA National Host Club Specialty, Canadian National Specialty, and Philippine National Specialty.



CH. ALHENA OF
MARKS-TEY, WAC
WAS THE
VANDIVER'S
FIRST
CHAMPION



ACTING PRESIDENTIAL AT
GREENVILLE KENNEL CLUB SHOW

Bob continues to breed a litter occasionally and still exhibits home bred Dobermans to championships.

He has tried a number of hobbies over the years, but only two have become "permanent." Giving up playing classical guitar in favor of showing dogs, Vandiver wonders how accomplished he might have become if he could convert all the thousands of hours he spent traveling in a van to and from dog shows into guitar practice.

Once he had a darkroom with all a professional photographer could wish for when that hobby was his passion, but dog shows left little time for creative pictures.

His two lasting endeavors are dogs and fitness. The death of his father had a profound impact on Bob's lifestyle. The elder Vandiver died a slow death brought on by bad health practices: heavy smoking, no exercise, eating all the wrong foods, etc. With great difficulty in 1977 shortly after his father's death, Bob started a fitness program. He has been committed ever since, working out three to four times a week for the past twenty-two years.

Upcoming shows for Robert Vandiver include the Doberman Pinscher national specialty in Boston, Massachusetts this October as well as two specialties in Australia and another in England. Don't you just envy the Vandivers' travel agent!

- Linda Ayers Turner Knorr