

ONE MAN'S TRASH

IS ANOTHER MAN'S TREASURE

A Follow-up

by Lisa Dubé Forman

I wanted to provide additional and hopefully helpful information to our readers regarding my original article titled, *One Man's Trash is Another Man's Treasure*, published in *The Canine Chronicle* May, 2012 issue. For those of you unfamiliar with the aforementioned article, I discussed the tragic fate of many fanciers extensive dog memorabilia. In some cases, even regarded collections were disrespectfully disposed of and donated to the garbage man. A tragedy largely because these dog fanciers spent the better part of their lives acquiring archival tools such as pedigrees, books, journals, memorabilia, irreplaceable photographs, and prints, only to have it appraised by unknowing individuals as of no use, little value or even worthless as they arrange the fate of the deceased's belongings. Such treasures, which were the result of a lifetime of passionate effort, reduced to trash in a blink of an eye.

This is a disturbing and poignant subject, especially since the fanciers in our sport are greying considerably.

Parenthetically, I recently was informed by a charming, elderly show chairperson of a long-established but small, all-breed kennel club, that

once she decides to retire most likely the club will dissolve. What a shame but, alas, a sign of the times. Reasons being there are simply not enough younger people joining the ranks of our clubs, never mind those who have the time, money, energy and training to take up the reins for show chairs like this individual who also wears additional hats in her club. So here we are. We have many fanciers who are aging, retiring, others finally yielding to the expenses, and some finally capitulating due to the political inferences in exhibiting on both breed and group levels.

After reading my original article, Mrs. Ginny Chapin of Pennsylvania contacted me with suggestions for possible repositories after she had dug out and hunted through old *AKC Gazette* issues. She sent me several suggestions to investigate which I was aware of since they were also listed on the AKC library webpage. However, these click-through links available on the AKC Library webpage direct the user to a general page for a Collection and are included as research options instead of possible repositories. Hence, they do not supply detailed information regarding contact personnel and guidelines for donations. As a result, I enthusiastically began investigating and contacting several of these options. During my investigations though, I again became almost melancholic because despite the few options available for the serious collector with prized artwork and literature, there are scarcely any options for the collector with unremarkable yet extensive collections. Those facilities that do actively

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acquire and accept donations must logically put into effect benchmarks for such bequeathals because space, staff and money restrict the collection's size and status. One potential depository unfortunately has had to close due to a lack of funds and when I spoke with the gentleman in charge, he informed me that he and his board were looking to relocate, and donate, at least two of their sizable and esteemed collections currently housed in temperature-controlled storage. Fortunately, I had already spoken with several University Special Collection Archivists and I ended up providing this gentleman and his board with their necessary contact information in the hopes that one of these facilities would be interested in acquiring such collections. Many fanciers may already be aware of these prospective facilities as a result of the AKC library website listing them in their navigation sidebar. However, there are many who are not familiar with these options and may be in the throes of determining what to do with their treasures. Donating lifelong acquisitions can be an emotional and daunting task.

I will begin with a potential source for our gun dog fanciers being the Bird Dog Foundation's National Museum. This museum has been in existence for 21 years and is dedicated to our sporting dogs, ideally located a one hour drive east of Memphis, Tennessee. I spoke with Executive Director David Smith who explained the library's broader mission. The National Bird Dog Museum is a repository of information, art, photography, and memorabilia reflecting a variety of pointing dog and retriever breeds, hunting, field trial activities, and shooting sports. Among portraits and exhibits contained in the museum, visitors will find history's most famous bird dogs represented. Many works of notable sporting dog artists and sculptors are also displayed. The library is not a lending library but rather a research library. The foundation welcomes donations of books, particularly on sporting gun dogs, and currently they have 1500 in their collection, spanning vintage books from the 1840s to present day. The museum is also interested in collecting material on icons of the sporting world, such as framed pedigrees of iconic sporting dogs, possibly even dual-purpose sporting dogs. Though they do emphasize field and hunting dogs, their library would be open to general interest reading and research such as hunting tales, sports shooting, gunsmithing and backpacking with sporting dogs. As for art, the museum seeks to obtain and is very interested in museum quality pieces regarding the retrieving, flushing, and pointing breeds. Additionally, the Bird Dog Foundation also boasts the National Retriever Museum in the newest and largest building among the foundation's various venues. The retriever annex was dedicated in February 2004 and contains 6400 square feet of space. The foundation is home to the Field Trial Hall of Fame but also now the Retriever Field Trial Hall of Fame. Typically to donate any acquisitions the museum requests a description and photo of the prospective piece(s) be emailed to sportdog@bellsouth.net Attention: David Smith. Additional questions should be directed to Mr. David Smith at 731-764-2058. Their website is <http://www.birddogfoundation.com>

Moving forward with possible options for an all-around depository for our dog fanciers. I contacted the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and spoke with the Special Collections Director, Mr. Max Yella. The university's Golda Meir Library with its Special Collections and Rare Books consists primarily of rare and special printed materials that hold long-term, historical research potential for UWM academic programs. The collections support a broad range of research and teaching activities in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. For a complete description please visit the library's website included here at the end of the paragraph. The Golda Meir library currently houses

the John S. Best collections. As the Library's special collections web page states, John S. Best was a noted Milwaukee lawyer, conservationist, and dog breeder who built an extensive collection of books on a variety of subjects before his death in 1989. To honor his memory, his wife, Helen M. Best, donated her husband's library to the Golda Meir Library in 1997. The collection reflects Mr. Best's deep interest in wildlife, outdoor sportsmanship, and the breeding, raising and showing of dogs. Mr. Best bred both Irish and Smooth Fox Terriers, and had a long line of champion dogs. The library boasts the books Mr. Best collected on Irish terriers is one of the most extensive collections about this breed to be found anywhere. Imprints in the collection range from 1642 to the present, with the vast majority concentrated between 1870 and 1980. As Mr. Yella stated, the Special Collections continues to add materials to the John S. Best Collection only in areas that relate to dogs and dog breeding published before 1970, with materials on dogs published after 1970 considered on a case-by-case basis. Keep in mind the 1970 date is a broad cut-off date. Mr. Yella and I discussed the practical aspects of the collection. Tomes, books, literary items such as novels, first-editions, special signed editions, and limited editions are always of interest. So are printed materials on uses of dogs such as sports enthusiast publications, as well as hunting and trapping periodicals depicting an integral aspect of American life. Vintage information on breeding, raising, and showing of dogs, as well as catalogs from the turn of the century, and other published material which is not archival but demonstrates periods of time, are very much of interest. I was informed this Special Collections is not interested in contemporary items nor are they art repositories. Mr. Max Yella can be contacted directly at 414-229-4345 or also at maxyella@uwm.edu and the UWM website Special Collections library is found at <http://www4.uwm.edu/libraries/special/collinfo.cfm>

Another potential depository that I investigated further was the Earl Gregg Swem Library at the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg Virginia. The Swem Library website indicates they have a collection of more than two million books, journals, manuscripts and films with electronic access to many of their resources from anywhere in the world. The Special Collections contains the Chapin-Horowitz Dog Book Collection which has over 10,000 items. This particular collection is the second largest collection of books about dogs in the U.S. An evolving collection, it contains scholarly works in several languages dating back to 1537, as well as children's literature, breed guides, and publications of the American Kennel Club. I spoke with the University Archivist, Ms. Amy Schindler, and delved into their interests for expanding their collections. Ms. Schindler indicated they would be interested in dog related books, journals, magazines, manuscripts, ledgers, and perhaps photography and pedigrees. Each gift would be considered on a case by case basis along with its condition. They are unable to accept art or bronze sculptures. For further information please contact Ms. Amy Schindler, 757-221-3094 or email acschi@mw.edu. The web address for the College of William & Mary's Swem Library and its special collections is <https://swem.wm.edu/research/special-collections>

Finally, I investigated the American Museum of Veterinary Medicine as I thought what could be more appropriate. However, this is the museum I alluded to earlier in this article and, unfortunately, due to a lack of funding, the museum currently in Birdsboro, Pennsylvania has closed their doors. Moreover, this museum was the recipient of more than 4,000 volumes from the estate of Mr. Roger Caras. For those who cannot place the name, Roger Caras was known to animal lovers

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as the host of the annual Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show. He was an Emmy-Award winning broadcaster and a veteran of network television programs including "Nightline," "ABC News Tonight" and "20/20" before devoting himself to work as president of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and to becoming an author. He is credited with writing more than five dozen books on animals and animal welfare. In 2005, Mr. Caras' widow, Jill Barclay Caras, donated her husband's book collection to the AMVM. Additionally, the ASPCA agreed to fund the collection for a period of five years. Besides this collection, the museum also is the recipient of the Shomer collection. Dr. Shomer was a 1935 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine who practiced veterinary medicine for 60 years. The AMVM states the Shomer collection comprises over 1,000 books and pamphlets relating to the practice of the veterinary art, with the breadth of this collection giving the student and researcher interested in veterinary history the opportunity to discover how veterinary medicine has evolved since its inception. The books in this collection include some of the earliest accounts of the profession, books by Andrew Snape, Delabere Blaine, W. Gibson, and George Stubbs. The oversized *Anatomy of the Horse* text, published by George Stubbs in 1766, is exceptional in its detail of horse anatomy. Another interesting bestowal is the museum's extensive collection of vintage and archival veterinary surgical equipment donated by Dr. Phyllis Lose. Dr. Lose was a well-known east coast, female equine veterinarian in the 1940s and was one of the first and youngest female racehorse trainers in the United States. The museum's collection even includes a complete skeleton of a horse which I am told is quite uncommon.



I have spoken several times with AMVM Museum President, Dr. Max Herman, in which he informed me in July, 2012 about the necessity to dispense with the sizable book collection. After five years of prior funding by the ASPCA, the museum did not have the further endowments necessary for the collection. I provided Dr. Herman with contact information for the other universities who may have an interest in his museum's collection and I recently followed up with him in September. He informed me the plans to relocate the museum to Agrarian Country in Grantville, Pennsylvania are currently on hold due to, of all things, the Agrarian Country seeking additional funding. Money makes the world go round doesn't it? If perchance there is a reader who is involved with a non-profit organization who is interested in the AMVM collections please contact Dr. Max Herman, VMD at 151 Lattice Lane, Collegeville, PA, 19426, or directly 610-489-4445, at dentlmax@aol.com

The latter issue of money is of great importance and may dictate the longevity of any sizable special collection. If you are considering bequeathing significant acquisitions then you should be prepared to arrange for initial funding of the collection, especially important if the collection will be donated to a smaller museum similar to the unfortunate American Museum of Veterinary Medicine. However, even the largest Special Collections Libraries such as the ones discussed in this article accept monetary donations and seek endowment funds. Importantly, all collections should be and in some cases must be catalogued before they will be considered. Don't fall into the trap of thinking you have all the time in the world to catalogue your prized collection because time is not on your side. Imagine yourself some years down the

road as an elderly fancier with your important, uncatalogued acquisitions; the mere thought of having to itemize them is daunting, and possibly a hardship. This is not unthinkable as I was contacted by a longtime fancier who had a large-ish collection. Indeed, this person had no idea of the number of volumes of books, photographs, dog prints, magazines, pedigrees, and jewelry because it was all undocumented. They had to hire an individual to come into their home and inventory their acquisitions. Apparently, it still is an ongoing process.

As I conclude this article, I envisage an old-time, retired breeder who has boxes and boxes of breed photographs, pedigrees dating back half a century or more, old movies of their dogs in the fields, at shows or at play, dozens of breed prints, decades-old parent breed publications, health records on generations of dogs, whelping records, weights and measurements...and what to do with all of this? It would be fortunate if this breeder still retains close ties with their parent breed club who may have an archivist who would be thrilled to acquire the treasured material. On the other hand, maybe they are not so welcomed. Perhaps, this old-time breeder is no longer closely affiliated with their breed's parent club. Likewise, now this old-time breeder may be considered irrelevant, no longer recognized as a breed authority, especially if they do not breed and attend specialties anymore. This happens more often than one thinks as I feel it is a decidedly unattractive aspect of American culture. As a society, our culture regards and treats our elderly very differently as compared to many other countries, some even third-world, who revere their elders. A sign of the times, I guess, and it happens, across the board, in all of our breed clubs. Most likely the reason is because many cultured, discerning, erudite dog fanciers have passed on

leaving today's breed associations replete with fanciers who do not share similar priorities and breed concerns as those of our veterans.

For those with few to no family members to rely on for proper allocation of their grand collections, and for those who wisely seek arrangements for the perpetuity of their rare treasures, please make an effort to contact those suggested above. For the hypothetical veteran breeder above with all the "good stuff," I would still recommend inquiring with these depositories to place some, possibly more, but do not expect them to take all of your historical breed documents. You may have to divvy up your splendid archival breed material to ensure its continuity, such as those books which one university may not want, then contact another suggested depository that may find these books appealing because their Special Collections are geared towards different interests. So goes the same with the pedigrees, journals, identified photographs, and the like. For those who are especially motivated, why not accumulate all the material in your own breed book? Anyone can be published these days, it is called 'Print on Demand' and there are a number of companies to contact. Include all the dozens of pedigrees, whelping records, weights and measurements, health records and other valuable, helpful breed information. Ensure your own legacy. Here is an excellent link for details and instructions on how it is done, <http://www.oprah.com/omagazine/Publish-Your-Own-Book>. When in print, with enough books produced, sold or donated, there is bound to be a record of your archival breed information minimizing the risk of it all being carelessly disposed of. Take heed, don't let a lifetime of effort and accumulation be set out with the trash.

