

# Who Owns the Bird Dog Museum?

By Neil Mace

As is too often the way of people, there has recently been a bit of turmoil among the Directors of the Bird dog foundation; the Board that oversees the Field Trial Halls of Fame, the bird Dog Museum, and the wildlife Heritage Center in Grand Junction, Tennessee. Being Dedicated, well meaning people, with the concern for sporting dogs foremost in their motivations, they are sure to work out their differences, given time. The conflict over which dog group deserves premier emphasis in the Grand Junction facility, most often just called the Museum, has led to some finger pointing and accusations that I will let the more qualified resolve. But this argument has also involved the very serious question, "Who owns the Bird Dog Museum"?

There are those that think it is the property of the Bird Dog Foundation, some the original founders, still others say American field Publishing, even others believe it belongs to the major donors or the man seemingly in charge, Capt. Lockee; they are all wrong. It, in its entirety, belongs to the people! Those common sportsmen that love and admire sporting dogs, whether it be pointers, setters, retriever, Continental, or spaniels. It belongs to us, all of us. the Board of Directors only manage it in trust for our and future generation's education and enjoyment.

All public museums are for just that purpose, they are not the playthings of the wealthy and powerful, nor solely for the politically connected. The Bird dog Museum exists to celebrate sporting dogs and their supporters throughout the world. Lest someone think I am naive, I realize that the donors and the "mover and shakers" that give vast sums of money and volunteer their time and energies to serve on the Board are vitally important, without them we would not have the shrine it has become. but they have a fiduciary responsibility to the public that is outlined in their charter. They, in point of fact, work for us, and at present they are not doing a very good job.

Too many on the Board have forgotten or never knew this simple fact, they behave as though they have no one to answer to, that no one can give them direction, no one to hold them accountable, save the major donors. But we are the primary stakeholders and it is time we let our voices be heard. Please write or call at the following address and number:

The Bird Dog Foundation, Inc.  
P.O. Box 774, 505 West Hwy 57  
Grand Junction, TN 38039  
[sportdogsm@aol.com](mailto:sportdogsm@aol.com) email  
731-764-2058 office  
731-764-3004

Let them know of your ownership, and as an owner, of your concerns, tell them that the squabbling must end, that sporting dogs are much more important than any of them. that field trial pointing dogs must regain their favored position. that this scared shrine is not for sale to the highest bidder. That no one person controls it.

I happen to own and enjoy Continental, retrievers, and spaniels, but I recognize the most significant sporting dogs of today and the past are the pointer and setter FDSB registered field trial bird dogs; however this spat is reconciled, those dogs must be the focal point of the Museum. It is not a matter of which group gave or gives the most money, which founded it which has a majority on the Board, or who claims to control its future. Just as Cooperstown exalts Professional baseball, Canton the NFL, Daytona NASCAR, the lead exhibits at Grand Junction must be comprised of pointers and setters. This is not to suggest that the others are lesser in importance, just that there can only be one premiere group. One group of dogs that are truly representative of all sporting dogs, and that must be the pointers and setters.

The other groups deserve and must be given sections and wings to showcase their breeds, but not to the detriment of the pointers and setters. Just as with thoroughbred race horses as the most celebrated of equine, the field trial dogs deserve and must be afforded the same high recognition. I am told by some that are either in denial or are deliberately trying to mislead, that are either in denial or are deliberately trying to mislead, that pointer and setter supporters control 15 of the 21 Board positions. This is not true in the way knowledgeable people accept the designation. Ask for a list of current board members and see how many pointing dog field trials you recognize.

As all things made by man, this too, shall pass. But your letters, emails, and calls are urgently needed to bring sanity to a group that has strayed from its intended purpose.

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## WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE BIRD DOG FOUNDATION, INC?

By Dr. John Webb

Every business and every organization must be guided by its mission statement. The importance of the mission statement cannot be overstated, as it is the guiding light pointing the way to the future. The Bird Dog Foundation's mission statement was well thought out. It beautifully encapsulates every aspect of the dream and goal of the revered Mr. William F. Brown, the late editor of the American Field. It was penned by Bernard J. Matthys, the present editor of The American Field. The following is the mission statement: "*Dedicated to preserving the past, and protecting the future for sporting dog fanciers the world over.*" This mission statement is

proudly ensconced on a brass plate that hangs over the doors of the National Bird Dog Museum. The mission is achieved by uniting sporting dog owners/enthusiasts to support the following:

**National Bird Dog Museum for Pointing Dogs, Retrievers and Spaniels\***

Maintain a sporting dog center to collect, preserve and display historic memorabilia, portraits and artifacts of all the sporting dog breeds and the people involved with these dogs.

**Field Trial Hall of Fame**

\* Maintain a venue within the sporting dog center to honor distin-

guished people and outstanding dogs that have contributed significantly to the field trial sport.

#### **Wildlife Heritage Center**

\* Employ the sporting dog center to introduce and educate the general public about the sporting dog activities.

\* Maintain a Wildlife Heritage Center to educate and to inform both adults and the nations youth about upland game birds and waterfowl, along with the conservation/habitat needed to protect them.

The Foundation's Field Trial Hall of Fame mission traces its origin back to the writings of the venerable William F. Brown, late editor of the American Field. The Field Trial Hall of Fame was a pet idea of Mr. Brown. The idea had been under consideration since the late 1930s. It was not until 1954 that the announcement was made of its establishment. In his book, "Field Trials History, Management and Judging Standards", the new revised edition copyright 1987, Mr. Brown devoted a whole chapter to the Field Trial Hall of Fame. On page 169, one phrase stands out above all others ". . . there is a cherished goal that hall of fame wings will honor all the pointing dogs - Brittanys, German Shorthairs, Vizslas, Weimaraners, German Drahthaars, Spinoni, Wirehaired Pointing Griffons - with

inclusion also of Retriever trial greets, Spaniel trial greets and perhaps Beagles and other breeds that have made field trial history in America".

#### **OTHER INFORMATION**

To the astute observer it can be readily understood from the mission statement listed above, and subsequent actions that there has been no change in the basic policies or philosophy of the Bird Dog Foundation since its inception in 1988.

As for the Field Trial Hall of Fame, the philosophy espoused by Mr. Brown is that which is being carried out today. Again a quote from Mr. Brown's book: "for several years now, plans have been going forward for the erection of a Field Trial Hall of Fame and museum, a structure wherein might be housed and displayed memorabilia of the bird dog sport. Pointer and Setter trials have, of course, the most colorful background with the centennial celebrated in October 1974". With the dedication of the Field Trial Hall of Fame structure in September 1994, Bill Brown's pet idea, or dream, became a successful reality. Its Board of Directors, who are responsible for maintaining the mission, are a cross section of representatives from the various sporting dog breeds and organizations.

## **THE FIELD TRIAL HALL OF FAME**

*By Ella Conable*

The tragic events of September 11th disrupted everyone's life to one extent or another. In the world of bird dogs, it brought the postponement of the annual trek to Grand Junction for the Hall of Fame induction ceremonies. After a great deal of rearranging of schedules, the inductions were finally held early this year. The Retrievers and Spaniels held their inductions in January, the Brittanys and Pointers and Setters held theirs in early February. A large number of familiar faces were absent because of scheduling conflicts - two major Brittany trials within 300-400 miles, hunting parties in South Texas that couldn't be covered by any one else - and those friendly faces were sorely missed.

Newly elected Foundation president, Dr. John Webb, welcomed all with a brief speech as did Gary Locke. The presentation ceremonies were then turned over to Bill Cartmell



**Bob Fleury with Ron Stevenson's Hall of Fame scroll, with Bill Cartmell**



**Dr. Webb, Foundation President**



**Bob Fleury and Dave Fletcher with Ron Stevenson's Patron Memorial plaque.**



**Lloyd Conable accepts the Hall of Fame scroll for Flatwood Tiger**

The Bird Dog complex (Museum, Wildlife Heritage Center and Hall of Fame) continue to expand and if you've not been there it's worth the extra effort to "detour" and visit this outstanding tribute to bird dogs and their human companions.



**Bill Cartmell, Don Young with Hall of Fame scroll for The Magic Moment and presenter Neil Mace**



**Mary Weisz with Bob's Patron Memorial Plaque with presenter Jim Chase**



**Don Young and Bill Cartmell with "Jenny's" Hall of Fame Scroll and Portrait**

Because of the delay, some of the honorees were unable to attend, but worthy "stand-ins" filled the void. Bob Fleury was there representing Dot Stevenson, accepting both his Hall of Fame scroll and a Patron Memorial plaque. Lloyd Conable did the same for Gene & Sherry Stewart and Flatwood Tiger. The presentation to them will be made at the Pennsylvania Brittany Club's spring trial in May. Mary Weisz came down with Jim Chase for the presentation of a Patron Memorial for her late husband, Bob. Neil Mace made the presentation to Don Young, who owned The Magic Moment.

Don unveiled her portrait, done fittingly by son Ross, to hang in the museum. And Bill Norvell presented a portrait of Brandy's Bullett, who was inducted in 2000.

Dave Fletcher and Jim Chase made the presentation to this writer for both the Hall of Fame and a Life Patron plaque. Other Brittany attendees were Leslie Fleury, Rheta Cartmell, Following the inductions Purina held a reception and buffet, hosted by Bob West, for all in attendance. Roy Pelton was also there representing IAMS Eukanuba. .



**Gary Locke and Bill Norvell with Brandy's Bullet, 2000 Hall of Fame inductee**



*Jim Chase & Ella show her Hall of Fame Scroll*



*Dave Fletcher holds Life Patron Plaque presented to Ella with Ella & Lloyd looking on.*