

MY HOW TIMES HAVE CHANGED

(and not)

I thought that I had just struck gold. A friend handed me a book that he found at an estate sale and wondered if I'd be interested. Interested? I couldn't believe this stroke of good luck. While I felt like jumping up and down with joy, instead I gave an enthusiastic "thank you" and rushed home to pour over my new-found treasure. I had just been given a copy of the "Weimaraner Yearbook, 1973, 1974, 1975."

In the 1970's the Weimaraner Club of America published a series of yearbooks that are similar to what we do today in our "Blue Ribbon Edition." One of the big differences between the publications is that the yearbooks are stand-alone books, instead of the "Blue Ribbon" magazine format.

Included in the yearbooks is a copy of the standard, a listing of the current BROM statistics, photos of any Best in Show Weimaraners and the rules for Shooting and Retrieving Ratings. For each year there is the Top Ten Listings for Show, Field Trial and Obedience Weimaraners, and the results for the National Field Futurity and Show Futurities.

For the balance of the book, owners could buy a page for their dog. The format for each dog's page included a photo, the registered name, call name, breeder, registration number, date of birth, a short paragraph about the dog and a three-generation pedigree.

The yearbooks give us a snapshot of what was happening in the Weimaraner world in a given year.

What were things like more than 40 years ago? To fully understand it is necessary to put this timing into context. The yearbook I was given recorded Weimaraners only a couple decades after the over popularization that occurred in the 1950's. The Weimaraner became the "dog-de-jour." The hype was that the Weimaraner was a wonder dog, complete with exaggerated, impossible claims of super hunting prowess, uncanny intelligence and trainability. Another important 40 year old milestone was that the yearbook was published only one year after our current standard came into effect. This is the standard that lowered the

acceptable height of our dogs and made “blues” and “distinctly long coats” a disqualification. Understanding what was happening in the Weimaraner world adds prospective to how our breed has changed and evolved

Paging through this yearbook, here are just a few things that struck me about where we were 40 plus years ago.

Generally, the overall look of the dogs was less refined and more rugged than what we have become accustomed to seeing today. I could picture many of the yearbook dogs being capable of the big game hunting that is part of our history. The overall picture was of dogs that had more bone and substance. Also, the dogs from more than 40 years ago had far less front and rear angulation. Some of the heads we would term today as “coarse” but none would be called narrow and snipey. Our modern Weimaraner is more angulated, bred to be “prettier,” and is a generally sleeker animal.

The yearbook showed an interesting trend in which dogs are campaigned in the show ring. For the years prior to the publication of the mid 1970’s yearbook there were only 15 Best in Show Weimaraners and only one was female. Today, the lady Weimaraners are no longer an oddity in the Sporting Group and Best in Show competitions. This coincides with a changed attitude about specializing bitches. I recall in the early 1980’s being told in the Group ring, by an elderly, curmudgeon of a judge, that I was wasting my money campaigning a bitch and, “...she should be home in a whelping box.” (Ladies – we have come a long way.)

While many things have changed over the years, what has come through the decades is the look of strength, alertness and intelligence in our dogs. There is a spirit within Weimaraners that was celebrated years ago and we continue to appreciate it today. Let’s continue to take pleasure in our wonderful breed.

Carole Lee Richards

PO Box 516, Collingswood, NJ08108

ymar_column@yahoo.com