

Weimaraner World 1960

There's been an uptick of interest in the 1960's. We talk about the "Mad Men" era, mid-century modern furniture, and how the 1960s brought a dramatic change to the cultural fabric of American life. It was a transitional time that took us from the conservative 1950's into the youth centric, anti-establishment, free wheeling 1960's

What does all this have to do with Weimaraners? For me, it was curiosity about what was happening in the world of Weimaraners at the start of the 1960's. Were things as they are today or has the world of Weimaraners dramatically changed? It would be wonderful to talk to someone who lived through the Weimaraner world of the early 1960's but unfortunately I have no such direct source. What's the next best place to start poking around? It's the written word in the form of "The Weimaraner Magazine" from the early 1960's.

I'm lucky enough to have collected some of the early magazines and here are a few eye-opening things I found in the issues of 1960. You'll be surprised by how so many things have changed and yet so much remains the same in our breed.

Lacking today's instant information via the internet, in the early 1960's there was only one major means of mass communication about all things Weimaraner and it was "The Weimaraner Magazine." Each month people would anxiously wait for the mail to bring the news about what was happening in Weimaraner circles.

What was a 1960's magazine like? The 1960 magazine measured a bit larger than the current issues and there were no color pictures. It was published each month except for December and the average number of pages was about 50. At the front of the magazine was a listing of the National Officers. There were no local clubs but rather 18 geographic regions headed by a "Regional Governor." Ladies, listen up to this one...all the National Officers and 17 of the 18 governors were men.

When it came to event write ups, field activities predominated. The calendar of coming events was about 75% field trials, with the balance divided between specialty shows and rating tests. Flipping through the pages of event results it was noticeable that the dogs had far more German names than we encounter today.

In 1960 the Bench Futurity program was in its infancy but the rules were being questioned and in some cases changed. While the Futurity program was formulated by the Weimaraner Club of America in 1954, the first Futurity wasn't held until 1956. Initially the Bench Futurity rules did not permit professional handlers to compete. In 1960 there was a recognized dilemma since a number of prominent owners were also professional handlers. To deal with this situation, the Bench Futurity rules published in October 1960, permitted professional handlers to exhibit if they were the owner or breeder of the exhibited puppy.

There was a prediction about the future in an article about breeding Weimaraners. The author foresaw that breeders, "...will make use of electronic computers in arriving at the best possible mate, ...feeding pertinent data into one of these machine marvels will come up with one or more suitable candidates." -

Talking about breeding, it seems that the Weimaraner population was not large enough to keep up with the market for puppies. The magazine ran a plea from the Executive Secretary, "...the supply is not keeping up with demand. We need good breedings. At this point in time, this office receives well over 100 inquiries a week asking where they can purchase quality Weimaraners."

I hope you've enjoyed this peek back into the 1960's and that these facts give insight into the history and evolution of our breed and our parent Club.

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