Retrievers of the Past...

By Joule Charney

2x NAFC-FC Lawhorn's Cadillac Mack

You probably have heard the expression – 'and, here's the real kicker!' Usually, it means there are strings attached to something, and the connection is not a desirable one.

In the case of back-to-back 1979/1980 NAFC-FC Lawhorn's Cadillac Mack, the word 'kicker' happens to be extremely apropos.

Co-owner Dennis Bath thought he'd entered into a very advantageous financial arrangement to allow himself an ownership interest in the dog. His clever deal included a provision that kicked in only if the dog were to win a National. That dream seemed so far-fetched, he was almost certain he never would have to concern himself with it. And, now here's the real kicker..... His dog fetched his way to not one, but two, National Amateur Wins!

And, here's another kicker, a very bittersweet one. When you win a National Amateur, you're in a very exclusive club. Win it twice, well, we literally can count on two hands how often that has happened. So, you can be almost certain you never will achieve that level of success again. No one person ever has won more than two National Amateurs, neither with the same dog nor a combination of dogs.

In the Beginning ...

Mack was not intended by his original owner to become a field trial dog when Gerald Lawhorn bought him at eight or nine weeks. On the contrary, "Mack was purchased as a hunting dog, for around \$350," according to Dennis. The pup was born in December 1974. "Hal and Sharon Gierman, who still are in the game, owned the sire."

FC-AFC-CFC-CAFC Gahonk's Pow-Wow, callname 'Pow,' was the first dog purchased by the Giermans, owners of Calumet Kennels in Illinois, recalls Hal. He bought Pow in Canada from the Chief of Police of an Indian reservation. Pow became the anchor of a continuous line of breeding from 1968 until this year, when the Giermans bought outside of the bloodline.

Creigh's Kalamity Kate of Brio was Mack's dam. "In the 60s or 70s, the bitch wasn't that important. There were so many brood bitches, and the dam was a brood bitch," says Dennis. Hal's recollection is that the dam was a trial dog whose owner, Bill Creigh, did not extensively campaign.

"Gerald sent Mack to Kim Kirkpatrick, a professional trainer based in the Atlanta, Georgia area, to be trained for hunting. When he was



2x NAFC-FC LAWHORN'S CADILLAC MACK

| OPEN | 1976 | 1977 | 1978 | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | TOTAL: |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|--------|
| Starts | 10 | 22 | 21 | 17 | 18 | 20 | 14 | 1 | 123 |
| First | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 9 |
| Second | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 8 |
| Third | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 7 |
| Fourth | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| Places | 1 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 1 | 32 |
| Jams | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| # Finished | 1 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 43 |
| % Finished | 10% | 27% | 29% | 29% | 50% | 45% | 43% | 100% | 35% |
| Open Points | 3.0 | 4.5 | 7.0 | 11.0 | 20.0 | 14.0 | 20.0 | 0.5 | 80.0 |
| Cumulative Pts | 3.0 | 7.5 | 14.5 | 25.5 | 45.5 | 59.5 | 79.5 | 80.0 | 80.0 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| AMATEUR | 1976 | 1977 | 1978 | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | TOTAL: |
| Starts | 10 | 12 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 15 | ? | 109 |
| First | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 18 |
| Second | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 13 |
| Third | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 8 |
| Fourth | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Places | 0 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 0 | 41 |
| Jams | ? | 2 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | ? | 11 |
| # Finished | ? | 4 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | ? | 52 |
| % Finished | ? | 33% | 44% | 56% | 56% | 56% | 67% | ? | 47% |
| Amateur Points | 0.0 | 6.0 | 10.0 | 31.5 | 33.5 | 26.0 | 31.0 | 0.0 | 138.0 |
| Cumulative Pts | 0.0 | 6.0 | 16.0 | 47.5 | 81.0 | 107.0 | 138.0 | 138.0 | 138.0 |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| ALL AGE | 1976 | 1977 | 1978 | 1979 | 1980 | 1981 | 1982 | 1983 | TOTAL: |
| All Age By Year | 3.0 | 10.5 | 17.0 | 42.5 | 53.5 | 40.0 | 51.0 | 0.5 | 218.0 |
| Cumulative Total | 3.0 | 13.5 | 30.5 | 73.0 | 126.5 | 166.5 | 217.5 | 218.0 | 218.0 |

From "Retriever Field Trial Statistics 1941-1995," by Sue Reynolds.

Owner: Dennis Bath Birthdate: 12/11/74 11 Derby Points Avg. Open pts per year: 10 Avg. Amateur pts per year: 23 Avg. All-Age pts per year: 27

ten months old, Kim said he looked like he could be a field trial dog. Gerald said, 'Do what you want,' as Dennis relates the tale. This turned out to be a fortuitous change in circumstances for the young dog.

Kim trained Mack during his first three years. "Kim came through where I lived and needed a place to train. He ran a couple of trials in the area. My dogs at this time were just dogs. They ran field trials and had places. Mack got a place in the Derby and a 2nd in the Open. I thought, 'Man, I'd like to own a dog like that same day," recalls Dennis.

Then, tragically, Kim drowned in a duck hunting accident. "They had some waves come up. The boat overturned. He fell overboard. He was hunting with his brother. His brother made it."

The dog in the accident happened to be owned by the Giermans. Sharon had sent him to Kim to resolve a problem of spinning on blinds and the brothers took him with them duck hunting. The dog swam back to shore and survived.

"Mack eventually was put on the auction block," Dennis says. Suddenly, it seemed as if he might have a shot at owning his dream dog. "When Kim died, there were a lot of people trying to buy the dog."



Dennis and Mary Lou Bath with Cadillac Mack at the 1980 National Amateur, photo by Larry Hovis.

Retrievers of the Past

The offers were in the \$30,000 to \$40,000 range. "It was a lot of money then. It's a lot of money now. But, it was a *ton* of money then!" Dennis contacted Gerald about purchasing Mack, and then flew to Georgia so they could talk in person.

"We developed an agreement. I would purchase the dog Mack, his field trial rights, and I would give him \$2,500 per year for every year that I ran him, but not to exceed a certain amount. Except there were kickers involved in Nationals. I had those dreams; but, I was thinking, 'that's never gonna happen.' I was to give the dog back to him if I ever quit running him for any reason whatsoever."

"Nobody ever knew what our agreement was." According to Dennis, this is the first time he is revealing it. "A long time has gone by. Thirty-four years. Gerald didn't want anybody to know about it. He thought people would think it was stupid for him to sell him to me for a set price – per year – when he had the offers that he did."

"We had a very unusual partnership. Gerald never ran a dog in his life, ever, that I know of. Never ran Mack, ever. He came to watch him run, occasionally. He came to Nationals mainly. He was never involved in anything but watching the dog and partying. He was more into that than most handlers. When I purchased Mack from Gerald, I purchased him on a yearly basis. I would owe him so many thousands of dollars for winning the National. It didn't matter how many dollars. It was just a dream. It wasn't a reality. It *became* a reality."

Originally a school teacher, Gerald was in the oil business at the time he bought Mack. "He owned OK Oil, a lot of truck stops and quick marts. He opened a sporting clays lodge in Georgia, with a restaurant and many cottages, when sporting clays was coming along. The restaurant was named 'Cadillac Mack'. Mack trucks were always considered the Cadillac of trucks. That's how he came up with the dog's name."

"He loved to hunt and had a big plantation down in Albany, Georgia area. Wayne Curtis trained on his property the first year. I arranged for Wayne to go there. Gerald was a very interesting person. He didn't know much about the running of the dogs, the winning; but, he certainly did love the dogs. There was no doubt about it."

Mack Under Dennis' Co-Ownership...

"Mack was excellent housedog. He went everywhere I went. He occasionally went to work with me. He was a good dog in the house. He slept in my closets, when I was out of town. I didn't have any dogs that were that dependent on me before. He would do almost anything for me." In a wry tone, Dennis adds, "almost!"

"All the dogs now are good. Especially pro-trained. It was not that way in the 70s. When a great dog showed up, he usually got a place. It's not that way today. They're not guaranteed a finish, like they were twenty, thirty years ago. Whenever I went with Mack to a field trial, I went with the intent to win. He placed or won most of the time. You can't go there today with that attitude. You can go with the attitude you'd *like* to win. There are so many good dogs today, almost every dog that shows up could win, whether he's with a pro or an amateur."

"Dogs of yesteryear wouldn't make it," Dennis believes, in modern day trials. "The dogs are trained to such excellence by trainers. They don't make a whole lot of mistakes. They make some. And, sometimes they just don't get the picture. It's the handler that knows how to train today."

The dogs from the past, "they'd be good dogs. Tommy, Cotton, Joe Shomer were all good, thirty-five, forty years ago. There's no doubt about it. They were the best. The collar has added so much to this game. It's not like a shotgun years ago. If a dog popped or wouldn't go, those problems were very difficult to work out. Today, they know how to correct it. If a dog pops or won't go, they've all learned how to use the collar. The dogs all run real happy."



When Dennis became Mack's co-owner, he took over his training himself. "I want to do it as much as I can myself. Nobody else trained him other than me, and Kirkpatrick."

"Mack trained perfectly. But, he was trialwise. He was hard for me to correct in training. Hard for me to set-up. And, then at the trial, he was not the same dog. He cheated. He was probably the world's best cheater! They didn't judge as much on it, then, as they do today. They judge today on what's acquired through training. They used to say, 'Oh, hell, he knew where it (the bird) was at."

"Gerald was the kind of guy who thought Mack could do no wrong. He rarely saw him go out. The first two Nationals Gerald went to (the 1979 and 1980 National Amateurs in McCall, Idaho and Waterville, Maine), Mack won both of them. Then Mack went out in the first series in the next National (the 1980 Open), in Roswell, New Mex-

ico. Mack chased a rabbit. Gerald just couldn't understand it. He couldn't understand how anybody who won two Nationals would go out in the first series. He wondered, 'What the hell's wrong with him? Is there something wrong with the dog?' Gerald had planned on leaving and going to Las Vegas to vacation when the National was all over. It was very fortunate he left early, because the MGM Grand, where he had stayed, burned down the following week and people died."

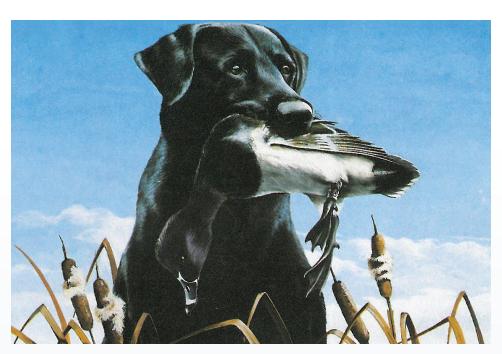
"He was not very selfish, or, obviously, I wouldn't have been able to purchase the dog. There were relatively large kickers. I didn't expect to win; so, I didn't care how high they were. What I was really buying was Mack's field trial life. I think I only paid the first year. From that point on, Gerald said, 'Forget the (yearly) money."

"The first year I had Mack, I qualified him for the National Open, but not the National Amateur. When Mack won his first National Amateur, in 1979, 'I thought, oh, s**t. I've got to come up with five grand.' Gerald told me I didn't have to pay the kicker after the first one. After the second one, he said, 'Forget the kickers.' They were eliminated. He wanted what was best for the dog." Fortunately for Dennis, "He was of the opinion that I was the best thing for him. I've had several partners. Gerald was the best partner I've ever had."

"It just seemed it was meant to be," Dennis reflects philosophically. "Gerald believed in the dog so much. His family thought it was meant for *him* to do this. It wasn't, of course."

"I used to duplicate the trophies and send them to Gerald. He got one-half of the stud fees and we spent that money at the Nationals. We would take a lot of people out to dinner, and things like that. In Maine, we took twenty-five to thirty people out to dinner one night. That's the kind of guy he was. He liked to have fun. And, he liked to be on top. That's what the dogs did for him."

"I sent him a trophy and a ribbon every time Mack won. And, painting. Phil Crowe was a good friend of mine and did the paintings. He was a popular waterfowl artist, has done many state duck stamps, and used to donate sketches as judges' gifts at the National Open." Dennis still has the paintings in his home and gave one to the Retriever Hall of Fame. Gerald hung his in the Cadillac Mack restaurant.



1982 National Retriever Club stamp/print, featuring Cadillac Mack, painting by Phillip Crowe.

"Something else that Mack accomplished," adds Dennis, "was that he was on the first National Retriever Club stamp and print, with a duck in his mouth. It was the largest selling print of all of them. At that time, the prints were done the same way as duck stamps, or any conservation stamps. They sold for about \$125 and generated a lot of money. It was because I was deeply involved in the National Club, at the time, that they would use a National Amateur winner instead of an Open. It was my idea that my dog went on the first time. There was a guarantee that they would make \$15,000 to \$25,000, whatever the figure was. They made much more than that. There were a couple thousand every year. They only did it for four years."

"They printed 2500 of Mack; but, they probably didn't sell all of them. There were misprints, with '1982' on them twice. Phil and I took some of the misprints to our vehicles. The printer shredded the rest. It was a good deal for the National Club and the dogs. People didn't forget about them. The print is the same size as the duck stamp print. And the stamp even had glue on it."

Special, Yet Ordinary...

"So many things happened," Dennis continues. "All the people that trained with the dog came to watch when Mack was at his first National."

"But, he was just a dog. I used to let him out every night, prior to the Nationals. He'd run all over the neighborhood. Some nights, I'd forget and he'd be laying asleep on the porch. It becomes an issue of value. After he won the National, I thought I shouldn't do that anymore."

"Mack was bred a lot. He was not the best stud dog. He produced some FCs and AFCs but he didn't produce anywhere near the quantity that you'd expect, given how much he was bred. He bred about fifty-sixty-seventy dogs a year. Five hundred puppies. Breeding is the name of the game," Dennis notes.

Happily, the outcome for Mack's sire was a different story, and it began quite unexpectedly. Hal Geirman retells it fondly.....

"I was at a restaurant in Ontario, Canada when Frank Fleet, one of the old-timers, came up to me." Frank was a Canadian amateur handler.

NATIONAL AMATEUR REPEAT WINNERS

Only seven dogs have won two National Amateurs, which began in 1957. All were Labradors, six males and one female. Only three dogs won in back-to-back years. No dog ever has won more than two National Amateurs.

| YEAR | DOG | 2 BACK- TO-BACK | + OTHER NAT'L(S) |
|--------------|--|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1967 1968 | 2x NAFC-NFC Super Chief, LM | Yes | 1968 NFC |
| 1971 1973 | 2x NAFC-FC Dee's Dandy Dude, LM | | |
| 1972 1975 | 2x NAFC-FC-3x CNFC River Oaks Corky, LM | | 1971, 1973 1974 3xCNFC |
| 1979 1980 | 2x NAFC-FC Lawhorn's Cadillac Mack, LM | Yes | |
| 1995 2000 | 2x NAFC-FC-2x CNAFC Ebonstar Lean Mac, LM | | 1998, 1999 2x CNAFC |
| 1996 1999 | 2x NAFC-FC Candlewood's Bit O Bunny, LF | | |
| 2001 2002 | 2x NAFC-FC-AFC Candlewood's Ramblin Man, LM | Yes | |
| Totals | 7 Dogs | 3 Dogs | 3 Dogs |

NATIONAL OPEN REPEAT WINNERS

Only two dogs are 3x winners, and four are 2x winners of the National Open, which began in 1941. Of these six, three won in two back-to-back years. These three include the two 3x winners. Neither of the 3x winners won in three consecutive years.

None of these six National Open repeat winners also won a National Amateur.

| YEAR | DOG | 2 BACK- TO-BACK | + OTHER NAT'L(S) |
|----------------------|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1942 1943 1946 | 3xNFC-DUAL CH Shed Of Arden, LM | Yes | |
| 1952 1953 | 2x NFC King Buck, LM | Yes | |
| 1957 1959 | 2x NFC Spirit Lake Duke, LM | | |
| 1961 1963 | 2x NFC-AFC Del-Tone Colvin, LM | | 1968 CNFC |
| 1966 1969 | 2x NFC Whygin Cork's Coot, LM | | |
| 1990 1991 1993 | 3x NFC-AFC Candlewoods Tanks A Lot, LM | Yes | |
| Totals | 6 Dogs | 3 Dogs | 1 Dog |

Retrievers of the Past

"You got that Pow-Wow dog along?" Frank asked.

"Yeah," Hal responded. "How do you know about him?"

"His son just won the National Amateur," Frank exclaimed!

"Frank went out and looked at the dog. He was looking for a sire for his bitch. That's how I found out that Dennis won the National," Hal laughingly admits, and he turned it into a serious business advantage. "I think I had more breedings with Pow-Wow than any other stud dog. I advertised him in Retriever Field Trial News, and headlined the ad 'The Producer."

"The dog game has been good to me," says Dennis. "I've had some good dogs. But, none that compare to Mack. I think that's one problem that people have that win Nationals. They're always trying to replace that dog. And, it's not possible. That 'super dog' is no longer available. He's not out there like they were years ago, like Corky and the dog the magazine just featured, Mariah." Born in 1965, FC-AFC Tigathoe's Mainliner Mariah amassed 254 combined points. NAFC-FC-CNFC River Oaks Corky was born in 1966. His record of 505.5 lifetime points has yet to be surpassed.

Mack accumulated 218 points during his career, 80 Open and 138 Amateur. He was inducted into the Retriever Hall of Fame in 1992. His titled progeny, listed in the 1979-1984 Performance Book, are FC-AFC B'Vill's Macho Man, AFC Frolickin Freeda and FC-AFC Longshot Limosousine.

Amateur Extraordinaire...

Dennis presently owns two field trial dogs, adding, with apparent lament, "they are not great house dogs," like Mack. "I'd prefer the mother and father to be an FC or an AFC. When I buy a puppy, I want to start with the very best I can start with. What's a few hundred dollars more? I'd rather pay \$1500 or \$2000. It's going to be a member of the family."

"My son David used to bring cats and dogs home. At least once a week, he'd show up with some stray dog," Dennis recalls. "He has English Bulldogs and a little brown thing, a Norwich Terrier. He takes it everywhere he goes."

Dennis' interest in field trials sparked out of an unsuccessful situation around 1969. "I sent my dog to Tommy Sorenson to be trained; then, I went to pick him up because

Sorenson was having the same problem with him. I watched a man handle a dog in an Amateur, and he handled on a mark. I thought it was one of the most phenomenal things a dog could do! I wanted one just like *that*! Even though the dog failed. He sat down when the owner blew the whistle. He went in the direction he was sent. And, he found the bird. I thought, 'I can do every bit of that.' I said to Tommy, 'It shouldn't be hard to teach a dog to do that!' I've been trying ever since."

"Tommy said, 'I got a bunch of puppies up there. You just go up there and pick one out.' I did." And, as it turns out, "I did that a few times!"

Many years later, upon his father's induction into the Retriever Hall of Fame in 2000, David wrote about Dennis' disastrous field trial debut. "My dad bought his first Lab in 1967 for hunting, from Tom Sorenson. Shortly thereafter, he went to a field trial in Wentzville, Missouri and decided he would like to participate. Figuring he was an amateur, he entered the Amateur Stake. He was quickly eliminated before the birds were shot. Promptly, he acquired a rule book to find out how to master the game. He is also constantly trying to improve this sport and the dogs he truly loves." Bad beginnings are not necessarily a harbinger of things to come ... Not only did his dog Mack win two consecutive National Amateurs, they were the first two National Amateurs that Dennis had ever run.

"I used to go to Nilo and train. John Olin used to go there and train. That's when I went. I trained also with Cotton Pershall. I trained with them for years. I tried to impress them," Dennis admits. "Of course, ahead of time, I'd run the blind twenty times. I had to blow the whistle two times when they were watching."

"I was in National (training) groups with Cotton (Pershall) and Tommy. He was really the ringleader of all the training groups I trained with. Eventually, I trained with Bill Eckett, when Tommy didn't have any Amateurs qualified."

Dennis has given back to the sport in numerous ways over many years. "When I first had Mack, he didn't qualify for the National. The next year, he qualified for the National Open. I was Chief Marshal of that National. Eventually, I went through the Chairs."

Dennis has held every office in the National Open Retriever Club, serving as its president for two terms and as secretary-treasurer for six.

"They honored me by dedicating a

National to me at St. Louis. I did receive from the AKC the Lifetime Achievement Award. And, I was one of the first people to go into the Hall of Fame." Those years were 2002, 2008 and 2000, respectively.

Dennis was instrumental in initiating the Purina Outstanding Field Trial Retriever Award and he remains an active charter member of the Purina High Point Awards committee.

Not only did his dog Mack win two consecutive National Amateurs...

they were the FIRST two National Amateurs that Dennis had EVER run.

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Also of service at the local club level, Dennis was President and Field Trial Chairman of the Mississippi Valley Retriever Club for around ten years. He currently is president of the River King Retriever Club and has chaired so many of its latest field trials, he can't recall how many. "I have been president, off and on, for about thirty years. I was one of the founders and first president. We don't have a lot of members," Dennis notes.

"Just finding someone to be president is a hell of a chore. It used to be a hell of an honor"

"The retriever game is very expensive. I'm not saying there aren't a lot of blue collar workers in it, because there are. It's expensive to be in the retriever game today. If you're going to run fifteen trials a year and a National, it's expensive. Just one dog is costing you hotels, meals, gas, entry fee, probably \$600 a weekend. A young guy who's supporting a family can't support this habit. So, there aren't as many members today as there were forty years ago when there were picnic and sanctioned trials. It used to cost about \$12 to enter a sanctioned trial. Another option was hunt tests, where there were pigeons or ducks."

"I judged about fifty picnic or sanctioned trials. That's a lot of weekends to give up. But, I enjoyed every one of them. Even if they didn't go well."

"I still judge an awful lot." In today's world, "I may have eighty dogs and twelve FCs. I may have sixty *good* dogs, or even eighty. Oh man, what am I gonna do? It used to be, I'd just back farther. More dogs would be washed out thirty–forty years ago. Wouldn't be today. You teach them all to handle, sit, stay, heel. Used to be if a dog was really high powered, the only way you could stop him was to shoot him in the hind end. I don't care how many shotguns you'd have. You can teach any dog to handle. You can't help their eyesight though."

"If you stand in the gallery, it always gets brought up about judging. We don't have enough good judges to go around. I've gotten to a place in my life, if I'm not back and I think I should be back, it doesn't bother me.

WINNERS OF BOTH NATIONALS

There is only one dog in the history of the sport that has won both Nationals in the same year. The only dog to have accomplished this feat is **Super Chief, in 1968.**

| YEAR | NAT'L AMAT. | NAT'L OPEN | IN SAME YEAR | BACK- TO- BACK | + OTHER NAT'L(S) |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| NFC-NAFC Major VI | 1957 | 1954 | | | |
| 2x NAFC-NFC Super Chief | 1967 1968 | 1968 | Yes | Yes | |
| NFC-NAFC Wanapum's Dart Dandy | 1976 | 1975 | | Yes | 1976, 1977 2x CNFC |
| NFC-NAFC Candlewoods Super Tanker | 1990 | 1992 | | | |
| 4 Dogs | | | 1 Dog | 2 Dogs | 1 Dog |

Retrievers of the Past



2x NAFC-FC Lawhorn's Cadillac Mack, photo by Larry Hovis.

There's always another trial next week. It doesn't do you any good to get upset. I don't know any judges who change results because someone's upset. Everyone's extremely competitive. There's only one Winner and one Amateur ribbon and the rest of us have to put up with 2nd, 3rd, 4th or Green. You're going to lose more than you win. No matter how much you pay for a dog."

Dennis judged the 2014 National Amateur Retriever Championship in Roseburg, Oregon, in June. He serves as Vice-President of Retriever News and is on its five-person Board of Directors. Dennis became President and Editor-In-Chief of the magazine in 2002, when its name still was Retriever Field Trial News.

Both Gerald's first and second wives, Rita and Rose, came to some of Mack's trials. His daughter, Leslie, is a doctor. Gerald died around two years ago of Lou Gehrig's disease. He was very deeply involved as a big supporter of the Boy Scouts, Dennis notes.

Retired for the past fifteen years, Dennis was in the office and school supply business, specializing in office furniture. He lives with his wife Mary Lou in Belleville, Illinois. Despite health issues, "She's doing just fine," reports Dennis. "We still go to trials together. She goes to about ten, and I go to about twenty a year. She loves the dogs. She's always got one in the house with her."

The couple owns 140 acres of training grounds in Campbell Hill, Illinois. They don't reside there, says Dennis, "because my wife is too into cement high-rises, and shopping centers." "Dennis has an extremely welcoming attitude with regard to his training property. "A lot of professional handlers and amateurs go there. The place is designed for training so there's a lot of water, technical water. Lardys, Rorems. I leave the place wide open and it's open to anyone coming through town." Although he can be a bit selective as to who gets to stay in the house at the training grounds, "I can honestly say I have never told anyone they can't train there."

Dennis is as magnanimous with his property as he is with his time and experience in the field trial world. "There's no sense owning it if you're not going to share it," he says, which, perhaps, best sums up his generosity.

Tenacular Dogs – Joule Charney

Joule resides in Paradise, California. She has been a contributing writer for Retriever News for six years. The Retrievers of the Past... feature series is published four times a year: May, July, September and October. Visit Joule Charney online at www.tenacular.com.