

Retrievers of the Past...

By Joule Charney

FC-AFC WATCHIM SNEAK

“
... a small black
ball of dynamite
decked out with
a big red bow.
”

DO YOU HAVE A SNEAKIN' SUSPICION that you know how this dog got his name? It wasn't because of canine carnage such as food, shoes and spectacles disappearing from their proper places in the house. It had nothing to do with 'creeping.' And, it wasn't because of the sneaky way that he entered Deb Morgan's life ...

Deb's first Lab pup was a gift from her future husband John in 1967 after she attended her first retriever event - with an Afghan hound. "John and some of his friends started the James River Retriever Club. They invited me to watch the dogs work. There were going to be a lot of dogs there and she went everywhere with me," so Deb didn't think twice about bringing her. "Boy, did I get some looks! I decided next time, I'd leave her at home."

The Lab puppy was a way for John to avoid relentless harassment from his hunting buddies. Soon Deb was hooked on daily training with John, and later, with their good friend Bach Doar, a professional trainer.

Deb watched licensed trials and made an attempt to run sanctioned trials; but, things were not going well with Deb's first Lab. "She was a great marker; but, she wouldn't bring me the bird. She would parade with it; show everybody what she had found. It was a little frustrating. I didn't really have anybody knowledgeable enough to help me with it."

The Wish ...

"I decided it was time to find a good retriever." Deb became obsessed with the desire to own a puppy sired by Mi-Cris Sailor (1971 NFC) when she saw him at a trial. "He was just unbelievable! He reminded me



"Sneak" at the 1974 National Amateur in Sacramento, California.

FC-AFC WATCHIM SNEAK

OPEN	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	TOTAL:
Starts	29	27	21	22	20	15	134
First	1	1	3	1	1	1	8
Second	1	0	2	1	1	0	5
Third	1	2	2	1	0	1	7
Fourth	1	2	1	0	2	0	6
Places	4	5	8	3	4	2	26
Jams	3	6	4	5	1	0	19
# Finished	7	11	12	8	5	2	45
% Finished	24%	41%	57%	36%	25%	13%	34%
Open Points	9.5	8.0	23.5	9.0	9.0	6.0	65.0
Cumulative Pts	9.5	17.5	41.0	50.0	59.0	65.0	65.0

AMATEUR	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	TOTAL:
Starts	20	20	20	20	21	17	118
First	0	2	4	2	2	1	11
Second	0	0	3	1	1	0	5
Third	0	2	0	0	1	2	5
Fourth	0	1	1	0	1	0	3
Places	0	5	8	3	5	3	24
Jams	?	4	2	3	7	4	20
# Finished	?	9	10	6	12	7	44
% Finished	?%	45%	50%	30%	57%	41%	37%
Amateur Points	0.0	12.5	29.5	13.0	14.5	7.0	76.5
Cumulative Pts	0.0	12.5	42.0	55.0	69.5	76.5	76.5

ALL-AGE	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	TOTAL:
All Age By Year	9.5	20.5	53.0	22.0	23.5	13.0	141.5
Cumulative Total	9.5	30.0	83.0	105.0	128.5	141.5	141.5

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

OWNER: D. MORGAN
 BIRTHDATE 11/10/69
 71 DERBY POINTS (H)

Average Open points per year: 11
 Average Amateur points per year: 13
 Average All-Age points per year: 24

of a well-bred racehorse, pawing at the ground with desire." But, the odds of ever acquiring a Sailor pup were stacked high against her. "I inquired if he had been bred recently. Joe Riser, his trainer, replied that he had been bred Allo Dere Louise. Ten pups had already been spoken for; so, I waited patiently for the birth of the litter, hoping there would be one for me. The pups were born November 10, 1969. The phone call then came telling me they were sorry, but there were only ten pups."

"I knew Sailor's owners, the Murnanes, did not like to breed their competitive field dogs. He, therefore, probably wouldn't sire any more litters. The holidays were approaching; so, I postponed my search for a pup."

"In what would turn out to be a huge stroke of luck for Deb, "the 10th Pick woman said the puppy was ugly; and, my husband John found out." By this time, recalls Deb, "I had just given up. I knew nobody was going to give up a puppy because of its breeding." Still, she couldn't help but hope her husband might surprise her with a pup as a Christmas present.

That Christmas morning, "All the packages had been opened. Much to my disappointment, there was no Lab puppy amongst them." The couple later went to Bach's house for brunch. The main attraction was "a small black ball of dynamite decked out with a big red bow, much larger than himself, tearing around the room." She naturally assumed

he belonged to Bach.

"I was playing with the puppy and somebody said, 'He's yours!' John gave him to me as a Christmas surprise. He was actually kind of a reject and I was glad he was a reject! I thought he was beautiful!" It was love at first sight for Deb. "It's funny how you know some things. I just looked at that puppy and just knew he was going to be a great dog." However, "When I knew more about dogs," she admits with a laugh, "I could see that was crazy!"

"I decided, 'I am going to learn how to train you and you are going to bring me the bird.' But it wasn't any trouble with him. I gave my Afghan to my mother," she adds.

"When he was a puppy, he'd run behind a chair. And he'd run out the other side," Deb explains in sing-songy fashion. "In the meantime, he had wet behind the chair. He was so sneaky about it! He wouldn't do it in front of you. He'd always sneak behind the chair to do it; so, that's why we named him 'Sneak.' That was as sneaky as he got."

"It was not common at the time to use a catchy name. The names were more proper, like kennel names. I did get some conversation from the older field trial people about the name, can you believe that? The name was a little different, and the ladies commented on it!"

A Dream Come True ...

"I don't want to brag on him, but I will... Sneak just caught on to everything you tried to teach him," Deb remembers. "Early training was easy for him. He caught on so quickly that I almost felt like he had done it before. He quickly displayed exceptional marking ability on land and water, and always did it with style."

"Sneak had a big, huge heart and a lot of style. He took a big leap when he went in and when he went out. He hit the water like gangbusters!"

"He tried to do everything that I tried to get him to do. If I had gotten Sneak when I was more knowledgeable, he would have been phenomenal!"

Sneak was never trained with an e-collar. In those days, to make a correction, handlers would "run and scream," says Deb. "Sneak's only problem was running water. It took some doing to get him to stop."

"I remember the first Derby I entered with Sneak. He was nine months old. A lot of pros came to watch him run the 2nd and 3rd series because they had heard he was such a good marker and a high roller. He received a green ribbon that weekend and won the Derby the following weekend. I had many interested buyers."

"At a trial, the judge asked me if I had considered competing for the Country Life Trophy. I had no idea what it was, and didn't want to let on to that fact. When I returned home, I researched it (imagine without a computer), and found it was a trophy awarded to

the Derby dog with the most points. There was no doubt in my mind that Sneak and I couldn't win it. I told my training buddies about my plan and they tested me relentlessly. They started calling me the National Derby Queen. So, in a year or so, I was the National Derby Queen and Sneak was the 1971 National Derby Champion." Sneak completed 33 out of 43 Derbies in which had been entered. He placed in 22 and ended his Derby career with 71 points."

"Back in the late 60s, you never taught a dog to handle until he was two years old; so, that's what I did. He caught on right away. He was a natural, and it wasn't long before he was running trials."

"He could see orange," Deb gleefully recalls, such as the orange tape used to mark blinds. "He could definitely see orange. There was no question. That devil!"

"Sneak loved the water. In the pond in the wintertime, I'd see him crusin' around. I remember one particular water blind with a long entry." Sizing up the difficulty before running it, a fellow handler called it "Sneak's kind of blind."

"You could give Sneak a line, he would carry that line forever." Deb tells the story of a line that ran through a tree. "Louise Belmont said, 'You do know where the line is? Let's see if you can do it,'" being a smart aleck. "Sneak went right over that tree! And, Louise never said anything to me after that."

Deb insists she does not have any secrets nor special tips behind her success with Sneak. "When we messed up, it was usually me. He was just an exceptional dog. That was just the package I got. I didn't pick him," she adds modestly.

"I'm not the only one who felt that way. The pros would come over to watch him run. I could have crawled in a hole. It was embarrassing; but I got over it. He was really the talk of the town!"

At Home ...

Deb describes Sneak's build as "large and tall. You didn't see that many dogs that tall. They usually were more compact."

"Sneak was not an inside dog. As much as I tried to make him an inside dog, he wanted no part of it. He was not interested in food, petting. He'd pace by the door. He wanted to be outside. Period! He was unusual. He just didn't want you fooling with him."

"Roger Reopelle had raised the litter, in his bathtub. I put Sneak outside with about five inches of snow on the ground." Checking on him, "He was not in his doghouse, he was out there in the snow. He had a thick coat. Plenty of insulation."

RETRIEVER NEWS
FIELD TRIAL
Owned and Sponsored by The National Retriever Club and the National Amateur Retriever Club — Successor to the Publication Founded in 1944 by John Fraser, Jr.
NUMBER 10
JANUARY, 1972
VOLUME VII

1971 NATIONAL DERBY CHAMPION
WATCHIM SNEAK
Owned by DEBARAH BOSCHEN, Richmond, Virginia

periences in the development of my field trial career. "Sneak" has also been run in Derbies by Ed Minoggie, Tommy Sorenson, and Joe Riser. Now that his Derby Career has ended I am delighted to see he is responding to handling. I believe that his future as an Open dog will be just as exciting.
I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of "Sneak" and myself to extend our thanks to our field trial friends, especially Backman Doar, The James River Retriever Club, John Morgan and my devoted bird girl, Anne Mountcastle, for the help and understanding to make this honor possible.
Debarah M. Boschen
Rt. 14, Box 152
Richmond, Virginia 23231

TOP DERBIES
(The following is a listing of the Derby Dogs with 10 or more points in AKC Licensed Stakes)

	1970 Pts.	1971 Pts.	Total Pts.
1. WATCHIM SNEAK, L.M., 11-10-69 (1971 NPC Mi-Cris Sailor ex Allo Dere Louise) Debarah Boschen, Richmond, VA	5	66	71
2. HAPPY PLAYBOY'S FEARL, L.F., 7-20-69 (Dual Ch. Happy Playboy ex Duxbak Betty) Clint Swingle, New Tripoli, PA	26	41	67
3. SILL'S BLACK BANDIE, L.M., 12-23-69 (FC Anzac of Zenith ex Sill's Little Smokey Lew Bonnee) Lewis Sills, Spokane, WA	—	66	66
4. RIVER ROAD BIPPY, L.M., 5-25-69 (CNFC Mi-Cris Drambuie ex Chere Te Negresse) Dr. Armand Jacques, New Orleans, LA	21	23	44
5. ROUND VALLEY'S LUCKY HIGGER, L.M., 1-1-69 (Spring Farm's Lucky ex Blitz of Round Valley) Michael Flannery, Hudson, OH	30	10	40
6. TIGER'S LUCKY BUCK, L.M., 3-27-69 (NAFC-FC Guy's Bitterroot Lucky ex Jill's Tiger Lt.) William Laughlin, Southampton, NY	26	5	31
7. WASHINGTON'S TIZZY LIZZY, L.F., 3-1-69 (NAFC-FC Guy's Bitterroot Lucky ex AFC Jilly Girl) A. Starke Taylor III, Dallas, TX	12	18	30
8. CORBY'S RAMBLIN RILEY, L.M., 5-17-69 (FC-AFC-CNFC River Oaks Corby ex Moody's Dell) Michael Flannery, Hudson, OH	—	29	29
9. THUNDER CHIEF OF ROUND VALLEY, L.M., 8-31-69 (NPC-NAFC Super Chief ex Blitz of Round Valley) F. N. Van Bergen, Moorhead, MN	—	29	29

WATCHIM SNEAK, L.M., with owner Debarah Boschen
"SNEAK"
It was Christmas morning 1969, and all the packages had been opened. Much to my disappointment there was no Lak puppy amongst them. Later we went to a friend's house for brunch and to my surprise there was "Sneak," a small black ball of dynamite decked out with a big red bow, much larger than himself. That was the beginning of a great new experience for the both of us.
From the very beginning he was an outstanding marker on land and water and was often admired for his ability. Each day of training, for the months to follow, offered a challenge for "Sneak" and myself. With every challenge came a new situation which he attacked with much enthusiasm. "Sneak" was entered in his first licensed trial at the age of ten months. He received a CM which put the both of us on top of the world and gave me the encouragement to continue even further. He ran a total of forty-three Derbies, completing thirty-three and placing by myself alone. We have three Derbies, by no means accomplished by myself alone, to work with Vance Morris, to Long Island with Bud Hedges and Ray Staudinger, and to Georgia with Cotton Pershall. Needless to say these were rewarding ex-

A SCHEDULE CARD OF RETRIEVER TRIAL DATES FOR 1972 IS INCLUDED WITH THIS ISSUE

"I once tried peeling a deviled egg and giving it to Sneak whole, hoping he'd accept it as a treat. Afterward, I saw him running around in the yard. After I called him, he heeled up to me and he had the egg between his teeth, then spit it out. Lord! That was so silly!"

"He was all business. He just wanted to retrieve. Even when he was old and retired." And, even after it was discovered that he had bone cancer. "There was no Chemo back then. They removed half his bottom jaw. That didn't slow him down at all. He could hold birds without any problem. All he wanted to do was retrieve a bird. And that's just what I let him do. He had such a big heart. He never quit working!"

"It was an honor to be part of the team with Sneak."

During his career, Sneak accumulated 141.5 points, was a Double Header winner, and qualified for ten Nationals. Before the Double Header win, "I can't tell you how many times I got 1st in the Open and 2nd in the Amateur or the other way around," Deb laments. "Mike Paterno used to rib me, saying, 'You're never going to be a member of our club.' Sneak came close to winning the National in Jackson, Wyoming," Deb adds. "He was a Finalist early on in his career. It was a great feeling!"

Sneak was inducted into the Retriever Hall of Fame in 2008.

Owner Deb Morgan and Influential People ...

Deb was inducted into the Retriever Field Trial Hall of Fame 2005. John preceded her there in 1996. Her early field trial records are under the name Debarah Boschen. She initially knew Dr. John Morgan as the family veterinarian. She was to become his wife, bookkeeper and office manager. Richmond, VA was Deb's home during Sneak's career. She and John now reside in Topping, Virginia, and have a second home in Goochland County.

All of Sneak's training was done by Deb. "John threw birds for me. He was a good birdboy!"

Deb did not run any other dogs at the time she ran Sneak. She says she always ran only one dog at any given time. "I waited until the dog couldn't run any more before I got a puppy." In addition to Sneak, Deb also trained and handled AFC Carmmoney's Samantha, FC-AFC Backacres Tuck N' Run, and FC-AFC Tuck N' Runs Watchout Willie.

"A lot of people helped me out." One of her closest retriever friends was the late John



"Sneak" and Deb at the 1974 National Open at Weldon Spring, Missouri.

McAssey. "We talked at least once a week. He was very knowledgeable and told the most wonderful stories."

Multiple professional trainers were of assistance to Deb. Ed Minoggie, Tom Sorenson and Joe Riser each ran Sneak a couple of times in Derbies. She traveled to Vance Morris of Dover, Delaware who "answered my questions and he helped me out an awful lot." Deb stayed on Long Island a couple of weeks with Bud Hedges. "Ray Staudinger lived near Bud and we all trained together. They'd give me pointers. I needed all the help I could get." She also went to Georgia with Cotton Pershall. Bach Doar lived nearby.

"Going to Bill Laughlin's on Long Island was one of my favorite things." She remembers looking forward to the special clam chowder and hot dog chow. "There were two mansions, one for field trials and one on the

ocean. He owned a steel company. He had a few bucks. The Labrador Retriever Club was on his property and he was an officer. Ray Staudinger was his Pro."

As to why there were relatively few women in field trials at the time, "Women didn't hunt as much (as men). Men wanted something to pick up their (hunting) game. When we went to the Nationals, they'd take a separate picture of the women handlers like it was some kind of novelty or something. I didn't think much about it at the time. I think it's funny now."

Deb and McAssey spearheaded fundraisers to benefit the Bird Dog Foundation. The pair, along with Charlie Hays, Dottie Metcalf and Pert Wunderlich, were instrumental in the effort to preserve the history of the retriever sport by collecting information and museum-worthy memorabilia, and encouraging financial generosity.

Retrievers of the Past

Deb has served continuously on the Bird Dog Foundation's Board of Directors since 1993, and in the prestigious role of Secretary for several of those years. She was an officer and past president of the National Amateur Retriever Club and the Women's Field Trial Club. For more than two decades, she served as the official hostess of the Labrador Retriever Club, along with her good friend, Nancy Sills. She served twenty years in the same capacity with the James River Retriever Club, and aided John in his chairmanship of James River and the LRC. Deb judged many weekend field trials, and the 1986 National Amateur in Bend, Oregon. She chaired or served on the Marshall and Hostess Committees at a number of Nationals.

Although she has been out of the sport for about twenty years, Deb still is on the Bird Dog Foundation's Board and 'keeps up' with her close friends Nancy and Nelson Sills.

Some readers may not be aware of the prominence of most of the folks mentioned by Deb. Collectively, they represent a large chunk of the Who's Who of Retriever Royalty. In addition to her husband Dr. John Morgan, Bach Doar, Charlie Hayes, John McAssey, Ed Mioggie, Cotton Pershall, Roger Reopelle, Nelson Sills, Tom Soren-

son, and Ray Staudinger all have been inducted into the Field Trial Hall of Fame. Louise Belmont was married to Auggie Belmont, another Hall of Famer.

"The old-timers mostly are all gone now. That's a problem in voting with the Hall of Fame," she points out. "People don't know who the old-timers are any more."

Deb clearly regards all the people who helped her during her field trial career as special, regardless of their stature. She even credited "my devoted bird girl" in the Winner's article celebrating Sneak as 1971 National Derby Champion, thanking Anne Mountcastle by name in the January 1972 cover feature of Retriever Field Trial News.

And, regardless of the passage of time, Deb has held onto to its treasures steadfastly. "Fond field trial memories and dear old friends will remain in my heart, forever." ■

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 online at www.tenacular.com