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Mr. Robert Kerans  
P.O. Box 11  
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Dear Bob--

(I assume that first names, without "handles" are the practice among all R.S.F.J.C. members). Let me touch on two, or three, or four matters in this one letter. I've been meaning to get it off for some time, but that (time) is the reason I haven't before this. Finding myself with "preaching preparation time" reduced because one of our young men who's studying for the ministry will be making his maiden flight tomorrow, I'm able to get at this.

First, you'll find enclosed a ten dollar bill for my current membership. I'm sorry to be a foot-dragger on this. Perhaps this is a good time to mention the strong possibility that this may be my last year of membership. A "good time" because if/when it happens I don't want a new Whip editor to think it may have been because of some shortcoming of his! Nor am I disenchanted with the club. I've belonged quite a few years, responding to what probably was one of the first Club ads, back around '52, '53. Because of time and money I've never been able to attend one of the club trials. I've seen the ups & downs in that time, and, out of my best lack of broad experience with the red dogs, am firm in my conviction that the Club wins all the laurels for comeback of the Irish as a hunting dog.

My reason, if this happens, will be money. It's just getting increasingly more difficult to scrape up the fee, as it rises. And I'm not griping about that! I know costs rise for the Whip. And it has given me value received many times over. In fact, most of the time it has helped keep my interest honed nicely. In addition, the miniscule cross-breeding program I've been engaged in over those years has been made possible only by the interest, and or generosity of men like Archer Church, Rusty Baynard, Ned LeGrande, etc., etc. (I have been blessed with a first dog that was the kind that "makes you stand up in the saddle", to quote Horace Lytle. She never ran under judgement, only twice, "out of judgement" just so I could see how she stacked up against other Irish in the N.E.I.S. club trials. I wasn't at all disappointed, by the way! The second time Ned LeGrande was at the trial, judged by Pilon and Ambesi (sp.?), and Ned asked them how she did. I overheard only the last part of their response "...all the others were just rattling around out there." Which underscores the second point I want to touch on: don't rule out the crossbreeds as contributing to the comeback of the Irish.) As I was trying to say, I owe a lot to the Club & to the Whip- but there come times when something has to give! Well, it's not this year, anyway!

The enclosed two photocopies represent the third matter. I believe the information about "some red setter dogs" pins them down in the earliest historical reference to bird dogs on this continent. In the early years of my Irish interest I read extensively on the matter, including Watson's book on dogs (which the vet who loaned it to me said was unknown by most younger dog people). I have never ~~mentioned~~ read, so far as I can recall, anything about bird dogs on this continent as early as this. I have tried to reach Robert David Lion Gardiner to ask if any more details are available. I believe it would be of historical interest. My letters have been returned stamped "addressee unknown". I just

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don't have resources around here to obtain a deliverable address. But I would like to see the Club, in some way, get the credit for establishing this in the "annals of dogdom". It will have nothing to do with the improvement of the breed, but when somebody says, "The best bird dog I ever saw was an Irish Setter", then it would be kind of nice to remark that they were the earliest on these shores. My thought is that the Whip might enlist the help of a member, perhaps in the N.Y. area, to follow this up.

(Perhaps one reason I have an interest in this is that my cross-bred original of my "line" was whelped on the shores of Buzzards Bay (just an extension of Long Island Sound, really), and I've ~~used~~ <sup>used</sup> Indian names for my dogs.)

In various assorted places I have most of the issues of the Whip since the early fifties. ~~Vol~~ 1958 Vol 4 "Denlinger Publication" mention, however, was news to me! I have always felt that even a one page jumble was a major accomplishment for anybody who owned a bird dog(s) unless retired and financially independent! I have always felt the rest of us owed a lot to those who took on the task of getting out a Whip. I've expressed this to most "past editors", perhaps you can work one line in in a Whip edition to this effect for the Crums. They have shown imagination as well as devotion. I'm confident you will do a good job-- and earn every bit of your salary!

I was going to comment on Bob Tallon's item on Cross-breds, but have decided not to for two reasons: One is that I haven't seen many of the "A.K.C. dogs" of recent years (and they may have improved), the other is that I'm afraid I would "come on too strong". I remarked earlier that I had run the original of my dogs "out of judgement" in the New England trials. The only reason I did so was because A.K.C. rules wouldn't let her run under judgement. Perhaps that has changed, I hope so. I'm first of all a hunter, but one who realizes that trials are of primary importance in maintaining or improving a breed. My remark when my little bitch couldn't run under judgement-- made to either Bob or Jim Finn, was, "What are they afraid of, that a bird dog would clean up?" I found at the time (when AKC standards still included a measurement "from hock to heel") that few of the show fancy were even aware that the breed originally was white & red, not red & white. I am highly critical, I know, of the show fancy, but even putting prejudices aside, what point would be really served by banning the cross-breds from club trials? Let Bob Tallon find out what is necessary to establish the records for the Stud Book to keep track of one's breeding (it is painfully torturous) and he may be less inclined to not let them in the game field with the purebreds! My present dog has something like 30-45 "Ch." in her pedigree, and is larger than a good field dog should be. But I don't think the two are mutually exclusive. Make them that way and the Irish again will go in a ridiculous direction-- as have the poodles. AKC still classifies them as "Sporting Dogs", I believe. I would like to see a miniature, or sub-miniature, poodle retrieve a good sized duck, let alone a goose! It's too bad to have this happen to the breed most independent dog people credit with being the most intelligent breed going. Sure, Irish Setters should be Irish. But they also should be setters, bird dogs. I think we have a lot to learn from the Golden Retriever people. I had some friends in Connecticut whose Golden (their first) made it all the way to the Garden, and the cover of Life, I believe. I know from them the Golden fancy was devoted to keeping their dogs both field and show.

Well! When I get started, I just can't stop. Good luck on your new duties--- and a welcome to what is woodcock country as well as Coho country any time you might be up in this country.

Sincerely,

Murray Sleep