

Canada, Eh?

Old time terrier men offer a compelling historical viewpoint on where we've been and where we are going. But, they are becoming fewer and farther between; Fred Fraser is one of Canada's last.

Now retired from both exhibiting and judging, Fred draws on 70 years of personal experience as a breeder, exhibitor and judge. I can't begin to tell you the stories Fred has recounted to me about dog people he has known. I wish I had recorded every conversation, but I didn't. The following is a glimpse into the life and experiences of one of my mentors, Fred Fraser.

I don't remember exactly when I met Fred but it would have been in the mid to late 1970s. He's a tall, graceful man with exquisite manners, wavy

hair and a pencil-thin moustache. His manner with dogs is gentle, but firm, and nothing appears to ruffle him. Besotted when talking about his family (they are all perfect, you know), I'd describe him as patient, principled, with a core of

steel, and a soothing voice that has a hint of both iron and irony. Always more than willing to talk to those eager to listen and learn, I always feel like I am in the presence of my father when we speak.

Fred was born in Ottawa in 1922, the son of Harry (Scotty) Fraser. As you will see through this interview, it is apparent that Fred's father had a profound influence on him. Harry and his six siblings immigrated to Canada from Scotland in 1902 to join Fred's grandfather, who had arrived in 1898. The latter bred a variety of breeds in the old

country, but at the end of his life bred Scotties and always had an Airedale bitch (Bess 1, Bess 2, Bess 3 etc.) as a sleeping companion cum guard dog. One of Bess' final acts for her master was to guard his body when he died in his sleep; Harry had to be called over to coax the bitch out so that funeral arrangements could proceed. Harry bred Airedales (the source of the countless Bess'), Wire Fox Terriers and the odd Scottie and Westie and was a handler and close friend of Ted Ward, the father of George Ward.

One of Fred's earliest memories (he started going to dog shows at age five) is winning BIS at age seven with a Wire of Ted's breeding that his mother had purchased for \$7. He reminisced, "Typically, Ted would board the train with 20 dogs, sleeping with them in the baggage car, and would arrive in Ottawa

was based out of Winnipeg. But he lost an eye in an accident and so went back to handling. The very last show he judged was a Kerry Blue Specialty. Since it was under the auspices of the Canadian Kennel Club my father was granted special permission to judge that show. In those days you could be both an handler and judge at specialty shows."

Fred joined the Special Services of the Canadian Army in 1939 at age 17 to fight in World War II. He served until 1945, fighting in France and

Elliot died poor, but was a very generous man. After anyone come to our kennel and bought one of his show dogs, he'd pull the money out of his pocket and give my father around used to come to my father's kennel, and later my own, where my wife would serve tea and sandwiches. It was what we did between shows. We'd put our dogs up on the table, trim them and socialize. My father was an all-breed judge with the Dominion Kennel Club, which

where my father would pick him up in a truck and they'd drive on to the show venue. George and I would attend the shows too, helping with the care of the 20 or 30 dogs. At the end of the day, our fathers would make their way to the pub, later returning with a hamburger and soft drink for our dinners."

Fred was his father's assistant until 1939. "My job was to train dogs to walk on the lead, clean up after them and help with trimming. My father always gave him the nasty ones! We kept upwards of 60 dogs, many of which belonged to clients including Humphrey Elliot, owner of Haymarket

Faultless, the first Canadian dog to win BIS at The Garden. Mr. Elliot owned the Dominion Hotel in Ottawa. He had oil paintings of each of his show dogs in his office in the hotel and had converted the hotel rooftop into a kennel. From there, potential show dogs were selected and sent to my father for training and conditioning. Mr.

English Canadian American Champion Gillisie Scotch Lad, pictured with owner Fred Fraser and judge Peter Smith.



the invasion of Belgium, Holland, Germany and Sicily. In 1939, he was the light heavy-weight champion boxer of the Canadian army and a Golden Glove winner. He also met his Brighton-born, wife-to-be in England during his tour of duty. She was 16 years old.

"This month we'll be celebrating our 55th wedding anniversary. One of my wife's first questions on arriving in Canada was: "Is that all you people do is talk about dogs?" Fred has four daughters, none of whom show dogs, but who, along with his sister, provide homes to retired show and/or breeding animals.

After the war, Fred built a kennel and took over his father's handling business, all the while working with the federal government in Revenue Canada. His principal breeds (to this day) are Scotties and Westies but he also bred Wires, Lakelands and Sealyhams. Fred believes he was the first to bring Lakelands to Canada. Clients included a Dr. MacIntosh (who kept up to 30 poodles with Fred and whose solution to every birthday gift question for his wife was "buy her another poodle"), Reg Sparkes (former CKC president and Bulldog breeder), and Mrs. Adams (who, according to Fred, imported the finest Skyes from France).

"Dog shows were smaller than they are today. We couldn't afford to take photos. But at the very biggest shows, like the old Sportsmen Show, we saw who would be our competition for the rest of the year. I met Tom Quilley at one of those shows before the war, he was a good dog man. He either liked you or he didn't. You were well advised to stay away from him if he didn't like you because he didn't make any bones about it. If the show was in Toronto, I'd stay with John Treleaven. Bumpy Lewis did a great job managing the Sportsman's Show.

"I ran for the CKC director position in 1949 but came in second. Bill Monahan won and John Devlin was third. Then Bill died so I was offered the job but didn't have time so they gave it to John and that was his start with a long history with the CKC board. But I've remained active in the Canadian Kennel Club and sat on complaints committees and did the oral interviews with aspiring judges like Jim Reynolds.

"I also was a founding member of Scottish Terrier Club of Canada, which was a different club from the Canadian Scottish Terrier

American and Canadian Champion Rebel Edition was a Best in Show winner owned by Fred Fraser (not pictured).



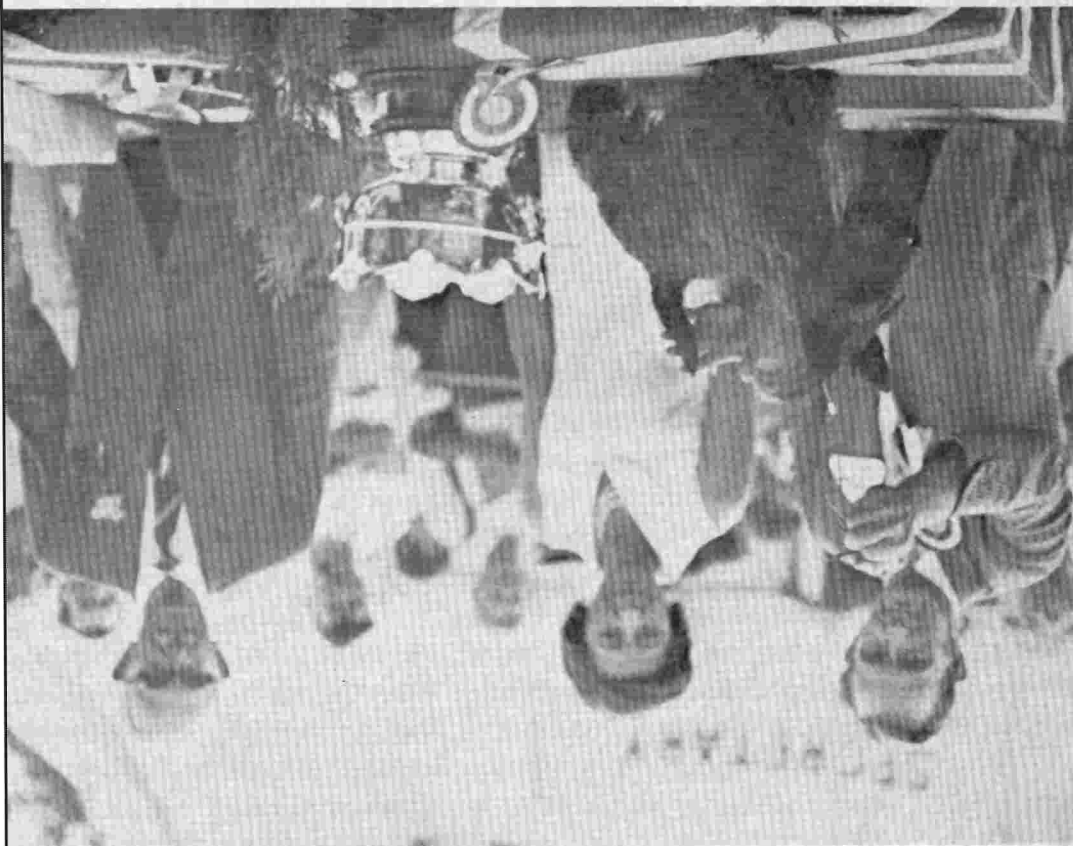
Club. Although we went for about 14 years, we ran into financial problems. So we decided to try an all-terrier show and it did better. Edna and Tommy Joel judged the first show. Tommy was a great friend of mine and a good terrier man and to this day I'm friends with Edna. That show was the genesis of the Rideau Terrier Club Show, in which I have been actively involved for many years."

Fred retired from handling in 1961 and was granted Groups 4, 5 and 6. In 1974 he received approval for the remaining groups. His judging career spanned 33 years with assignments in 16 different countries.

Fred bought his first kennel in 1949 and, when the government

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Menace was probably my best stud dog in recent years. He sired a bitch that I think was about the best I've seen in recent times, certainly in the same league as Fanfare, Fashion Hint and Close Encounter because of her beautiful balance."

Fred has imported to Canada some top terriers. I asked him which ones he thought were the best. "That would be the Scotties Gosmore Gillsie Scotch Lad who was BIS at Windsor over 12,000 dogs and Glendoune Gauntlet who was BIS at Manchester over 12,000 dogs and given to me by Mr. Walley. Only a handful of British Scottie BIS winners ever made their way to North America and I am proud to have owned two of them. The other great one I owned was the Westie bitch Stoney Gap Sugar Candy of Mahnaf, BOB at Crufts and top dog all breeds in Canada in 1964."

"I'd say my best homebred was Ben Braggie What a Lad and Ben Braggie Dauntless Lad, both Best in Show winners. My first Scottie was a gift from a Mrs. Batt of Haldon Kennels; she had a lot of English stock. In turn, I gave both John Treleaven and John Devlin their first Scotties."

Fred owner-handled his dogs in Canada; in the U.S. they

went to his old friend George Ward. I'm often asked who people should send their terriers out with and boy it's hard to find someone who knows about proper conditioning. While there are some good ones in the U.S. like Ron Schaeffer, Bergit Coady-Kabel, George Ward, Peter Green and Ric Chashoudian - in the days when he was handling, that the same depth of knowledge of terrier conditioning doesn't exist in Canada."

I asked which were the best terriers he's ever had his hands on. Without a second's hesitation, he answered "The Kerry Melbees Chances Are that I gave Winners Dog to at Santa Barbara to a Best in Specialty Show, and the two Scotties Bardene Bingo and Walsing Winning Trick. In fact, the reason I wanted to judge was for the opportunity to touch the very best terriers on the earth."

Fred says he loves to judge the terriers, what sets them apart are the differences in movement and temperament, and unlike a great many other breeds, you must actually touch them to know what you are looking at.

"For example, there's a great variety in coat types, Sealyham, Skye, Kerry, Bedlington, you need to know

these differences in detail to do justice to their judging. And there's so much more detail in the conditioning, for most breeds it takes three months to get them into condition - longer if they have had puppies - and then daily work to keep them there. Muscular conditioning was less of an issue with these breeds than some of the larger working/sporting/hound breeds I judged which were too often soft and flabby. My brother and I would run his GSD along country roads behind a truck. The terriers are easier to bring into good muscle tone because they self-exercise in the kennel runs. Although my father just sat in a chair and threw a ball, for hours and hours on end, which the dogs would bring back again and again, only to chase again and again." (I'm kinda thinking these had to be fox terriers!)

Fred says that one of the reasons he no longer exhibits is because good dogs get missed so regularly. "The judging of terriers is scandalous, and is at the lowest point I think I have ever seen. People get discouraged and stop showing. Who wants to show their good dogs to these people? I used to say that a good dog will be found and win more often than not. I no longer believe that. And I don't see

anything changing for the better. It's a dying sport. The reason is that we have lost our top terrier judges and things will never come back."

Why, I asked. Isn't the CKC

requiring that judges attend symposiums and report on their extra-curricular training efforts? Fred blames "the system."

"Judging is what you do after you have carved out a reputation as having bred and exhibited outstanding dogs. It's what you do at the apex of your exhibiting career. Instead, we have people who want to judge that no one has ever heard of. They have achieved nothing in dogs. But they win a ribbon or two and decide they are qualified to judge. What's even more astonishing is that apparently they are!

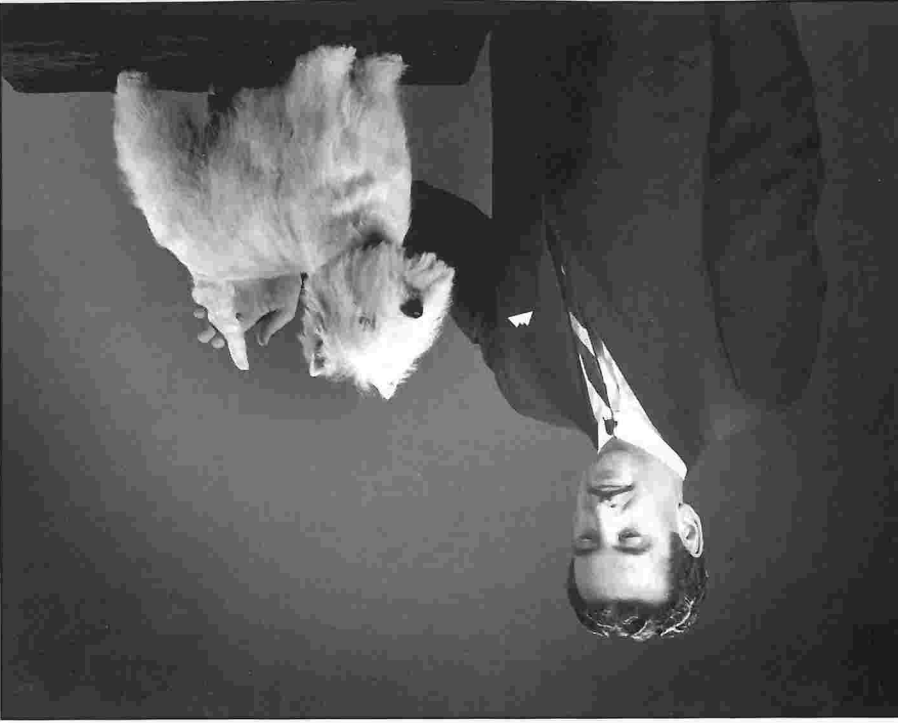
"Recently, I appraised a litter of Westies, none, including the mother, were very good. The owner confessed that the only way she'd been able to finish the dam was to hire a handler. This is an admission that you can slide poor dogs past less-than-knowledgable judges if you fancy them up and put them with a name. They are no better than they were several months ago, maybe just better behaved and better trimmed, but cer-

tainly no better from a breeding perspective. Which was the news I had to break to this person about the quality of these long-backed untypical puppies. But some of them will likely finish anyway.

"I used to look forward to showing to people like Walter Reeves, Percy Roberts, Alva Rosenberg, Bob Waters and Abie Schwartz. Then knew dogs. Those kind of judges are very few and far between today. That's not to say that they don't exist. They are just spread too thinly. There are too many shows. It used to be that EVERYONE had to attend the big shows because

there wasn't anything else to go to. Top dogs had to meet and battle it out in places like New York and Chicago. Today, with the multitude of shows, and this applies to both Canada and the U.S., handlers collaborate and find out who is showing where, so that they don't run into one another where their chances are less than favourable. As George says, he's paid to win with his clients' dogs, so he needs to seek out the most favourable conditions. And there's lots of choice. Those same dogs wouldn't have anywhere near the same win-loss record if they had to meet up regularly."

English Canadian Champion Stoney Gap Sugar Candy of Mabnraf, pictured with owner Fred Fraser. (21 BIS) CC winner at Crufts 1964. Top dog all breed in Canada 1964.



Dogs in Canada cover, November 1973, honoring the late Thomas Joel (judge). Fred Fraser is shown with CH. Lymehill's Special Edition (Peter).



THIS MONTH'S COVER DOG



This cover was going to be quite different. So many judges have given this dapper little showman Best in Show in his brief career in Canada (his first show here was the Canadian National Sportsmen's Show, March, 1972) but owner Fred W. Fraser felt it was only fitting to pay tribute at this time to a man who really understood and appreciated fine terriers—the late Thomas Joel. Ch. Lymehill's Special Edition (Peter) is pictured with owner-handler Fraser, receiving the Best in Show award at the Kitchener-Waterloo show. Peter to date has 15 BIS awards and 33 Group 1sts to his credit. Although he has been shown only occasionally in

1973, due to his owner's pressure of business, he has nevertheless had his share of major wins.

Last year he was just 55 points away from being Top Dog in Canada, but was the Top Terrier in all of Canada. Among other triumphs, he was BIS dog at the Show of Shows in Ottawa, 1972.

Prior to coming to Canada, Peter had won a BIS, two CC's and two reserve CC's at Westie specialties in England. His sire is Ch. Lymehill's Birkfell Solstice ex Wychworth Wedding Bouquet.

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We talked about the sort of judge training that is useful. Fred feels that training in proper procedure, decorum and attire is useful, citing a few examples of improper procedure involving jewelry, or casual appearance that don't send the correct signal to exhibitors. "Image is important, you have to look the part," he said. "However, developing an eye for good dogs isn't book or seminar learned. It's learned by going out and exhibiting at show after show after show, important shows with the very best dogs present, and staying from beginning to end. My father said that the measure of a judge's knowledge can be determined by what they themselves exhibited. Too many people who are judging today owned dogs that have achieved zero recognition on the national stage.

1993, I asked Fred. He said that most people don't realize how hard judging is. "The difficulty isn't in the ring. It's in the traveling and accommodation. I used to judge 50 shows a year in my heyday, but eventually I eliminated December and January shows because of the uncertainty due to the weather of getting to them from Canada. And later, July and August shows because it's too hot for man or beast and for me. The kicker came when I judged several shows from one end of the country to the other over the course less than two weeks, when I got to B.C. my feet were so swollen I couldn't get my shoes on."

Bearing in mind it's been a few years since you last judged, what did you see as the difference between Canadian and American shows, I asked. "Canadian shows are more relaxed. Also, the continual mental changes make a big difference, in Canada you judge many, many breeds in small numbers which require much mental alacrity as you shift in breed nuances. In the U.S., you might judge three breeds in one day, so you can keep the most important factors in the back of your mind as you run through the detail judging each and every dog, there's fewer mind shifts to be made in a day. But another big difference is the role of the AKC rep. In Canada, a judge's decision is final, more or less. In the U.S., while judges may believe their decision is final, the rep has considerable final say, where individuals are able to challenge a judge's decision on many levels. I also think that there's an undercurrent of assignment and/or show win reciprocity that goes on enabling judges to keep busy. I think that's wrong."

Fred has recently served as Honorary Chairman and Honorary President of the Canadian Kennel Club. I asked him what he thought the CKC was doing right and what it needed to change. "The proposed changes to the championship system, which the newest board rescinded, were not improvements, cheap champions would still be made. I'd like to eliminate awarding of championships to dogs under one year of age. Many dogs I've personally owned had good wins as youngsters but didn't amount to much of anything as adults. The Junior Warrants offered in England are a good compromise, noting quality at a young age, but stopping short of awarding championships."

Sparting is an issue that continues to simmer in Canada.

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Their dogs were, at best, mediocre. And they themselves never traveled anywhere to learn differently. It's a travesty."

I asked that, bearing in mind this was a terrier magazine, who he saw as notable terrier visionaries, past and present. From England, he felt the Reanda, Walsing, Bardene, Viewpark and Glendoune kennels, all Scotties, stood out foremost in his mind. From Canada he named: Mrs. Adams (Skyles), Eileen McKechran (Kerries), Ted Ward (Wires, Airedales and Kerries), Betty Hyslop and George Davies (Cairns).

I asked about one of my favourite topics, top winners that no knowledgeable breeder would ever use. Fred puts the issue squarely back to the judges. "Take a look at Canada's top dogs over the past 20 years, you won't find many that made it into the stud books, the Westie Jeramio was one significant exception among the terriers. My father said not to breed to winners but instead to look to the stud books and see who was producing quality. You don't breed to the winner, you breed to his father. I believe strongly in looking at the pedigree."

Why did you stop judging in

Is this an age-old question, or relatively new phenomena? "The latter," says Fred. What has changed to cause this shift in thinking? "Ric answered this well in a publication a number of years ago. People raising this issue fail to understand terrier temperament, there is a huge difference between terrier temperament and viciousness. People are relating to the latter, without an understanding of the former.

"For example, I imported from the U.S. a beautiful Scottie named Rebel Edition. He had done some specialty show winning with Jake Trehune, but didn't have a Scottie's heart, he went around the ring wagging his tail, but with his ears pinned to the back of his head. Many of these people that don't know any better would say he had a good temperament. A nice pet temperament maybe, but he did not have the correct temperament for a Scottish Terrier. In another instance, at great effort I imported a well-bred Wire from England. He was very sweet. One day, while on the trimming table, a mouse ran into the room. My father was sitting in a chair reading the newspaper and said, "Put him down on the floor." That dog stood in the middle of the room, watched the mouse run all around it,

and then jumped into my father's lap. "He's got to go." was all that my father said. I will never forget that very short sentence or the matter-of-fact way it was delivered. You need to have terriers look at each other. There's no other way of determining whether they have the confidence and courage to go after their game.

"My grandfather used to take half a dozen Scotties to the local dump every afternoon and let them kill the rats. My father used to catch rats in a bucket and toss them in with eight and ten week old puppies, those that didn't attempt to dispatch them were relegated to pet homes. We can't test this instinct any longer, so we do the next best thing, we assess their gameness. No one wants a vicious dog, but we don't want happy robots either. Many of the people arguing against sparring do so because they think "up, tough, macho" dogs make poor pets. That's simply not true. Crazy dogs that fly at everything on four legs make poor pets. The macho dog with a solid temperament seldom does because he is so confident and solid in his dominion. Dennis was that kind of dog. There was never a thing he was afraid of, he never dropped his tail, he never had to be hand stacked when he

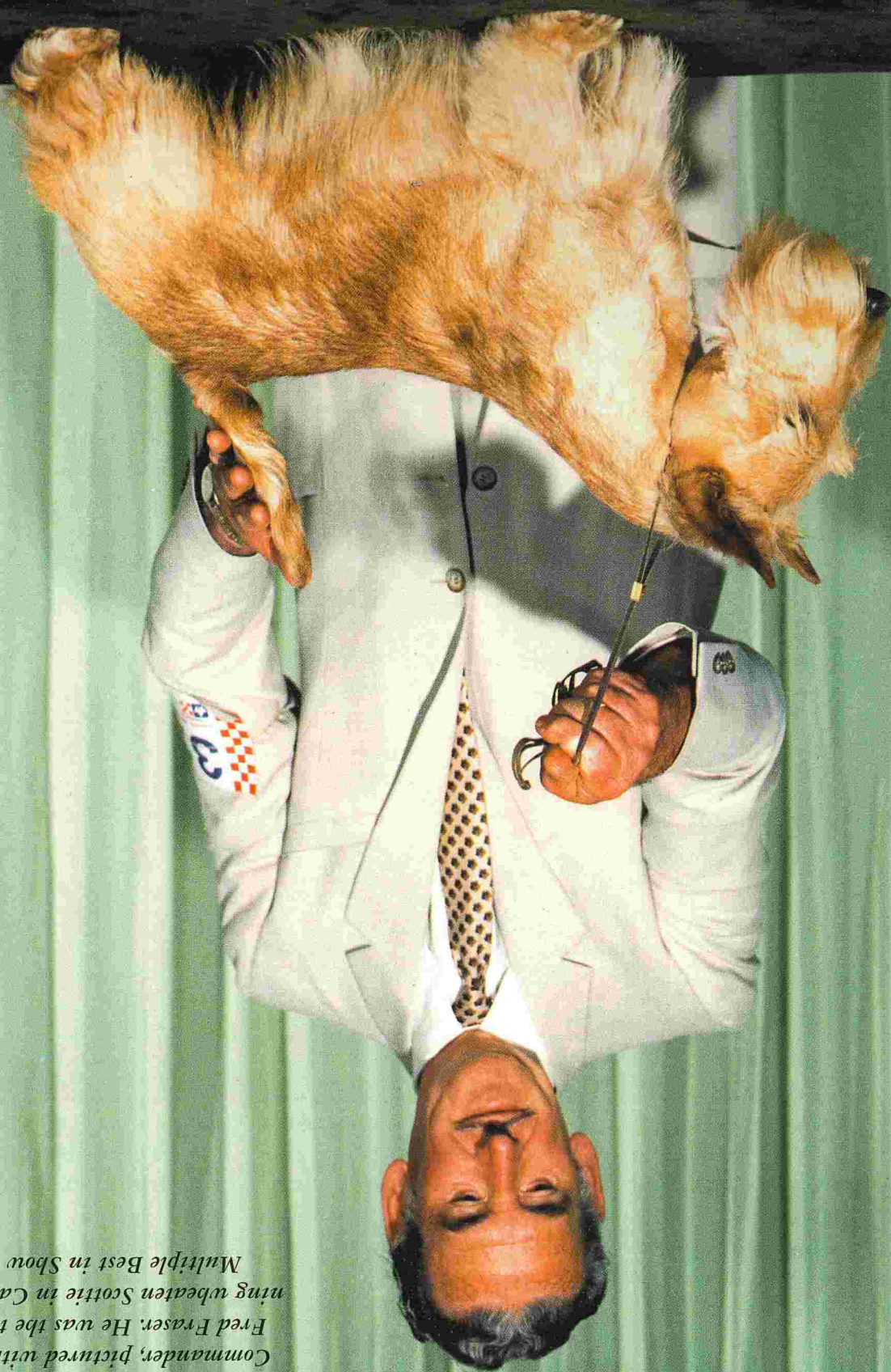
was shown, and he never met a bitch he wouldn't breed."

So, if you were God, how would you improve dog shows, I asked? "I'd make it more difficult to become a judge. People can know standards inside out and recite them to the last comma but their ability to apply them is hopeless. I've noticed that lots of people want to write about judging but the only one I was ever able to see a correlation between the written words and actual application was Max Riddle.

Secondly, I'd force people to stay at dog shows. The only way you can learn about dogs is by looking at them to the bitter end. I don't know how many people will come to me and complain about how they only got 2nd. I'll ask, what was Winners or BOB and they don't know. So I'll say, I guess you can't tell me how the group or BIS went and they'll say no, they can't. You simply can't learn about dogs if you aren't there to look at them, and in the toughest of competition.

"One of the things about no longer judging I miss the most is the time I spent with good dog people. In fact, I often used to ask whom I'd be with on a panel. We had some great times and did post-mortems when the show was

*American and Canadian
 Champion Kenjo Touch O'Gold
 Commander, pictured with owner
 Fred Fraser. He was the top win-
 ning wheaten Scotie in Canada, a
 Multiple Best in Show winner.*



over, talking with real dog men was a good learning experience. I learned something from every show I judged. I also enjoyed finding good dogs. My father used to say that the kennel club should keep track of who found good dogs before they had a big reputation. Those were the people with an eye. Far too many people rely on the reputation of the dog, putting it up long after it has ceased to deserve accolades, or on the reputation of the handler."

So where are we at with the CKC these days, I asked? "Well, Dick Meen is a good dog man and a good representative for Canada, relative to some of his predecessors. But there's lots I don't agree with. I think some on the board have exhibited very inappropriate behaviour and that the board has not dealt with this as firmly as they ought to have. They should lead by example and set the principled behaviour to which all others aspire.

"I disagree with the new rules that limit communication between judges and exhibitors. They are there to protect stupid people. I've heard judges say things they never should because they have no idea what they are talking about. But there's a

teaching aspect that knowledgeable judges can offer and I always enjoyed doing that when I could. A certain propriety and dignity is required of judges but I dislike the premise that all are crooked and therefore conversation must be eliminated. Sometimes those discussions really do add value to the person's entry fee."

Is there anything you want to say in conclusion, I asked.

"Dogs have been my life, just ask my wife."

Marg Moran McQuinn is a senior communications executive with the Saskatchewan government, Marg got her first Scottie in 1973 and is approved to judge a number of terrier breeds. She used the kennel name Hopscotch (Perm) Reg'd. At shows she can often be seen seated at the end of the diagonal mat, peering over her glasses

while doing counted cross-stitch. In her spare time, she jogs, lifts weights, scuba dives, enjoys gourmet cooking, travelling, wine-making and gardening. Her pride and joy is the brand-new home in the country, architecturally designed to be just perfect for breeding and showing a small number of dogs that are part of the family. Anyone with Canadian terrier story ideas can contact her at: hopscotch@accesscomm.ca telephone 306-352-6045

Marg Moran McQuinn, pictured with three of her Hopscotch Scotties. By the way, the center one is Hopscotch Friends In Low Places.

