

Lake Country Retriever Club

Volume 5 Issue 5

May 2000

Hunt Tests - The Judges' Perspective

Five LCRC members who have served as judges in either or both AKC and NAHRA hunt test formats were interviewed to give handlers a view from the judges' perspective. Members interviewed included Donn Mattsson, Steve Czech, Matt Cashman, Karen Cashman and Dave Mealman. All of the persons interviewed were either founding members of LCRC or very early members. The discussions with the judges is presented in interview format.

Why did you decide to get into judging hunt tests?

All of the persons who got into judging felt that if hunt tests were to progress and give everyone opportunities, judges were needed. According to the Cashmans, judging was a way to "give back" for all that they had received in running hunt tests. Judges volunteer their time for judging. Donn Mattsson's wife got tired of him grumbling about the judges with the "field trial mentality", and after he had one test in which he felt "robbed", his wife told him, "If you don't like it, do something about it, or quit complaining." So, in order to preserve his grumbling rights at home, he became a judge. Steve Czech was "dragged" into it by the others.

Hunt tests were established, according to some of the persons interviewed, to give a broader range of ordinary persons the opportunity to test and work with their dogs outside of the field trial circuit and all of its demands and politics as well as keep their dogs in shape. It also provides the opportunity to work together beyond the hunting season. Dave Mealman pointed out that a prominent field trial judge described the hunt tests, when they were initially started, as "the Special Olympics" of field trailing.

What is the most common problem handlers have at the junior or started level of competition?

The responses here all related in some fashion to being prepared for the test. This includes starting with reading the rule book. No person should come to a hunt test without having read the rule book. According to Dave Mealman, you are participating in a game, and if you do not know the rules, you aren't going to do well in the game. Steve Czech emphasizes having a strategy when you come to the line. This is true for all levels of tests. Handlers come to the line without having thought through what they are going to do.

Though junior or started doesn't involve as much in terms of partnership with the dog, the handler should have some idea about how he is going to help the dog if he gets in trouble. Dave Mealman's biggest worry with new handlers is that they are going to have a heart attack coming to the line and after they send their dogs because they are so nervous and uptight. Several persons interviewed emphasized that if the handler is unsure of herself and doesn't have a clear picture of what to do, this definitely transfers to the dog.

Karen Cashman emphasized having some control over the dog even though the dog comes to the line on the lead. The dog shouldn't be dragging the handler to the line.

You should realize that at a hunt test you are asking for the opinion of two persons that day. Judges are human. Even though you feel you got a bad break, there are days that you got breaks in the other direction. It all evens out. Enjoy yourself and your

What is the most common problem handlers have at

the senior or intermediate level of competition?

Everyone agrees that this is probably the toughest test. At this stage, the handler and the dog are a team and work together to qualify. Steve Czech pointed out that the handler is there to work with the dog. He likes to see the handler help out the dog appropriately. He would rather see the dog handled than have the dog hunting around until he "stumbles" on the bird. He feels that persons are sometimes too concerned about "over-handling". Karen Cashman also feels that persons get too uptight about handling the dog; they let the dogs get too far out before they handle them. Donn Mattsson feels that sometimes handlers "micromanage" their dogs. They jump to handling the dog much quicker than they have to. Sometimes, it seems the handler wants to demonstrate how well she can handle, lets the dog get way beyond the bird, and then handles the dog "all over the place" to get the dog to the bird. So, the best advice is

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Hunt Tests from the Judges' Perspective - continued from page 1

NAHRA Fun Test ...All Levels... Sunday, April 30...Details on page 5

Calendar of Events

Changes are made every month!

Steve Scherber, 1374 Highway 65
New Richmond, WI 54017

CLUB EVENTS

April 30: Fun Test (NAHRA Format)
May 6 & 7: NAHRA Hunt Test
June 24 & 25: AKC Hunt Test

June 17 & 18 Central MN Ret. Club, Sauk Rapids, MN *
Julie Mills, 26402 183rd Avenue
Richmond, MN 56368

NAHRA HUNT TESTS

April 29 & 30: Eastern Iowa HRA
Bondurant, IA, All levels
Anne & Bob Heise (507)282-2329

June 24&25 **Lake Country Retriever Club***
Prior Lake, MN
John Blackbird, P.O. Box 417
Prior Lake, MN 55372

May 6 & 7 **Lake Country Retriever Club**
Prior Lake, MN, All levels
John Blackbird (320)679-0611

July 15 & 16 Duluth Retriever Club, Duluth, MN

July 22 Labrador Retriever Club of the TC
Marine-on-St. Croix

May 27 & 28 Eastern Iowa HRA
Sigourney, IA, All levels
Stan & Mary Pfoff (319) 294-1701

July 22 - 24 NDak Retriever Club, Dilworth, MN *
Karen Hanan, R.R. 1, Box 94
Elizabeth, MN 56533

July 8 & 9 MN Hunting Retriever Association
Hoffman, MN, All levels
Ed Loeffler (320) 986-2200

August 5 & 6 Lakefield, MN

July 15 & 16 Southern Minnesota HRA
Owatonna, MN, Started and Intermediate
Joe Newinski (651) 258-4078

August 12 & 13 Minnesota Iron Range Ret. Club*
Virginia, MN
Michelle Wojciehowski
17272 Westwood Road
Nashwauk, MN 55769

August 19 & 20 Mississippi Flyway HRA
Joy, IL (South of Moline)
Started and Intermediate: 19th
Seniors: 20th
Scott Butler (309) 627-2798
Bonnie Moothart (319) 653-5323

August 19&20 Rice Creek Hunting Dog Club*
Little Falls, MN
Stephen P. Kruegar
8218 Killian Road South
Brainerd, MN 56401

Sept. 2, 3 & 4 Central Flyway HRA
Minot, ND, All levels
Lisa Rathbun (701) 362-7465

August 26 Northern Flight Hunting Ret. Assoc. *
same as June 3 & 4

Sept. 9 & 10 Blackhawk RC
LaForge, WI, All levels
Kim Buchanan (608) 783-1256

OTHER DATES OF INTEREST

April 29 Little Moran Spring Dog Training Field
Day, Staples, MN
Little Moran Hunt Club, (218) 894-3852

October 7 & 8 Midwest Retriever Club
Diagnol, IA All levels
George Shaw (712) 246-5202

June 24 & 25 How to Prepare and Improve Your Dog
For Hunt Tests, Brookdale Retriever
Training Kennels, Sheboygan, WI
Edell M. Schaefer, ballintra@juno.com
(414) 672-1107

AKC HUNT TESTS (*on AKC Web Site)

May 20 & 21: Rice Creek Hunting Dog Club*
Little Falls, MN
Peg Manea, 4160 121st Street NW
Rice, MN 56367

June 3 & 4: Northern Flight Hunting Ret. Assoc.*
St. Croix, MN

Club News

SECRETARY'S REPORT - CARLA FRYAR

- ⇒ NAHRA test: Jason still needs some help with the dinner. If you will be there and are not running a dog, call to volunteer your help with this. It would mainly be setting it up. He also still needs a few bird throwers. Call Jason Ladd at 952-873-4599 to help.
- ⇒ AKC test: Ron reported that all judges are set, and we will be looking for help. John Blackbird will be calling or you can call him to help - 320-679-0611.
- ⇒ New members: 3
- ⇒ Speaker: Mark Labarbera talked about new Outdoor Heritage Museum, which will be a hands-on museum for children of all ages.
- ⇒ Club party: 5:00 p.m. start at Hunter's Lodge; dinner at 7:00 p.m. (pig roast; bring dish to share). Persons should bring a door prize with them.
- ⇒ Fun test: next one is April 30 (see page 5)
- ⇒ Training nights started tonight - April 11. Rules are posted again on page 4.
- ⇒ The raffle is going well. See any board member to buy your tickets: 1 for \$5; 5 for \$20. The prize is a Pro 500 collar, and the winner will be drawn at the AKC test in June.
- ⇒ Greg Fryar reported that the Club has two sheds located by the bird pens. One shed has a freezer with birds in it that are for club members' use, and the combination is 16-34-12. The other shed has our equipment in it, and the combination will be given out on an as needed basis.
- ⇒ Randy Herman has the videos that are for rent. The list of available videos will be published in the newsletter. Call Randy at 507-744-4267 if you want to sign out a video.
- ⇒ U.S. Open Pheasant Championships: Club members did well. See story on page 4. Terry Correll was very pleased with all of the help that LCRC members gave. He donated several gift certificates to our Club party to thank us.
- ⇒ Web Page: the "LC Retriever Club" will be ready in one to two months. We will have things like entry forms, events, training tips, clothing, the Newsletter, pictures, etc. on the site.
- ⇒ Clothing: new items will be t-shirt, button down polo and women's shirt.
- ⇒ John Schroers handed out plaques for Club members whose dogs earned titles.
- ⇒ New business: Rally at the State Capitol on Wednesday, 12th; see flyer that was distributed or call John Schroers for more information.
- ⇒ Ads in catalogs for NAHRA and AKC will be sold to Club members at a 10% discount. John Blackbird has more information if you are interested.

Approximately 75 persons attended the club party. The following persons contributed prizes to the Club party.

LCRC Club: \$500 Gift Certificate (G.C.) to Cabelas; Tri-Tronics 500 Collar
Oak Dale Ridges Hunt Club: 4 Bird Hunts; \$100 G.C.
Dana Vendor: 2 year supply of dog food
Kruesar Vet: \$50 G.C.
P&R Taxidermy: \$50 G.C.
Scott Lake Pet Clinic: G.C. Vaccination Shots
River Valley Vet Clinic: \$25 G.C.
Mid-America Taxidermy: Wildlife Print
Ron Rahm: Wildlife Print
Shakopee Vet Clinic: G.C. Vaccination Shots
John Schroers: Framing of 3 prints
Dave DeGonda: Mug, Key Chain, 2000 App. Book, Picture of Thunderbird
John Blackbird: \$50 G.C. (3)
Terry Holzinger: 4 bumpers; whistle strap
Prior Lake Redwing Shoes: \$25 G.C.
IAMS: 1 year supply of dog food
Cross Road Vet Clinic: Rabies shot
Dave Bornhofen: 2 water dishes
Gnerer Grooming: \$20 G.C.
Lannies Cafe: \$10 G.C.
Invisible Fence of Burnsville: \$900 G.C. (2)
Dave Behnken: Nylon bed sleeper
Tom McMorrow: Dokkens dead fowl trainer
Ron Rahm, Jason Ladd, Jeff Willet, Mike Morrisette, Frank Cikanek: 1 lab picture; 2 wood duck houses, 1 dozen decoys
Prior Lake Vet: OFA x-ray
Terry Correll - MN H&H Club: \$25 G.C. 4 bird hunt, 1 round of sporting clays
John Schroers: Black lab statue; goose guided hunt
River Valley Sports: 1 print; \$10 G.C. (5); \$15 G.C. & shampoo
Sandy's Hairstyling: \$15 G.C. & shampoo
Greg & Carla Fryar: 4 bird hunt at Caribou Gun Club
Ducks Unlimited: Wildlife Prints
Cabela's: Poop scoop, lunch box, bumper
Smith's Vet Hospital: 2 microchip implants, free rabies vaccination
Brad Borchardt: Basket of gourmet coffees and syrup
Linda Twiss: Wildlife Print
Mike Morrisette: Stock pocket
MN H&H Club: 4 bird hunts, 2 sporting clays & Trigger G.C.
Win Mitchell: Woolrich blaze hunting coat
Bruce Cameron: Wood duck house
Mark Madore: Print
AB Kennels: \$80 G.C.; obedience class and other prizes

CLUB PARTY - CONTRIBUTIONS

Club News - continued

LCRC MEMBERS AND THEIR DOGS FINISH IN TOP POSITIONS IN MINNESOTA STATE PARTRIDGE TOURNAMENT IN PUPPY AND TOP GUN

3rd Maggie Mike Glewwe
4th Maggie Doug Lunde

Amateur

2nd Tar Gary Templin, Tim Dahl

Last month's article on the Minnesota State Partridge Tournament, held March 11 and 12 at Minnesota Horse & Hunt Club, neglected to report club members' accomplishments in Puppy and Top Gun categories.

In Puppy, Roz Wilson and her golden retriever puppy, Izzy, finished first and second. Roz ran with Billy Dunn and Bob Walker in the top two positions. Other top 10 finishes included:

5th Maggie Paul Woyda and Fred Blesener
8th Tahoe Doug Lunde and Mike Koehnen
9th Izzy Pat Murphy and Billy Dunn

You might want to figure out the variable in the 1st, 2nd and 9th place finishes with Izzy!

In Top Gun, Club members made the following showings:

5th Drake Greg Fryar
6th Coal'lee Rob Hardcopf
8th Yukon Doug Lunde
10th Jazz Fred Blesener

LCRC MEMBERS AND THEIR DOGS FINISH IN TOP POSITIONS IN U.S. OPEN PHEASANT CHAMPIONSHIP

Club members and their dogs finished in the following positions at the U.S. Open Pheasant Championship held April 6 - 9 at Minnesota Horse & Hunt Club. The most spectacular finish was the 1st place in Top Gun, by Greg Fryar and his Golden Retriever, Drake. They finished a clean run in 2 minutes and 28 seconds.

Open Flusher

4th Jake Dave Bornhofen, Fred Blesener
6th Coal Terry Holzinger, Todd Haferman

Puppy Flusher

2nd Cisco Terry Holzinger, Todd Haferman
4th Maggie Paul Woyda, Mike Glewwe
5th Izzy Bob Walker, Billy Dunn

Top Gun

1st Drake Greg Fryar
9th Windsor Terry Holzinger

Top Gun Puppy

1st Drake Bob Walker
2nd Izzy Bob Walker

CLUB ROSTER 2000 UPDATES

Change of address:

Charlie Ratgen
P.O. Box 43, Vermillion, MN 55085

Add phone number or e-mail, correct phone number:

Pat Murphy/Roz Wilson: Phone: 952-435-8742
Carla Fryar: e-mail: CJFRYAR@gateway.net
Terry and Carrie Bush: Phone: 701-728-6363

Additional members:

David and Heidi Hust
45 Smith Avenue, Wayzata, MN 55391
Phone: 952-470-6911; E-mail: dwhust@tealwood.com

Phil & Sandy Schrock
22846 Baseline Blvd., Jordan, MN 55352
Phone: 952-492-65551

Paul Thomas
1304 Keller Lake Road, Burnsville, MN 55306
Phone: 952-891-6002

David Possin
84 Bates Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55106
Phone: 651-771-7323

Bill Johnson
5816 Olinger Blvd., Edina, MN 55436
Phone: 952-922-6929

Deb Gavnitz
1166 Lawson Avenue East, St. Paul, MN 55106
Phone: 651-776-5389; e-mail: djgav@aol.com

Fran Smith, DVM
5162 Union Lake Trail, Lonsdale, MN 55046
Phone: 507-744-2284; e-mail: danikk@means.net

Brian & Michelle Daubs
13324 Zodiac Street, Lino Lakes, MN 55014
Phone: 651-464-4346; e-mail: okqua@aol.com

Club News - continued

NAHRA FUN TEST HELPS HANDERS - NEW AND EXPERIENCED - GET READY

The Fun Tests sponsored by the Club each year are an excellent opportunity for you to work with your dog in a simulated hunt test. The test on April 30 at Beaver Pond at Minnesota Horse & Hunt Club beginning at 10:00 a.m. It will be run in the NAHRA format. Even if you are training for AKC, this test will be useful experience for your dog.

In addition to the experience for your dog, you will have the opportunity to learn a great deal from watching other dogs, seeing success and seeing problems. The Fun Test format offers the handler all of the help he/she needs in the test.

Steph and Joe Newinski are organizing the test. Come prepared to run your dog and also help out.

REPORTING OF HUNT TEST RESULTS

The hunt test season is beginning. By the time the next Newsletter is published, tests will have been completed. Club members enjoy sharing their accomplishments with other Club members, and we want to print the results of each of the tests that are held in the area and in which Club members compete. Though we will be at a number of the tests, the editors are not assuming responsibility for keeping track of everyone's qualifying legs and titles. Please let us know when you have a qualifying run and when you earn titles. We need the full name of your dog, your name, location and date of hunt test in which you competed, what you qualified in and, of course, when you get your title. You can do this in a variety of ways. If we are there, you can let one of us know and we will check it off on the catalogue. You can fax, mail or e-mail your results. Please print so that it is legible. You can also call if necessary. If you call and leave a message, please spell names, etc. and talk slowly.

DOG RULES

(contributed by Mike Fullerton;
do you have any rules to add?)

I will not play tug-of-war with Dad's underwear when he's on the toilet.

The garbage collector is NOT stealing our stuff.

I do not need to suddenly stand straight up when I'm lying under the coffee table.

I will not roll my toys behind the fridge.

I must shake the rainwater out of my fur BEFORE entering the house.

I will not eat the cats' food, before or after they eat it.

I will stop trying to find the few remaining pieces of clean carpet in the house when I am about to throw up.

I will not throw up in the car.

I will not roll on dead seagulls, fish, crabs, etc.

"Kitty box crunches" are not food.

I will not lick my human's face after eating animal poop.

I will not eat any more socks and then re-deposit them in the backyard after processing.

The diaper pail is not a cookie jar.

I will not wake Mommy up by sticking my cold, wet nose up her bottom end.

I will not chew my humans' toothbrushes and not tell them.

I will not chew crayons or pens, especially not the red ones, or my people will think I am hemorrhaging.

When in the car, I will not insist on having the window rolled down when it's raining outside.

We do not have a doorbell. I will not bark each time I hear one on TV.

I will not steal my Mom's underwear and dance all over the backyard with it.

The sofa is not a face towel. Neither are Mom and Dad's laps.

My head does not belong in the refrigerator.

REMINDER: RULES FOR TUESDAY NIGHT TRAINING

- ⇒ Training starts at 5:00 p.m.; no earlier
- ⇒ Absolutely no live ammunition used
- ⇒ STAY OFF planted fields
- ⇒ Train only on the 160
- ⇒ H&H Club members have priority and right of way at all times
- ⇒ Mentor nights are 3rd Tuesday of the month; meet in front area or in the field

Going to the dogs...

Veterinary care is doing well in Canada. Because the private sector runs it, unlike human health care, people sometimes go to vets for care: One man, long wait-listed for an MRI at Ontario hospitals, booked time at an animal hospital without delay.

Star & Tribune

Ask the trainer...Getting ready for Junior Hunt Tests

keep your decoys on short strings. If a young dog gets caught in a string swimming past decoys, the dog may well develop a fear of the decoys.

After a few days of exposure, you should be able to put out a more normal decoy set and throw marks beyond the decoys. Decoys shouldn't be an issue after this training.

You can use the same type of approach with the duck boat. Set it on shore; play with the dog in the boat; throw short retrieves out and have the dog bring them back in. Keep the boat on the shoreline and have the dog jump out into only a few inches of water. Take the dog out for a ride in the boat.

It is important that you take your dog to different areas to do the same training exercise. If a dog "falls apart" at a hunt test doing what he has consistently been doing in the backyard for several months, it is likely that the dog has been doing the same thing in the same area and does not recognize what to do when the terrain changes. You should train for everything in a minimum of five different areas to be prepared.

How do you train the dog to go through obstacles in cover and stay on line to the mark?

A ditch with some cover, a log, a gravel or dirt road – all these different things can be used to train your dog to go through obstacles to retrieve the bird. You need to teach the dog to go through the obstacle. Make the dog familiar with the obstacle. Sit on the log and have the dog come up and put his paws on the log. Then stand in or right up next to the obstacle when you throw the first retrieves. The dog will most likely want to go through it. You can then begin challenging the dog a little by making the retrieves a little further beyond the obstacle and you can move further away from the obstacle. If you run into problems, back up, show the dog again how to go through the obstacle, and then move forward. If you are having problems, you need to simplify what you are asking the dog to do and show him again. You need to train with different obstacles to work your dog through, including small creeks, through tree brush, over a small hill. Murky water is an obstacle. However, you should make sure that your dog is comfortable with hard bottom clean water before working in murky water. If you provide plenty of variety in the training situation, when you get to the hunt test, varying obstacles should not throw your dog. Training in alfalfa fields, hay fields, and mowed grass is desirable. This type of cover is excellent for teaching concepts. However, this type of cover is not an obstacle. The dog still needs to learn to deal with obstacles. A bit taller grass is not an obstacle.

When you are working with a young dog, try to use white dummies so that the dog sees them. If you are using birds, tie white surveyors' tape to the birds' legs, e.g., streamers, so that the dog can easily see the bird when he is marking. This will improve the dog's marking considerably. Bigger birds or white pigeons

also should be used. Don't start out challenging the marking ability of your young dog. Train him and then stretch the distance as he improves. Mix things up in training.

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Make sure that the dog is marking well on low cover before you take him to more complicated cover.

What if you have problems with sticky mouth and playing with the bird at the return?

The first thing is playing with the bird at the return. Force fetching should take care of this problem. If you are having problems, a light jerk on the leash to hurry the dog in returning the bird will help. If the dog won't come back with the retrieve, you may be putting too much obedience pressure on the dog. If that is the case, back off, play, have fun with retrieving and then work on the return again.

Sticky mouth is another situation. Sometimes sticky mouth may be the result of having played tug of war when playing with the dog. This is

not advisable. *I really want to emphasize again the importance of training your dog to be successful rather than*

If this occurs, I will have the dog come in and sit next to me; I put my foot on the dog's front toes, grab hold of the retrieve and then start exerting pressure on the dog's foot. As soon as the bird is released by the dog, I give the command to drop and eliminate the pressure on the dog's foot. After a few corrections, as soon as you touch the dog's toes, he will release the bird. Soon after that, if you even move your foot, the dog will release the bird. A similar problem that you can have in your training is that after the dog releases the bird, you say okay, then they jump up and try to grab birds. This I generally deal with with the electronic collar. We will discuss use of the collar in another column.

Do you have other general advice for handlers as they train their dogs to be good hunting dogs as well as participate in hunt tests?

I highly recommend a good puppy class for socializing your puppy. The more time that you spend with your dog, the more success you will have with training. When training for hunt tests, get into bigger birds and live birds so that the dog is used to these before the test, e.g., pheasants, ducks. I really want to emphasize again the importance of training your dog to go through obstacles, to mark and be successful rather than constantly testing the dog.

At what ages and for what lengths of time do you take dogs for professional training?

Ask the Vet...Spring Tune-up and Nutrition

(Jim Delker, DVM, is a LCRC member and practices at the Prior Lake Pet Hospital in Prior Lake, Minnesota)

Spring is a fun time of year for dog owners. The water is open, the weather is getting warmer, and we are getting tuned up for another training season (not to mention that Fall is that much closer). Before we blow the dust off the whistles and dummies, we need to make sure our four legged friends are fit for the field. Our pets' health is our greatest responsibility if we want to fully enjoy the rewards of hours of training. There are a number of steps we can take to keep our pets healthy and performing in top condition. Proper nutrition, routine exercise, parasite prevention, and regular exams all play a part in maintaining a healthy pet.

Proper Nutrition: Rule # 1: Don't Feed Junk

Feed high quality diets that are from reputable companies. Avoid inexpensive low quality foods (i.e., Old Roy), most feed store labels, and bulk products. Labels can be deceiving because two products claiming 25% percent protein may not be equal. The amount of protein is important but the label doesn't tell the quality or digestibility of the protein. The true premium foods have better quality ingredients and consistent formulation (hence the reason they cost more to produce). I will also guarantee less stool volume in the yard with premium foods because of better digestibility and less fillers. And on top of that, I predict that your pet will not need as much food to maintain good condition and haircoat when eating high quality food compared to a bulk product. Bulk producers often change their formulations in response to changes in the cost of ingredients. The bag you bought last month may not be exactly the same as this month's bag. Many dogs will get by on lower quality foods, but is your goal to save a few bucks each month or keep your dog on a diet that will provide him with a consistent quality of ingredients in every bag?

So how can you be sure you are feeding a good quality product? Ask your veterinarian his/her opinion. There are hundreds of dog foods out there, and each company, pet store, and feed store is trying to claim a niche in the pet food market. They will all try to convince you why their product is better. Make sure that it is.

Pet Exams:

Make sure your pet is examined annually and stays current on all necessary vaccinations. Annual exams are equally as important as vaccinations. Often a veterinarian can detect problems (lumps, ear infections, heart murmurs, dental disease) that often go unnoticed by many owners. Early detection of disease can be an important factor for successful treatment.

Vaccinations:

Rabies and Distemper/Parvo are the most common vaccinations given. I also recommend all dogs that hunt or spend time in the field be vaccinated against lyme disease, which is spread by ticks. Since no tick preventative works 100%, I would not rely on any collar/preventative alone to prevent lyme disease. Another vaccine to consider is Bordetella (Kennel Cough). Kennel Cough is spread from dog to dog by aerosol and nose to nose contact. It is more common in boarding kennels, grooming facilities, training facilities, and veterinary hospitals but can be contracted from any contact with another dog. If you board your pet, train in groups, or even hunt with others, I would consider this vaccine.

Parasite Prevention is an extremely important topic for dog owners and their families. Parasites not only risk the health of our pets but some can actually be spread to humans. Internal parasites of most concern are heartworms and intestinal worms (roundworms, hookworms, whipworms, and tapeworms.) Heartworm disease is spread by mosquitos and causes life threatening cardiovascular disease. Heartworm can be prevented with annual blood testing and a monthly preventative medication. Give your medications completely as directed because stopping the medications too early can have severe consequences. One of our five cases of heartworm this year was due to a client who stopped giving the prevention in September of last year. We commonly give parasite preventatives April through December, but you may want to consider giving medications for an additional 3 months to provide year round parasite prevention. Most heartworm medications now also contain a wormer to prevent common intestinal parasites noted above. Intestinal parasites are best controlled by a routine preventative and annual fecal exams. Most intestinal worms can be prevented by keeping the yard clean of stool and giving the appropriate monthly parasite preventative. Some of these intestinal parasites can be transmitted to humans with children under five being most at risk. Keeping your pet free of parasites may be important to the health of your family as well as your pet.

External Parasites include the most notable culprits - fleas and ticks. Along with being pesky, these little critters can

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Our pet's health is our greatest responsibility... There are a number of steps we can take to keep our pets healthy and performing in top condition.

to get to the test in time to see the test set up and have the opportunity to talk to the judges about what they expect. In many instances, according to several judges, the dog knows what to do but the handler doesn't. Several persons emphasized that as many handlers go out as dogs. The handler, at this stage, shouldn't be at the line hoping and praying that everything goes well. She should be working with the dog. If you haven't trained for this level of partnership, you should have the wisdom to do the training before trying to compete at the senior or master's level. Don't rush into seniors if your dog hasn't had sufficient training and isn't solid on the handling.

What is the most common problem handlers have at the masters or senior level?

Everyone concurs that the masters or senior level test is an extension of the senior or intermediate test. You need to be willing to put the time into the training that it will take you and your dog to stretch yourselves. Steve Czech said that if you have a good senior or intermediate dog, you will not have much trouble with the masters or senior level tests. When you train, however, you need to train to do the additional work. The Cashmans emphasized that the more advanced you get, the more the dog is cueing in to you with body posture, etc. At this point, the success or failure is most often dependent on the handler. Dave Mealman indicated that judges will seldom take a dog out on points; the dogs or handlers will take themselves out.

What is the most common problem new handlers have?

The concurrence is that new handlers don't familiarize themselves with what is going to be expected. Persons commented on the number of times persons show up at hunt tests without having read the rule book. In addition, handlers come without ever acquainting their dogs with the situations that they are going to encounter, e.g., decoys on water marks. A key factor with new handlers is also the nervousness, which transfers to the dog.

What is the most common problem experienced handlers have?

The most obvious issue that appears to develop at this level is deciding when and how much to handle the dog. The interviews with the judges pointed out that judges come from different directions in what they prefer, while following the same rules. The balance is achieved through experience and through having the opportunity, as the test is being put together, to discuss with judges their perspectives on handling.

Several judges commented that persons should be prepared for the tests. They don't have to be perfect, but it is a waste of time for everyone when a person comes to the senior/intermediate hunt test without having trained the dog to perform at this level. The Cashmans emphasized that you need to step back and ask yourself why you are doing this. They commented that they ran seniors and ran seniors and ran seniors and were not having success with a dog that they felt had the capability to go to the

master's level. They finally sat down and asked themselves why they were doing this. When they concluded that they were doing the hunt tests to enjoy working with their dog, they relaxed. And they were successful in completing seniors and masters with the dog.

What is the most interesting or entertaining thing that has happened to you while judging?

Responses ranged from the bird falling on a dog's head because of the way that it was released and shot to a dog going up to the Club House to get a little petting, and when the upset handler took his pickup up to the Club House to get the dog, the dog beat it back to the finish line with the bird in mouth waiting for the irate owner to return. Steve Czech related that when a dog was running his final leg for his Master's title, after the leg was done and the dog had done a wonderful job, it was pointed out that the dog was sent before the judge said "dog." But the perfection of the performance compensated, and the dog received his title. Donn Mattsson related that he thinks he may have been partially influenced in an extenuating circumstance calling back a handler and dog in a senior test because, in part, his 8+ month pregnant wife was relaying how disappointed he was going to be not being called back. The other judge pointed out that in addition to the dog at the line breaking during the honor of the affected dog, the dog in the blind broke, which Donn didn't know. The handler of the dog on honor had said audibly "no" to his dog when he started to break, and he came right back. Donn was relieved when the dog did his water work perfectly and qualified. In addition, the handler of the dog spent the entire afternoon throwing a difficult bird for the water work and didn't want any relief until it was his turn to run his dog.

What is your overall advice to handlers in relating to judges at hunt tests?

Judges are volunteering their time and deserve respect. If persons are interested in how different judges view situations at the various levels, they should show up at the beginning of the hunt test and have the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions. Judges are open to suggestions and ideas at this stage. No judge wants to set up a "crummy" test. If you show up at the 11th hour, the test has been determined, and it is your job to run the test as it exists. In addition, judges are not very open to discussing the test with you as you are coming to the line. If you don't get there in time to watch at least two or three dogs run, you don't deserve the time for a judge to explain the whole test set-up to you. Judges have received threats in a variety of forms. Dave Mealman indicates that he now confronts the

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handler at the conclusion of the test just run to comment that the handler didn't get it done that day. He explained that after the guy goes back to the gallery and discusses with his friends that 25 whistle refusals and handling on five of the six marks

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carry and transmit diseases to your pets. Fleas carry tapeworms and can cause allergic dermatitis. Ticks can carry blood borne parasites such as lyme, babesia, and rocky mountain spotted fever. Due to recent advances, prevention of these parasites has become safer and more convenient than ever. In general, it is best to avoid collars and most over the counter sprays. Flea and tick collars in general are unreliable and can be easily removed and ingested which puts the pet at risk. Many have significant odor and may not work once wet. There are over-the-counter topical applications available, but these again contain harsh pesticides which have a higher risk for adverse reactions. The best and safest options are monthly oral preventatives (Program/Sentinel) to control fleas or a monthly application of Frontline, which kills both fleas and ticks. Both Sentinel and Frontline remain effective for one month even with bathing or frequent swimming, and both are safe with little risk of adverse affects for pet or owners. There is also a new product, Revolution, on the market, but its effectiveness against ticks in the field has not been determined. I will keep you posted on my in home efficacy study (I have one of my labs on Sentinel/Frontline combo and the other on Revolution). Consult your veterinarian to determine which products are appropriate for your pet.

Now that we know your pet is healthy we can hit the field. As training sessions begin, remember to start slowly. Don't overwork your pet the first few times out due to your excitement to be back in the saddle. Keep plenty of fresh water on hand and take breaks as needed in warmer weather. Stay positive and always end with "fun bumpers" to keep you and your pet excited about a hard day of training.

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isn't all that bad, and he should probably qualify, his perspective is not as clear as it was at the line.

Several persons suggested that all handlers should attend a judge's seminar in whatever format they are running. Handlers learn as much as judges at the seminars. Experienced judges point out that they read the rule book before each test that they judge, even though they have judged many tests.

The Cashmans emphasized that you should remember that the judges are coming from the same experiences you are having. You should realize that at a hunt test you are asking for the opinion of two persons that day. Judges are human. Even though you feel you got a bad break, there are days that you got breaks in the other direction. It all evens out. Enjoy yourself and your dog.

In addition to regular training programs for dogs, I do custom training, when owners want me to deal with certain things and/or do not have access to birds and facilities for training and/or do not have the time. I assess what the dog is doing and we plan a program. The first time I am working with a dog, I would want to have a minimum of two weeks. I want dogs to be six months old before taking the dog for the first time. I can be sure that the dog is at a level of maturity that the owner will get her money's worth from the training.

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Cook's Corner...

YUMMY DUCKS

This recipe came from the Chesapeake Bay Duck Hunting Lodge of Townsend McAlpin. It has been reduced to serve two normal appetites. Even a dainty eater will manage to dispose of one entire duck prepared in this manner, and the more robust the diner, the more glances will be cast at the plate of his (her) companion, in hopes that an assist may be in order - just to avoid waste, of course.

During the entire preparation, the McAlpin's local cook croons tender spirituals in a low contralto. While this incantation may soothe the waiting and hungry hunter, it is not a requirement in the preparation of the birds.

Ingredients

2 canvasbacks (mallards, pintails or redheads)
1 medium onion
1 carrot
1/8 pound butter
1 lemon
1 wine glass of dry sherry
1/2 teaspoon tarragon
1 bunch green celery
salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 wineglass Marsala
4 thin strips of fat salt pork

How to Cook

Stuff each duck with the following - grated carrot and onion. Add tarragon and merge with the celery (chopped into two inch lengths, leaves and all). Lard each breast with a strip of salt pork, working larding needle a half inch under the skin from front to rear. Rub skin with salt and pepper. Brush each duck thoroughly with the following mixture: 1/8 pound of melted butter, juice of one lemon and one wineglass of sherry. Place ducks in shallow roasting pan in oven that has been preheated to 400 degrees, basting frequently with butter-lemon-sherry mixture, and cook for 20 minutes. Place ducks on a hot platter and return to the oven. To the juices in the roasting pan, add one wine glass of Marsalar and merge thoroughly. Pour resulting gravy over birds. Service with wild rice, a green vegetable, and a crisp hearts of lettuce salad with a tart dressing. If you happen to have a bottle of Tavel that has been slight chilled, you will find it serves as a perfect complement.

(contributed by David Hust)

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