



# 2020 Upcoming Events

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR ETRC's EVENTS!

1. June 10, 2020: Board meeting, 6:30 p.m., Pegasus Technologies back yard, 108 Pawnook Farm Road. Members welcome, bring a chair and your own drinks, have a mask available in case of rain.
2. August TBD: Summer picnic and training seminar — details to follow!
3. September TBD: Club Trial
4. October 17-18: ETRC Fall Hunt Test, Sweetwater. 2 flights MH (132), double JH & SH. Keep

## Photo of the Month

*Puppy Fee begins her toilet training....*



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## Ducks Available This Week for Local Pickup

Duck supplier Kiley Buettner of Buettner Farms will be coming close to Knoxville this first week of June delivering ducks to Chattanooga. He contacted J. Michael Evans to say he would be happy to drive up to the Knoxville area if any club members wanted to purchase some ducks. They will be \$14 apiece unless a particular person wants more than 100, at which point there will be some kind of price break.

If anyone wants any, J. Michael will be happy to facilitate a meeting time and place, but will not pick up and deliver ducks -- you will need to meet the truck when it comes through. Please con-

## Hard Times For Duck Supplier

Buettner Farms, which has supplied ducks for our hunt tests for many years, is facing some financial difficulties this spring because of the pandemic. With all hunt tests and field trials suddenly canceled for several months, they are having to feed their expanded inventory with no new money coming in. Several clubs who buy from Buettner regularly have put down a deposit towards ducks for the next event, whether it be in the fall of 2020 or in the spring of 2021. The ETRC Board also voted to help out in this way, and sent \$1,000 towards ducks for our next test.

## Reports from Hunt Tests

Some hunt tests are starting up again — Atlanta, North Mississippi the first weekend of June and Ohio in the middle of June. Luke McCoy and Mike Evans judged at the Northern Alabama test on the weekend of May 16, and will be judging again in Mississippi the first weekend in June. They reported a couple of hunt test changes — every handler had to provide their own handler's gun; they requested no groups larger than 6 (which lasted about 15 minutes until it was ignored); and everyone was supposed to stay 6 feet apart at the ribbon ceremony (which never happened). Handshakes for qualifiers were replaced with fist bumps, and hugs were treated as a criminal offense. For the most part, it was pretty much business as usual.

Away from the grounds, they report seeing only one or two folks with masks except in stores and restaurants. There was no buffet breakfast at the motel, there was a sign on the coffee at the convenience store that no one was allowed to refill a cup OR a thermos. One thing not related to the Covid problem, the tick population is through the roof due to the amount of rain and cooler than normal temps so everyone take special note of that. Deer ticks are horrible right now!

Thanks for the report, guys. Helps the rest of us to decide if we are comfortable with getting back out in spite of the continuing presence of the coronavirus. Tennessee has been doing better than average in keeping people with this disease alive, with an overall death rate of 2% as opposed to 6% nationwide. However, for people in the 70 and up age bracket in Tennessee, that mortality figure jumps to 10.5% and there is no information on how many of the survivors have permanent complica-

## Master National Qualifications

The MNRC board has decided the 2020 MNRC Qualifications will be determined as follows:

- ◆ MNH dogs (3 MNRC qualifications) remain qualified for life.
- ◆ MNR dogs (2 MNRC qualifications) are automatically qualified for the 2020 event.
- ◆ MH dogs that qualified for the 2019 event are automatically qualified for the 2020 event.
- ◆ MH dogs with at least 4 MH passes during the current qualifying year (8/1/19-7/31/20) will be qualified for the 2020 event. Please read the entire MNRC blog for more information.

## Training Corner

# 7 Retriever Training Secrets — Achieve peak performance from your Retriever *By James Card, for Ducks Unlimited*

Follow these tips from five expert trainers to help your dog reach its full potential in the field

"I think we are drawn to dogs because they are the uninhibited creatures we might be if we weren't certain we knew better," wrote the late George Bird Evans in *Troubles with Bird Dogs*.

"They fight for honor at the first challenge, make love with no moral restraint, and do not for all their marvelous instincts appear to know about death. Being such wonderfully uncomplicated beings, they need us to do their worrying." And worry we do.

But worrying will not in itself bring wisdom. Sometimes you need a little help from a professional to offer guidance on how to handle man's best friend. With that in mind, we asked a group of expert trainers to share some of their wisdom about how to make a retriever the best dog it can be. Here are some of the techniques they use to achieve peak performance from their retrievers.

### 1. Change the Scenery

Both dogs and people can excel in their comfort zone, but when faced with an unfamiliar situation or setting, they sometimes find it difficult to adapt. Mike Stewart of Wildrose Kennels in Oxford, Mississippi, recounted a story of a client from Memphis who regularly trained his Lab at Shelby Farms, a massive urban park near DU headquarters. At Wildrose, the dog didn't seem to remember any of its previous lessons. "He never does this at Shelby Farms," the client told him.

"As a joke and being a bit of an antagonist, I began to call his dog 'Shelby,'" Stewart says. "O! Shelby just never transferred the skills he learned in his familiar training ground to other locations. We call this generalization.

"Dogs don't transfer skills from one location to another without transitional training. Our training rule is to practice each individual skill or lesson five times in five different locations to ensure habits are well entrenched," Stewart explains. "Shelby never mastered his performance in different locations because his handler didn't provide diverse training experiences. Doing the same thing, the same way, and later expecting a different outcome can be a pitfall in retriever training."

For the trainer, this means developing a portfolio of accessible and varied training locations. These should include different types of terrain, such as wetlands, fields of tall grass, woods, and grazed pastures. But training should also be conducted in different types of weather and with other dogs and people. The greater variety of training experience you can provide a dog, the more confidently and proficiently it will perform in real hunting situations.

### 2. Make Patience a Priority

Obedience is the cornerstone of all retriever training, and for a dog, an important aspect of obedience is learning patience. "A common mistake made by many enthusiasts is throwing meaningless, repetitive retrieves in play or during training," Stewart says. "This is a fun activity in the yard and entertaining in training, but in reality the dog is learning to gain his reward—the retrieve—while often being quite out of control, overexcited, and sometimes even vocal. It's unrealistic to expect the dog to be steady and quiet in the field or duck blind when he has been regularly worked into a frenzy during training sessions."

**"An easy way to instill patience is to drop a bumper while the dog watches and then pause before sending him for the retrieve." —Mike Stewart**

## Training Corner, Continued

Stewart encourages patience in all aspects of training, especially before retrieves or rewards are given. "An easy way to instill patience is to drop a bumper while the dog watches and then pause before sending him for the retrieve. To further build a dog's patience, incorporate denial into each training session by not allowing the dog to pick up a few bumpers during each round of retrieves," he says.

### 3. Don't Rush the Retrieve

Outdoor writer and photographer Tony Zappia trains his golden retrievers for national field trials in New York's St. Lawrence River valley. He contends that 90 percent of the problems encountered during training are the trainer's fault. Among the most common mistakes is rushing the retrieve. "When you are at the line, it's important to know when the dog is ready to perform a retrieve," Zappia says. "After the bird or bumper hits the ground, watch the dog, and let him settle down before releasing him. Let him concentrate for a while. When his ears perk up, send him."

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Like Stewart, Zappia also incorporates steadiness techniques into his training sessions, as well as in play sessions with groups of dogs. "I'll sit them in a row, throw a ball in the yard, and send them to retrieve, by name, one at a time. This sharpens their honoring skills and steadiness for hunting and trials. I'll also throw the ball and make them sit and stay while I go pick it up," he adds. "This playful activity is less stressful than many other steadiness drills and helps you achieve the same result."

### 4. Overcome Diversions

In waterfowling, executing multiple retrieves in the proper order is often essential to recovering crippled birds. "Suppose a brace of birds is shot over water. One bird is close and lying belly up in the decoys and the other is a crippled glider that landed 80 yards from the blind. The logical approach would be to send your dog after the crippled bird. But this will require the dog to swim past the dead bird in clear view. If you haven't practiced diversions and your dog is not solid in his casting skills, he will likely switch to the short bird," Zappia says.

Diversions test a dog's determination to complete the task at hand. These include visual distractions like the example above, auditory distractions like gunfire at other birds, and even scent distractions—such as when a dog catches wind of a dead bird while pursuing a cripple. To build a gun dog's single-mindedness amid diversions, Zappia recommends "lining" exercises like the wagon wheel drill.

"Handlers must be able to cast their dog away from any distraction," Zappia says. "The dog and trainer must practice casting, lining, and blind retrieves so the dog not only complies with commands, but also trusts the handler giving the commands."

### 5. Know When to Back Off

Another common pitfall in retriever training is going too hard, too fast. Enthusiastic beginners often expect progress during every session and no backsliding. When a dog doesn't respond to initial training attempts, they double their efforts, and in turn double their problems.

Pamela Kadlec, author of *Retriever Training for Spaniels* and one of the most respected trainers and breeders of Boykin spaniels in the United States, says flexibility is an important part of her training philosophy. "You have to find out what 'clicks' with each retriever. I always have at least one dog

## Training Corner, Continued

in the kennel that will make me stop and rethink the methods I am using to get the best performance out of that dog," Kadlec says. "Most retrievers need a balance of pressure and patience. Putting constant pressure on a dog can have the opposite of the desired effect. In some cases, a dog can completely shut down and never retrieve again.

"Knowing when to back off and when to push forward can only be learned through trial and error. When in doubt, back off and give the dog a chance to work it out using gentler methods," she continues. "If one method doesn't work with a pup, try another. For example, I often find young pups don't like to fetch pigeons, but if you put a bird in a white sock, most pups will grab it right away. Similarly, if you are trying to teach a pup to retrieve in the water and he's not interested, go into the pond to show him that it's fun to go swimming."

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Butch Goodwin, owner of Northern Flight Retrievers in New Plymouth, Idaho, offers similar advice. "I once worked with a dog that for some reason would not hold birds or bumpers. I thought I was making progress, and seemingly out of defiance he would spit out the bird. I was banging my head against the wall trying to get this dog to hold, but he just wouldn't give in," Goodwin says. "A friend and fellow dog trainer stopped by and asked to take over. Within two minutes he had the dog holding birds, bumpers, and happily walking at heel carrying a bird. Later, he even had the dog fetch some bumpers.

"My friend saw that as the frustration level escalated, so did my pressure on the dog. Eventually it became a war of wills, and the dog was winning," he explains. "I learned a very valuable lesson: regardless of how frustrating the training becomes, keep it steady. And if your blood pressure starts to go up, back off and end the session on a positive note. Frustration will only hurt your training program."

## 6. Pick Up a Pen

Just as a coach keeps detailed records of his or her players' stats, a retriever trainer should keep a journal of a dog's progress in training sessions. It's easy to forget the nuances of a dog's performance in the last session. A written record will help you identify strengths and weaknesses that can be reinforced or addressed in future training.

**"Keeping notes on each dog's training helps. I can go over the notes and usually find out what the problem is and then make a change in that dog's routine." –Jim Karlovec**

"I do a lot of training alone, and most of the time I follow a regular training routine. This works well most of the time, but on occasion there's a dog that doesn't quite fit into the routine," says Jim Karlovec of Flushing Star Kennel in Columbia Station, Ohio. "Keeping notes on each dog's training helps in this regard. I can go over the notes and usually find out what the problem is and then make a change in that dog's routine."

Another advantage of keeping a journal is that it keeps trainers on schedule. There may be a temptation to skip drills that are particularly time consuming or demanding, and a journal will help trainers conduct training sessions in the proper order. "If a brick is left out of the foundation, eventually the entire structure will fail," Karlovec says. A journal will keep trainers honest about whether they are working hard enough on the right drills at the right times. Too many blank journal en-

## Training Corner, Continued

tries will indicate that some problems may not be entirely the dog's fault.

### 7. Take a Hike

Once a dog has mastered casting and lining to visible bumpers, Karlovec shifts his focus to blind retrieves. One of his favorite techniques is to take a dog for a long walk in the woods. He drops a white bumper and continues walking another 50 paces before bringing the dog to heel and giving it a line for the blind retrieve. As the dog is running to get the first bumper, he tosses out another bumper in a different direction and the stage is set for the next blind retrieve.

"As you continue walking, get creative by tossing the bumpers over logs, across roads, and into different types of cover. Distract the dog by sending him on marked retrieves so he doesn't see you drop or toss the bumpers," Karlovec advises. "If the weather is warm, try to include ponds along your route so you can work on water blinds. This is a great drill to teach 'backs' and 'overs' in the water. As the pup gets proficient at this drill, lengthen the distance of the blinds and switch to different kinds of bumpers to mix things up."

## Youth Program



2018 Award Recipients, Cade and Ivan Chambers

The Luthenauer Young Handler program is entering its fifth year. Kids who are interested in working in retriever sports are encouraged to join; check out the website for rules and an application form at [http://www.etrclub.org/etrclub\\_youth\\_program.htm](http://www.etrclub.org/etrclub_youth_program.htm).

There is no application fee; if the applicant is not already part of a family membership, their membership fee will be paid for by the Luthenauer fund. The program will reimburse AKC Hunt test fees, and ETRC Club Trials are free for enrollees.

Yearly awards include a perpetual trophy along with a plaque to keep, and participation award for everyone in the program.

## ETRC Membership

Membership is \$25 for a single person or a family (one vote). Both new member and renewal forms are available online at <http://www.etrclub.org/join.htm> — just click the link, print it off, and send it to:

Karen Edwards, Secretary /Treasurer, 254 Babbs Road, Lenoir City, TN 37771.

Cost is still just \$25, which includes electronic copies of the newsletter, special announcements, eligibility to attend all ETRC Sponsored events, and consideration for end of the year awards plus the opportunity to make friendships with like-minded dog people and learn more about our favorite sport. It's a bargain! The membership year runs from March 1 to February 28/29th; people who join in November or later are also paid up for the following year.

## Around the Region – Seminars, Tests, & Trials

### Upcoming AKC Retriever Hunting Tests

North Mississippi ARC	Bruce, MS	06/06/20
Cuyahoga Valley GRC	Chardon, OH	06/06/20
Magnolia RC	Ralph, AL	06/06/20
Lumber River RC	Rose Hill, NC	06/12/20
Black Warrior RC Summer Test	Brilliant, AL	06/12/20
Buckeye RC	Chardon, OH	06/13/20
N. Alabama RC summer Test	Ralph, AL	06/19/20
Carolinas RC (66)	Advance, NC	06/20/20
Black Warrior RC Summer #2	Summerdale, AL	06/27/20
Buckeye	Chardon, OH	06/27/20
Central KY Master Only (66)	Kevil, KY	07/18/20

*Numbers in parentheses are limits on number of Master dogs*

### Upcoming AKC Field Trials

Back Bay Knotts Island Double D/Q	Farmville, VA	06/12/20
Black Warrior Summer Trial	Greenboro, AL	06/12/20
Lumber River RC FT Derby O/H Q	Watha, NC	06/19/20
Mobile ARC Fall Event	Greensboro, AL	09/18/20

### Seminars

Check out Elite Retrievers (Pat Burns) facebook page. He is posting training tips and drills online, with some short videos. Not quite like a seminar but the price is right!

## Free Bird Boxes Available

ETRC Member Gale Frana ‘inherited’ a couple of bird boxes, one quail size, one duck size, both new. She does not need them and is interested in giving them away to a club member who could use them. Pictures are available. Contact Gale at [gale.frana@gmail.com](mailto:gale.frana@gmail.com). Be sure to put “bird boxes” in the subject line so she doesn’t miss your email.

## Newsletter Info

The ETRC newsletter is published monthly, as close to the 1st of the month as we can get it together. Send us your test results, litter info, new dogs, dog-related jobs and services, death notices, interesting articles, and any brags you care to share, along with pictures! Deadline is the 26th of the month but we can sometimes sneak something in a little late.... Send items to: Karen Edwards ([edwardskc@gmail.com](mailto:edwardskc@gmail.com)).

You may notice we have a new numbering system. When I first took over the newsletter, I just continued on with the volume # from the last issue, then upped it by one every year. But, it makes no sense, and doesn’t reflect how many years of newsletters we have anyway! So beginning with the January 2020 issue, the volume number will be the last two digits of the year, in Roman numeral format — so this is now Volume XX (for 2020).