

# SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2008

## Meetings and Pre-trial Activities

Saturday was a day full of checking into hotels, gathering up Worker and Contestant packets, and or course shopping the Merchandise Committee's assortment of National gear. Shop was set up at the Walden Yacht Club, located about 10 minutes from Headquarters at the Lake Conroe Best Western. This was also the site for the meetings and Cocktail Party, which were held in the Central Promenade room with a wall of windows looking out onto a beautiful lake.



The Walden Yacht Club

The Meeting of the Retriever Advisory Committee was probably the quickest in history. The passing of Marshall Simonds was appropriately recognized. The attendees were asked if they had anything new to add to the discussion of the issues that were presented at the National Amateur in June. (For a description of these issues, please see the June 14th report from the National Amateur.) When no one had any new orders of business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned. Total time: 5 minutes!

At 3:00, the general meeting was called to order by Stake Chairman Mike Kammerer. After welcoming everyone, he asked that a moment of silence be observed for those that had passed away since last year's event. Tony Snow, NRC Secretary/Treasurer for the past 7 years, was named in particular. This year's stake is dedicated to Tony who passed away in August quite unexpectedly. Our sympathies to Tony's wife, Jan, who is in attendance at this year's event, serving on the Hostess Committee. Our thanks also to Mitch Patterson for taking on this role a bit earlier than anticipated.

Mitch Patterson took the mic next and went through the financial statement of the National Retriever Club, after motions were passed to skip the role call and the review of last year's meeting minutes. Mitch also mentioned that two donations had been approved by the National Club - \$1000 each to the Bird Dog Foundation and the Animal Health Foundation.

Dennis Bath was asked to speak next and recognize the sponsors for this year's event. These sponsors are Purina, Eukanuba, Tri-Tronics, Kent Ammunition, Chris Chantland, Dogtra, and new sponsor Avery Sporting Dog. Each sponsor was presented with a plaque in recognition of their generosity. Dennis also announced that this would be his last year as the Corporate Sponsor Liaison. Taking over for him is the more than capable Ginger Cope. Congratulations, Ginger! You have mighty big shoes to fill!



Dennis Bath announces the sponsors of this year's national

Just when Dennis thought he was done being put on the spot, Mike Kammerer surprised him with a the presentation of a bronze sculpture of an elk in recognition of all of Dennis's hard work throughout the years as the Corporate Sponsor Liaison. "Nobody works harder or puts in more hours than Dennis." A round of applause was given by the meeting attendees.

Bill Totten of the PRTA then announced the recipients of the three grants they issue for the year. The recipient clubs are Manitowoc County Kennel Club, Red River Retriever Club, and Wisconsin Amateur Field Trial Club. Mike Kammerer next presented a painting of Windy, the NRC defending champion, to owners Ken Neil and Brenda Little. The painting was done by Official Artist Chris Chantland.

Craig Stonesifer, Chairman of the 2009 National Retriever Championship, took the podium next with information on next year's event. It will be held from November 15-21 in Dover Delaware. The judges were named as Joe Broyles, Tom Vaughn, and Jack Vollstedt. The slate of officers for 2009 were announced as President Bill Goldstein, Vice President Lee Jolley, Secretary/Treasurer Mitch Patterson, and Directors Gary Ahlgren, Jim Cope, and Craig Stonesifer.

This year's judges were presented with the customary judge's gifts - a beautiful bronze statue of birds in flight. These were presented to 2008 NRC judges Charles Hayden, Loren Morehouse, and Gary Zellner. Shyness struck all of the judges, but each in turn took the time to wish all the contestants Good Luck for the upcoming week.

Finally, the important stake details that everyone has been waiting for, as announced by Marshal Steve Karr:

1st test dog will run at 7:00 am and will be FC-AFC Freeridin Smooth Operator, LF, owned by Ted Shih and handled by Ty Rorem.

2nd test dog to immediately follow and will be FC Just Do It, LM, owned and handled by Danny Martin.

1st running dog on line at 7:30 am and is #93, FC CK's Blue Velvet, owned by Marion Stroud-Swingle and handled by Mark Mosher.

1st test will be a land double with hen pheasants.

Rotation is 93 - 14 - 40 - 66

No Birds: 1st no bird - come back immediately; 2nd no bird - come back in 6 dogs; 3rd no bird - come back in 6 dogs; 4th no bird - go to the end.

There will not be a caravan in the morning out to the test site. Directions to Mike Kammerer's property are located in the lobby of headquarters.

Bitch check would immediately follow the meeting outside of the yacht club.

Mark Rosenblum was the final speaker, being asked to come up and present the latest information on the entry service, RetrieverEntry.com. He informed everyone that the site would be made live on the internet starting November 17th in a Beta state. This is when everyone is able to start playing with the site and offering up suggestions for additions and modifications. Mark also announced that with this re-launch of the entry service, the \$2.50 per entry processing fee will be eliminated, no matter if you are pro or amateur, or entering 2 or 20 dogs.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:42 pm and everyone dispersed to finish gathering their packets, shopping for a bit, and ultimately heading back to their accommodations to prepare for the Cocktail Party.

## Cocktail Party

The Cocktail Party was held in the same room as the earlier meetings at the Walden Yacht Club. However, the room had been transformed and an atmosphere of elegance and sophistication had been created. The tables were covered in white table cloths with candlelit autumnal centerpieces. On the menu was a delicious taco bar, including flour tortillas, refried beans, spanish rice, quacamole, tortilla chips, and queso. To every chocolate-lover's delight and 4-tiered chocolate fondue fountain was set up, surrounding by strawberries, marshmallows, donut holes, and cookies for dunking. Absolutely delicious and able to make everyone smile!

As always, the bar was the most popular gathering place, offering up such beverages as wine, mixed drinks, soda, and beer. The conversation was never dull, with conversations ranging from catching up with old friends to discussions of the day's meetings and final training preparations.

Alas, all good things must come to an end, and many called it an early night in order to get plenty of rest for the upcoming week of competition.

Good Luck to Everyone!!!!

## "Saber Surprise" PART I - CHRIS HATCH & SABER

"It's really kind of beyond our expectations," says handler Chris Hatch, "especially with our breeding and as young as he is. We're really thrilled to be here." And, "we're one of the few amateurs," he adds.

Chris is running Dog #88, "Saber," a dog that is barely four and out of his own breeding. Saber has been trained and handled exclusively by Chris.

"He's a pretty nice dog, but to win an Open with a dog under four, is a pretty big accomplishment," Chris humbly states. "That was a pretty big deal being an amateur. It was an unexpected happening that just catapulted us into this National run."

He was thinking that his other trial dog, Saber's dam Ty, was pregnant. And, he wasn't expecting to qualify his young dog for the National. So, Chris agreed to judge, without trials this fall; then, lo and behold, Saber qualified. "He (Saber) kind of rotted for a week, without much training." After he judged, he stayed a week at the trial area and began Pre-National training there, with one other handler, Steve Cote. It was an extra hectic few months, which included the arrival of Ty's pups in August, one of which Chris kept and has brought with him.

"We haven't put our feet down since August," says Chris, referring also to his wife and Saber's co-owner Portia. "We knew we were going to go. With all the judging assignments I'd accepted before qualifying, we just put our noses to the grindstone." Thankfully, though, "Everything's been good since I got a chance to concentrate on the National."

Time is something that Chris manages with amazing dedication and finesse. He only has been in the game since 2000, which was when he bought Ty as a seven week old puppy from Debra Folsom of Highest Kennels in Oroville, Calif. Debra was going to run a Derby with a littermate. "She talked me into entering," explains Chris. "I got a green ribbon and I was hooked."

From the outset, Chris trained "probably six days a week" on top of working "almost full-time" as a State Farm agent. He met fellow amateur Ted Robinson at the first Derby he ran. Getting together to train after full days at work, then "we worked really hard." Chris can't praise Ted highly enough. "He was my mentor. He told me everything I knew about the game, I learned from Ted. Great influence. Great teacher." However, Ted left training in 2004 to spend more time with his kids and their sporting activities, for which Chris also admires him tremendously.

Chris came up with his time management protocol while training with Ted. Chris got off work around 3:30 pm; they met around 4 or 4:15, then they trained until dark. He went out early on weekdays and trained all day. "Thank goodness I had a very understanding wife. My kids were grown."

The training partners were "two guys with two wingers and we got a lot done," adding, "We used to refer to ourselves as the 'low rent club.'"

After training with Ted, "I just kind of kept up that same scenario. The only difference is that I can take him (Saber) to work now." Presently, Chris takes Saber to work every day. "We fit the training around work and the work around training." His parks is in the city of Chico, Calif.; but he has blinds "picked out all over Butte County," including parks and rice fields. He runs about three at a time. For marking by himself, he does a lot of double and triples with wingers. Chris notes that he is a "big disciple" of Dennis Voigt, particularly his articles on training alone.

"I can get a lot done when it's just me," says Chris. Saber "gets his blinds work on Mondays and Tuesdays; Wednesday, I train all day, basically, with one of the groups. Thursday, I do blind work in the morning and maybe a couple of marks in the afternoon." He spends Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays with groups. On his blinds-only workdays, Chris runs Saber on blinds once in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Chris spreads his group training time among three small groups, each comprised of all amateurs: weekly with Debra Ziegler and Cheryl Jones, and "off and on" with Don Graves and Steve Cote, alternating with Julie Cole and Karen Young. He also trains with Pete Hender at Pete's Honker Pond Ranch in Loma Rica, Calif. about every other week. "Pete was a huge influence in Saber's early training. He's known for his really wild and crazy dogs. He's almost eight-four years old and I love him to death."

Until this week, Chris never added up how many hours per week he trains. When asked, he had to add the pieces together to come up with a figure. "Probably thirty-five to forty a week is what I average by myself and group training." And, that does not include driving, which he estimates would add another ten hours. The closest training grounds he uses are a half hour away from his home in Butte Valley, Calif.

..... To be continued in Part II, which will be posted on Sunday's report.

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