



January 1st, 2012

## President's Message

Happy New Year to all MHGDC members and our four-legged hunting companions! Looking back on 2010 the club was very active with organized training, fun events, licensed hunt tests and field trials. I would like to extend a personal thanks to the Board of Directors who volunteered their time and energy in meeting bi-monthly to deal with club business and issues. One of our objectives for the year was to repair and or replace some of our training equipment which we accomplished along with the addition of an enclosed trailer for storage and transporting gear to events. I would also like to thank club members who volunteered their time and energy in making the many training sessions and tests and trials very successful. Good fortune to all in 2012!

With the mild winter weather, training at the Horse Pasture for some groups has begun. The Spaniels have started training on their regularly scheduled Saturday mornings with a few retrievers joining in for some upland work. The Retriever group has Wednesday evenings and the Pointers Thursday evenings for their regularly scheduled training sessions. This is a good time to remind everyone that before you start using pen-raised game birds in your training sessions, you will need to submit a Permit to Use Captive-Reared Upland Game Birds for Dog Training to a regional FWP office and get their signed approval. Permits will be available from Board Members and at the annual banquet. This permit contains two parts. If you are going to hold game birds, you must fill out part 1. If you are only going to use birds supplied by the club, you do not need to fill out Part 1. Part 2 is the portion you fill out to use game birds while training. The legal description for the Horse Pasture and Blackbird FAS are:

Horse Pasture: Township T2N, Range R2E, Sections 20 & 21

Blackbird: Township T2N, Range R2E, Section 19.

Hope to see everyone at the annual meeting at Johnny Carino's Italian Restaurant in Bozeman at 6 PM on Saturday February 11. A buffet style dinner similar to the one we had last year will be served with a no-host bar. The dinner cost will be covered by the MHGDC. A raffle/auction will follow the dinner. We are looking for items for the raffle/auction. If you have an item or items to donate, please contact Sam Robinson or one of the other Board members listed in the newsletter.

Remember, your \$35 annual membership dues need to be paid. Frankly, I think this is the best deal in town! For starters you get an evening out with family, friends and fellow hunters, an excellent meal and an opportunity to tell hunting stories (both fact and fiction) and brag about the great things your canine companion did during the hunting season. What follows are opportunities throughout the spring and summer to train with people that have the same interests in hunting behind a well-trained gun dog. So don't wait – renew today!

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### PRESIDENT

Greg Johnson 586-6323

#### VICE PRESIDENT

David French 600-8428

#### SECRETARY

Jack Weiss 586-6365

#### Treasurer

Steve Fink 581-0841

#### SPANIELS

Cheryl Johnson 586-6323

Jeff Squire 581-9055

#### RETRIEVERS

Mike Heard 490-6298

Al Gadoury 586-3806

#### POINTERS

Peter Bakun 388-6829

Sam Robinson 388-1346

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## Board Meeting Minutes December 20, 2011

Members Present: Jack Weiss, Greg Johnson, Mike Heard, Steve Fink, Cheryl Johnson, Sam Robinson, Peter Bakun and Jeff Squire. Absent was David French.

Minutes from the October 18 meeting read and approved.

Treasurer's Report: Steve presented a summary of club expenditures and income through November. Club has a net operating income of \$4241. Trailer was purchased for the retriever group.

Retriever Report: HRC judging seminar will be held on February 18 at the Bozeman Library. The HRC upland tests will be held 5/5-6/2012.

Pointer Report: Off hunting. No further report.

Spaniel Report: The 2012 Field Trial will be March 31 and April 1. A meeting to discuss the trial, hunt test and TED's of the spaniel group will be held January 14 at the Bozeman Library. The cocker group is planning a field trial at Roy Montana on May 18-19 2012. Discussion of the trial will be done in new business. Greg has been training at headwaters on Saturdays.

Unfinished Business: 1: Banquet planned for 2/11/12 at Johnny Carinos. Sam will head up raffle and auction items. Sam is working on getting a 22 Golden Boy for a raffle item. Board approved a \$500 budget for Sam to procure raffle items. Sam asks all membership to call him with items they are donating for the raffle. Glen Johnson has agreed to present a "German Traditional Hunting Horn" rendition at the banquet. 2. Club purchased a used trailer in very good condition. It will need minor wiring and brake connections. It is 6x12 and has a dual axle. The cost was \$2500. This will be used to store much of the retriever equipment and transport the equipment to

events. 3. Randy will coordinate with FWP on the timing adding road mix to the access road at the training grounds. 4. The nominating committee (Jeff Squire, Dan Marsh, and Priscilla Robinson) presented a slate of officers for 2012: President-Greg Johnson; Vice President -Mike Heard; Treasurer- Keri Payne; Secretary- Jack Weiss, Spaniels- Cheryl Johnson, Jeff Squire; Pointer- Peter Bakun, Sam Robinson; Retrievers- Al Gadoury, David French. This slate was presented to all members attending the potluck and approved by the membership. 6. The great Rockies Sport Show was cancelled. The club received a refund of its deposit.

New Business: 1. The club calendar for 2012 is being finalized. Greg will set this up for the February meeting. It will be posted on the club web site. 2. There was discussion on club participation in the Pheasants Forever "two Guns" raffle. The board voted unanimously to not participate. Board also decided to not to be a Pheasants Forever sponsor. At the potluck member Priscilla Robinson asked the board to reconsider its position on that subject. Greg agreed to postpone a final decision to the February board meeting. 3. Board wanted to remind all members who want to use game birds that their permits must be renewed with FWP. 4. Greg will discuss with FWP our club use permit renewal for 2012. 5. Club dues are due and payable on January 1. We will be notifying members via email and snail mail. 6. Club Insurance is also up for renewal and Greg, Keri and Steve will finalize for February meeting. 7. There was a great deal of discussion on the Cocker trial. Questions were raised about their planned budget and bird use plan. Board wants to help with the event but needs more final costs on birds, numbers of birds and operating budget. Greg will discuss the event further with Oliva and Robert (they are chairing the event).

Meeting adjourned and next meeting will be February 21, 2012.

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## PROPERTY FOR SALE

The Setzer's plan to list their property for sale this spring. If you know a Breeder, Pro Trainer or avid Amateur that might be interested please pass on the info.

- Four Bedroom
- 1 ¾ Bath
- Log Home
- Eleven acres
- Eighteen run kennel
- Steel storage buildings
- Shop/Barn
- Bird pens
- Pigeon coops
- Small pond

For more information please contact Randy & Tracey Setzer 406-285-6724 or Setzers5@aol.com.



Missouri Headwaters Gun Dog Club  
2012 Annual Dues Notice

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Annual dues \$35. Please make check payable to MHGDC. Send payment with this form to:

MHGDC, P. O. Box 4717, Bozeman, MT 59772-4717.

Please answer the following:

I prefer receiving the club newsletter by email \_\_\_\_\_ regular mail \_\_\_\_\_.

I plan on attending the MHGDC Annual Banquet on February 11, 2012 at Johnny Carinos.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes. How many will be in your party \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ No

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## Judges/Handler Seminar

It's time to hold an HRC judges and handler seminar. The club held our first HRC seminar 3 years ago, since then we have held 3 HRC regular hunts and 1 upland hunt test. In order for all of us to continue to qualify to judge these events we need to meet the seminar requirement.

This seminar is also a great way for new folks to learn more about the rules and procedures for running a dog at an HRC hunt test event.

It is FREE!

**February 18th (Saturday)**

**Bozeman Public Library**

**9am to 5pm**

Lunch will be included

Margo Ellis will conduct the seminar. Margo is a MHGDC member and is our regional representative for HRC.

Please contact Mike Heard via email:

wxmheard@hotmail.com



if you plan on attending. We will need a head count for lunches.

If the weather is good, we will conduct a field session on Sunday the 19th at the club training grounds near Missouri Headwaters State Park by Three Forks. We will let you know at the seminar.

## Tri Tronics Influential Members

Several members of the retriever group of MHGDC are influential members for Tri-Tronics.

We can get you e-collars, transmitters, electronic remote releasers etc. for a discounted price.

We can beat the local sporting good stores price on the basic "Sport Combo G3 exp" to the "Pro 500 G3 exp" to the "Upland G3 beeper".

Member to contact emails:

Mike Heard

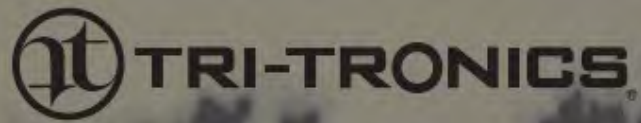
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Margo Ellis

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# To Breed or Not to Breed

## Responsible Reproduction

So, your dog sits like a stone in the blind, steady to wing and shot, is unwavering in watching where you are shooting, only releases on command, marks like it has radar, makes multiple retrieves, and unerringly retrieves to hand. Sooner or later, just like every dog owner, you face the question of whether or not to breed this unmatched high performing canine retrieving machine.

For some, breeding is out of the question as a matter of practicality, making the decision very easy. For others, the idea of having their dog live on through puppies has a certain appeal. However, with breeding comes great responsibility, and it is not something that should be jumped into without a great deal of thought and preparation. If you are trying to decide whether you should allow your male dog to stand at stud, or female to whelp a litter of puppies, there are several important things to consider.

First and foremost, why do you want to have your dog bred? If you own a female and the answer is because you want to make a little extra money, you should reconsider. Responsible breeders never breed for the money. The fact is that having a litter of pups is both time consuming and expensive. On more than one occasion I have actually lost money by allowing my dog to have puppies.

Likewise, you should not breed to get another dog just like the one you currently have. The unique characteristics that you love about your dog come from not only its genes, but from other factors such as environment and experience. Furthermore, any puppy that your dog produces only has a 50/50 chance at getting those personality traits that are heritable since half of its genetic makeup will come from another dog.

Maybe you want to show the kids the "miracle of birth?" Whelping a litter makes a bloody mess, it usually happens in the wee hours of the morning, and there are lots of opportunities for heart break. Almost all litters have at least some mortality. Still born puppies are very common, as are those with defects. There is also considerable risk to the bitch whelping the litter from delivery right up until the time the puppies are weaned. What started as a well intended lesson in birth can very easily have tragic consequences should something go wrong.

So why should anyone ever allow their dog to reproduce? Really, there is only one good reason, and that is to improve the breed. Responsible retriever breeders do not breed any dog until they are convinced through knowledge and experience that it is a good representative of what a hunting retriever should be, and that will help preserve and enhance the best characteristics its individual breed. In short, responsible breeders breed to improve.

## Evaluating Your Dog

To you your dog is probably the best dog in the world, and that is the way it should be. However, responsible breeders know to avoid being "blinded by love". Instead, they take a step back and honestly evaluate the good points and bad points of their dog prior to making the decision to breed.

Since the goal of breeding any hunting retriever should be to produce a better dog, there are two key areas that you should examine during this evaluation: personality and performance.

Let's start by taking a look at personality. There are certain personality traits among retrievers that are heritable and make them highly valued for their specific sporting role as a waterfowl and upland hunter. These traits include tractability, attitude and temperament.

As a professional trainer I would have to say that the most important personality trait to any retrieving breed would have to be tractability. Since the hunting retriever and handler must work as a team, only those dogs that train easily and are manageable should go into the gene pool. As a rule dogs that are extremely "hard headed" and difficult to train and handle are very poor representatives of any retrieving breed and should not be bred. Likewise, it has been my experience that dogs that are very "soft" and respond poorly to correction or show strong avoidance tendencies while training almost always pass these traits on to their offspring.

Another important personality trait is attitude. Good hunting dogs are friendly, have an outgoing personality, and adapt well to new situations. One of the first things that I look at when a new dog comes into our kennel is the way that it carries itself. I am most impressed by a dog that comes into the yard with a care free attitude and posture. These dogs almost always train well, and they are very enjoyable to work with. Conversely, it is generally a bad sign when an owner drags out a dog with its tail tucked between its legs.

Just as important as attitude is temperament. According to the American Kennel Club, two of the three most popular breeds over the last ten years have been retrievers, the Labrador and the Golden respectively, with the Lab dominating all breeds over the last decade. Without a doubt this is due in large part to the wonderful temperament of the average retriever. Whether as a working dog or a pet, a good retriever should be even keeled, not mean or aggressive and not overly excitable. A good retriever should be calm in the duck blind, but ready. Highly excitable dogs can upset a hunt and destroy a home. On the other hand, lethargic dogs often tend to work lazily and fail to get the job done. Therefore, it is very important to the breeds that an evaluation of temperament be included before making any breeding decision.

In addition to personality, you should also evaluate your dogs' level of performance prior to making a breeding decision. Probably the best way to get an objective opinion of your dogs' level of performance is to test it against an established standard of performance (such as in hunt tests).

Without taking the time to establish a basis for comparison there is not way to really be sure just how good a dog is. As stated earlier, almost every guy I know who hunts with a dog thinks that his dog is great, however, the fact that he thinks he has a great hunter does not automatically qualify that dog as a good candidate for breeding.

Hunt tests and field trials can often help expose undesirable characteristics within your dog that you may have not encountered if your particular hunting situation. Succeeding in hunt tests events as well as in actual hunting can help you be more confident that you dog truly does have the ability to make a contribution to the breed.

Continued on next page.....

## To Breed or Not to Breed—continued

### Health Considerations

Unfortunately, not all dogs who possess great personality and performance are good candidates for breeding. There are several genetically linked conditions within all of the retrieving breeds, responsible breeders screen for a number of these conditions to keep from passing them on.

Some diseases are recessive in nature requiring the sire and dam to each possess the gene before a puppy can be affected. Veterinary researchers have been able to find and isolate the gene for two different autosomal recessive diseases: Exercise Induced Collapse (EIC) and Centro Nuclear Myopathy (CNM). Since these diseases are recessive in nature, both the sire and dam must carry the gene for a puppy to be affected. By screening all breeding dogs and avoiding the mating of carriers it is possible that no future puppies are ever affected by either of these diseases. Furthermore, by not breeding any carriers, it is possible that both diseases could one day be eradicated.

Other diseases if present in the parent predispose any offspring from that dog to be affected. Perhaps the three most common of these types of heritable conditions affecting the retrieving breeds are hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia and progressive retinal atrophy (PRA). Luckily, all three diseases are easily detected and can be screened for as follows:

**Hip Dysplasia** – This condition is most commonly detected by performing one or more x-rays of the hips. Only dogs that have been certified by either the Orthopedic Foundation for Animals (OFA) or a Penn Hip certified veterinarian as non-dysplastic should be bred. Almost any vet with an x-ray machine can take the required radiographs and submit them to OFA for evaluation. For more information about how to have your dog certified talk to your local veterinarian or visit the OFA website at [www.offa.org](http://www.offa.org).

**Elbow Dysplasia** – Elbow dysplasia is also detectable by x-ray, and according to OFA statistics is just as common in Labrador retrievers as hip dysplasia. In addition to hips, the OFA also grades elbows and maintains a registry of normal dogs. As with hips, almost any vet can take the required x-ray and submit it to OFA.

**PRA** – Established by concerned breeders and dog owners the Canine Eye Registry Foundation (CERF) provides eye clearance certificates for breeding dogs in hopes of eliminating heritable eye diseases such as PRA. Unlike OFA, CERF only accepts eye examinations performed by diplomates of the American College of Veterinary Ophthalmologists (AVCO). To learn more about CERF visit [www.vmdb.org](http://www.vmdb.org).

In addition to having these screenings performed, you should always review your dog's health history with your veterinarian before making a breeding decision. Often your vet will point out ailments from your dogs past that have been shown to have a genetic component such as seizures or demodectic mange. Since any offspring of a dog that has one of these ailments will be genetically predisposed to have the condition also, previously affected dogs should usually not be bred.

### The Mate

Finally, you have to find the right mate. For even if your dog is the greatest example of the breed in the world, is great in the field and has all of the proper health clearances and titles, the breed gains nothing if you breed to a dog that does not have characteristics that will help improve the breed, too. Therefore you should examine the personality, performance and health of the potential breeding dog as you would that of your own.

Making the decision to breed your dog is definitely hard work, but it pales in comparison to the job of actually whelping and raising the puppies. In our next issue we will take a look at the job of having puppies, and the things you need to know to increase your chances of having a happy, healthy, well socialized litter.

J. Paul Jackson is, along with his wife Melanie, the owner of Lone Oak Retrievers. He has been training dogs for more than 20 years, full time for more than a decade. J. Paul has been the gun dog editor of Delta Waterfowl magazine since 2005.