

The Official Newsletter of the Master National Retriever Club



Vol. 14, No. 2 Sept 2008

President's Message...

The 2008 Master National Event is almost upon us and I am excited. The Minnesota Iron Range Retriever Club and a host of others have been working very diligently to ensure your enjoyment and success for the Event. Duck bands, ribbons, plates, pins, bags, hats, shells, birds, and a host of other supplies have been ordered and are in route. Now we need the teams to complete their entries and pack their bags because we are going to have a grand time in 2008.

We had 424 teams that qualified for the Master National and at this writing entries are still streaming in. With 149 member clubs across our four regions we hope that every club is represented and that each member has a special memory of 2008 to take home.

Clubs need to be aware that with the change in the membership dues structure they are now payable August 1 of each year. It is important to get your dues in before September 1 to avoid late fees and it is just as important to have these dues in line so your delegate can have their voice heard at the annual meeting. Remember the dues were changed to coincide with the qualification period and to lessen any confusion about "are my club's dues current."

There has been discussion about the need for the Master National Retriever Club to engage the use of an electronic entry service. During the Master National Board meeting held in July a special task force was appointed by your President to explore and discuss the use and direction the MNRC should take. This committee is chaired by Frank Barton with members being Ray Muth and Theresa Stevens. We look forward to the discussion on this topic.

As you enter the Iron Range region look around and enjoy the heritage and history of this unique area. The wonderful hunting and fishing, plus the host of sports are a great attribute to the area. Our banquet on Friday night September 19 will be adjacent to the US Hockey Hall of Fame, so that may be a place to visit on your trip.

So train your canine companion in preparation of the event, travel safely and remember to pack some warm clothes. At this time of year we can have mild days or it could be very chilly and there has been snow during this time period – like last year.

I have enjoyed my time as President of the Master National Retriever Club. Marty and I have entered and judged many hunt tests events this past year and it has been my privilege to hear your thoughts and concerns about the future of our sport. Our sport continues to grow and I consider each of us to be ambassadors. I admire and hold in high esteem your efforts to train, the sacrifices made to enter our tests, and your desires to better our sport.

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MNRC News

OFFICERS and BOARD

President

Dave Kress
PO BOX 426
Gallatin, TN 37066
dkress@alberici.com

Secretary/Treasurer

Frank Barton
116 Alta Vista Dr.
Marion, AR 72364
fbarton@bartonagcenter.com

Region I

John Marchica, VP
34 Appleseed Rd
Sudbury, VT 05733
yhgolden@sover.net
Sam Ferguson, Director
1512 Valley Rd
Tallahassee, FL 32301
SAM.FERGUSON@fldoe.org

Region II

John Blackbird, VP
1783 Johnsons Cartway
Mora, MN 55051
jblack0690@ncis.com
Ray Muth, Director
W1626 Mountain Rd
Theresa, WI 53091
re_muth@netzero.net

Region III

Bill Teague, VP
734 CR 630
Nacogdoches, TX 75964
ta1@hughes.net

Gloria Mundell, Director
829 S. Miller Ct.
Lakewood, CO 80226
gjmundell@comcast.net

Region IV

Janet Peters. VP
534 Wilson Ave.
Novato, CA 94947
jpeters@arcadis-us.com
Jim Huston-Director
2268 SE Mulberry Dr
Milwaukie, OR, 97267-4541
jhuston@wicin.com

Mary Williams, IPP
214 Beckys Creek Rd
Hampstead, NC 28443
mary@hightidekennels.com

President's Message con't

A special thank you should go to my wife, Marty Kress for her support during this special year. The MIRRC has been wonderful to work with and each contestant will benefit from their preparation. Our Judges deserve a heartfelt thank you, Auggie Argabright, Ed Sullivan, Tim Buck and Ron Sauls for giving their time and energy to judge the event. They also gave up the opportunity to campaign their dog for the event so this is a great sacrifice. Finally the Board of Directors for the Master National Retriever Club truly has the best interest of the event and entered teams in mind and I thank them for their efforts.

Thank you for the wonderful ride and your support this year!

David M. Kress
President of the Master National Retriever Club

Vision Statement

The Master National Retriever Club, Inc., is committed to the hunting tradition, and devoted to the promotion, breeding, training and best interests of retrievers. In order to carry out our commitment, Master Hunters will be tested annually in a non-competitive manner at the Master National Stake to the maximum of the standard set out by the American Kennel Club. We firmly believe in supporting the hunting test program and that all participants should conduct themselves as good sportsmen. To obtain the maximum of the standard there shall be such utilization of terrain, bird placement, and natural conditions so as to provide significant challenge to the abilities of the master hunting dog.

MANY THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS



Meet Our 2008 Judges

AUGGIE ARGABRIGHT



REGION 1 JUDGE

I have been involved in the hunt test movement since the formative stages. My dog, MHR Shannandoah's Free Sprite MH was the first chocolate Labrador to earn the AKC title of Master Hunter and the second Labrador to hold both the AKC and NAHRA Master Hunter titles. Doc went on to compete in the first National Invitationals for both organizations. Doc was also qualified to run the first Master National in Delaware, but was fighting cancer at the time.

I live on Maryland's Eastern Shore and over the years have competed in field trials, hunt tests and several State Gun Dog Championships. While hunt tests have been my primary interest I also run field trials. Most recently, Rocky (Cin-D's Storm Trooper MH, MNH, QAA) received a JAM in only his second time running in an Amateur All-Age stake. Currently I am competing in hunt tests with Rocky's offspring Shannandoah's Highland Drake MH and K and K Ginger Snap SH, and in field trials with Shannandoah's Highland Cruise JH. This spring Cruise has earned Reserve JAM's and JAM's in the Qualifying stake.

I have judged over 50 hunt tests, the 1999 Master National as well as field trials and WC/WCX's. I enjoy good dog work, whether it's hunting retriever stakes or field trials. I do believe that field trial judges should judge field

trials and hunting retriever judges judge hunt tests. Some of the problems we're now experiencing in the hunt test stakes are a result of maybe too much influence from the other side... after all, the hunt tests were intended for the average person.

I hope my having judged the Master National once before is something that will help the 208 event be one of the most enjoyable, challenging and successful events ever. Regarding judging and test set-ups: I always try to be fair to the dogs and handlers. I like to set up tests that are challenging, tests that allow the dogs to be successful or eliminate themselves –no tricks. I figure that if my dog could be successful with the challenges of the test, a Master National dog should be able to do it also. I like marks to be visible and dogs to be able to take straight lines to retrieve them. I want to be able to see if the dog can mark and remember. Sometimes the easier a test looks to a handler, the harder it is. Before judging the '99 Master National I was asked if I ever gave 10's. To which I answered, "Yes!" I think straight to a mark or lining a blind deserves a perfect score. How could you get any better than that?

I want to wish everyone the best of luck at the 2008 Master National. Travel safe and I'll see you there.

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IN REMEMBRANCE

Early Christmas morning, a lone star was shining

brightly down upon her ...

... and she followed.

BRASSFIRE'S MUSTANG SALLY

"Sally"

3/20/94 - 12/25/07

Master National Hall of Fame

*Breeder, Owner, Handler,
and Best Friend,
Chris Braswell*

ED SULLIVAN



REGION 2 JUDGE

I am honored to have selected to judge the 2008 Master National. My wife Jane and I acquired our first retriever (a Golden) in the early 1960's. This dog was trained by D.L. Walters, who at that time was located outside of Council Bluffs, Iowa. Jane and I have four retrievers: three Golden and one Lab. I am currently running two dogs at the Master National level. Pictured in the photo is my little Golden Master National Hunter, "Who." The first Master National in which I was involved was in Kansas City at the James A. Reed Memorial Wildlife Area in 1993. I was on the traffic and equipment committee. In recent years I have shot flyers, worked control stations, marshaled and planted blinds.

Over the years this sport has changed immensely. Equipment, training methods, and the quality of dogs have made allowed us to make quantum leaps to where we are today. The introduction of the hunt test program in the 1980's opened up the sport to many people who would otherwise never have tried to compete in the retriever game. The introduction of the Master National opened another door in the sport that allows the best dogs in the hunt test program to compete at a national level. Although no distinction can be noted on a dog that has qualified at a Master National, those in the retriever world know the effort, time, and sacrifices that have gone into getting one's dog to

and through a Master National.

To all of you who qualified for the 2008 Master National, stand proud of yourselves and your dog's accomplishments. You are a team and I look forward to seeing and judging that team. My co-judges and I will do our very best to make the test a fun, rewarding, and memorable experience.

TIM BUCK



REGION 3 JUDGE

My name is Tim Buck and I am honored to be the judge representing Region 3 for the 2008 Master National. I would like to thank the clubs in our region for giving me this opportunity. My appreciation also goes out to all of the people that I have trained with, judged with, and ran dogs with at various hunt tests over the years. While the names are too numerous to mention, these are the people that I have learned from, and that have made my participation in the retriever game such a pleasant and rewarding experience.

I live in Lexington, Texas, about an hour east of Austin, with my wife, Mary Young. Mary is a fully pointed field trial judge, and my mentor in dog training. I work in Austin as the Controller of a computer component manufacturing company. Mary and I have a 135-acre ranch on which we train our dogs and raise Irish Dexter Cattle. At present, we have five Flat-Coated Retrievers and

TIM BUCK con't

one Labrador. We are members of the Waterloo Amateur Retriever Club, which will be hosting the 2009 Master National. Our ranch will be one of the training properties for the 2009 event, so we look forward to seeing you there. I am proud to be following in the footsteps of two other WARC members that have previously judged the Master National, Roger Fuller in 2004 and Rick Greer in 2006.

We have a saying in Texas: "I was not born in Texas, but I got here as soon as I could." This applies to myself, as does a similar saying about bird hunting and the retriever game. I was not raised in a hunting home or with retrievers, but I got involved with both as soon as I could. I have had retrievers for over twenty years, have been running AKC hunt tests since 1991, and have been judging AKC field events since 1998. I love to go duck, goose, or dove hunting whenever I get the chance. I look forward to the time when I can travel north more often for pheasant hunting.

It is very important to me that handlers perceive my test set-up and judging to be fair. My tests tend to be challenging, but I think this makes them even more rewarding to the handlers' when they pass. Good bird placement and optimal use of the factors are the keys to a good Master test. The quality of the grounds, and the weather, are always important and I am sure they will be ideal for the Master National. I do not believe in trying to trick dogs and I do not like breaking tests. I think "tight" tests should be balanced with "open" tests that give dogs room to recover, if necessary, and figure out the location of the fall. Good control and handler/dog teamwork are imperative.

Above all else, a good Master dog must have excellent memory. There is nothing like seeing a dog come back with the second bird of a triple, look back over it's shoulder to the area of the third bird, lock in on it from the line, and then go out and "stomp on it". I believe a judge should be friendly to all handlers, provide encouragement to new handlers, and cause all handlers to feel the test was good, fair, and honest – whether they pass or fail.

I am excited to be judging this year's Master National and sitting front row to watch these fabulous retrievers perform. It will be a pleasure to work with Auggie, Ed, and Ron, as well as the Master National Board and the Minnesota Iron Range Retriever Club members. I know the Master National will be a fun and rewarding experience for me. In return, I will do everything I can as a judge to make the event fun and rewarding for the handlers. I wish the best of luck to all participants.

RON SAULS



REGION 4 JUDGE

I am truly a lucky man. I'm married to a terrific woman, Janet Peters, and we share our lives with a combined family of three daughters, one son, one daughter in law, and a fantastic grandson. Our extended family includes eight Labradors, one German Shorthair, three horses, and four cats. Janet and I and Mallory (the last kid still in High School and at home) live in Novato, which is located about 30 miles north of San Francisco. I am employed as an engineer at Sandia National Laboratories in Livermore, where we work to develop and sustain our Nation's nuclear weapon stockpile.

My involvement with retrievers began in 1974 when

RON SAULS con't

I got my first hunting dog, a completely untrained Lab. She retrieved lots of ducks and pheasants over the next decade or so. When I retired her I went dogless for a season or two but the experience just isn't complete without a dog. I decided that I'd get a new puppy but this time I'd train it to be a polished hunter. That decision led me to get involved with a Retriever Club, which led to running hunt tests, and then to another dog... and so the snowball starts rolling down the mountain.

It is an honor to be selected to judge the 2008 Master National event, and I will do my best to make it enjoyable and memorable for all of the contestants. I take this responsibility very seriously but I will try to keep a relaxed atmosphere at the line. After all, this is what we do for fun.

I was asked to share some of my philosophy on retrievers and judging. A few thoughts came to mind that might give you some insight into where I'm coming from.

Handling on Marks. Too often we think that we did an adequate job on a mark if we don't handle. I'm sure you've heard people say after their performance something like, "it was ugly, but at least I didn't have to handle." Imagine two performances: In one a dog fails to remember a fall and then hunts until he eventually wanders into a downwind position and recovers the bird; In the other a dog fails to remember the fall but is handled to the bird. We seem to think that the first is somehow a better marking performance. Neither dog remembered the fall, so both should get poor marking scores.

Blinds. Many years ago a veteran retriever trainer coached me to always "go for the bird" and to "do the test." By that he meant to always point my dog right at the blind and then do my best to run the blind as the judges obviously wanted it to be run. As a judge I have more respect for teams that try to do the test as it's designed rather than avoid it. There are times when discretion may be the better part of valor, and we decide that it's just too risky to challenge the line. When I'm judging I score dogs higher if the handler challenges the line, even if he has a less than perfect job, than I do those dogs

whose handler elects to avoid the line and then has a cleaner job.

Areas of the Fall. One of my peeves is a marking test where the areas of the fall overlap. Out west we call it a "flowerpot"- when two birds are thrown from the same location. I believe that a dog should be able to hunt within the area of the fall without getting into trouble. If the areas of two falls overlap, as is the case when the same guns throw two birds, a dog could loop around the guns while putting on a reasonable hunt and get caught up in the area of the other bird. I have no problem with tight lines to marks, but each mark needs to have its own distinct area. If the lines to two marks are tight their depths need to be different enough that the two areas do not overlap

Line Manners. I'm not a stickler on line manners. There is a minimum level of control that I like to see but I hate to penalize the hard-going dog, the one with the high drive that causes him to be "up" at the event. What we do is artificial. That's unavoidable. I tend to be forgiving of dogs that let their enthusiasm surface a bit. I much prefer that dog to the one who is under such tight control that he looks like he'd much rather have stayed in the truck.

I look forward to seeing you in Minnesota. Good luck to all.

*Congratulations to
the 2008 Master
National
Qualifiers.
See
you in
Minnesota!*

SLATE OF JUDGING CANDIDATES FOR 2009

REGION 1

Mike Bunting, Dix Hills, NY
Bob Swift, Vero Beach, FL
Mike Moss, State College, PA

REGION 3

Joe O'Brien, Tulsa, OK
Ed Arnett, Dripping Springs, TX
Jeff Schoonover, Windsor, CO

REGION 2

Randal Ayers, Buhl, AL
Corrine Dillow-Clavey, Pleasant Prairie, WI

REGION 4

Wendy Pennington, Long Beach, CA
Rip Shively, Kalmath Falls, OR

Amendments to the Constitution

From the Middle Amateur Tennessee Retriever Club

SECTION 3. Number of Contestants, Eligibility and Entry Fees

(a) Contestants shall be limited to the following:

- (1) Qualifying dogs of the previous year's Master National Hunting Retriever Test shall receive credit for two qualifying scores.
- (2) All contestants shall be required to obtain qualifying scores in a minimum of five Master tests in seven attempts conducted by member clubs, plus possessing an AKC Master Hunter title, subject to (1) above or earn a total of eight Master passes. A dog qualifying at the Master National in the previous year will be credited with two passes in two attempts. Except as follows

(3) Dogs domiciled in Alaska may qualify by passing 5 tests at MNRC Member Clubs holding tests in Alaska.

(b) In order to be counted towards the qualifying requirements, hunting tests at which qualifying scores are awarded must have a beginning date falling between August 1 of the year preceding the current National Master Hunting Retriever Test and July 31 of the year of the National Master Hunting Retriever Test.

(c) Each entrant must pay an entry fee, to be determined by the Board of Directors.

New Business Request from Member Clubs

From the Lumber River Retriever Club

We, the Lumber River Retriever Club, move that the Master National Board of Directors contract with Entry Express /Dogs Afield to track qualifiers beginning on Aug 1, 2009 and take electronic entries, organize flights and publish the catalog for the 2010 Master National Hunt Test.

From the Yadkin River Retriever Club

We, the Yadkin River Retriever Club, move that the Master National Board of Directors contract with Entry Express /Dogs Afield to track qualifiers beginning on Aug 1, 2009 and take electronic entries, organize flights and publish the catalog for the 2010 Master National Hunt Test.